

## Challenges in Confronting Racial Discrimination in Angie Thomas's Novel *'The Hate U Give'*

Rilla Indar Paryutty

Universitas Pamulang  
Email: rilla@gmail.com

### *Abstract*

*This study aims to find out how racial discrimination and its impact can occur on African-Americans as reflected in the novel entitled *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas (2017). Furthermore, this study analyzes how the struggle of African-Americans who live alongside with white people and how racial discrimination revealed due to racial differences where the black race is the weaker group, while the white race is the strong group with the privileges they have. The writer uses a descriptive qualitative approach in this study. The data collected are excerpts from dialogue novels to be analyzed using two theoretical books entitled *Critical Race Theory* by Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic (2001) in analyzing racial discrimination and African-American struggles, then *Theory of Racial and Racism* (2000) by Les Back and John Solomos in analyzing the impact of racial discrimination. The results of this study show the struggle of African Americans against racial discrimination because they are a racial minority and are considered bad for white people through their race and skin color which causes some persecution to discrimination. The acts of discrimination experienced can be in the form of verbal and non-verbal which have an impact on mental violence, physical violence, to murder.*

**Keywords:** *discrimination, racism, prejudice, stereotype, racial discrimination.*

### **A. Introduction**

This study related to racial issues in the United States, which is African-Americans always be victims of discrimination. The literature explains societal relations such as racial differences or existing issues is the struggle against racial discrimination contained in the novel *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas which was published in 2017. This novel is marked as a national book award. Angie Thomas is

an African-American writer that was born in 1988 and grew up in Jackson, Mississippi. She is famous because of her works that write about young-adult novels stories. Angie Thomas writes this novel based on her own experiences. *The Hate U Give* tells about 16th years old black people girl named Starr Carter, who experienced racial discrimination that occurred against his friend, Khalil because he was killed by white people police without doing any crime. The writer chooses *The Hate U Give* novel to be a thesis because the story consists in the novel has a moral value that reflected human life. The plot of this novel can open people's minds that racism and discrimination should not do and can expand the reader's comprehend and awareness of the Black Lives Matter movement in other to there is no misunderstanding of it anymore. The writer analyzes *The Hate U Give* novel by Angie Thomas and conducted this thesis entitled: Struggles Against Racial Discrimination in Angie Thomas's Novel *The Hate U Give*.

## **B. Method**

The descriptive qualitative approach is a writing method for collecting the data for statistical analysis in the thesis object. This method such as participant observation, in-depth interviewing, and others, that yield descriptive data (Leavy 2017, p. 4). The writer uses this kind of approach as a key for data collection and analysis processes. Data collection usually continues until the writer begins to achieve data saturation or until resources or the writer are exhausted. Qualitative writers predominantly use inductive data analysis, which means that critical themes emerge out of the data. The data that the writer collected for this study is literature fiction which is a novel by Angie Thomas *The Hate U Give* was published in 2017. The writer chose a novel as the data source. The writer took the dialog as the data from the page of the novel book which discusses a racial discrimination issue like how the character face it with the conversation with other character. The data collected only relates to the issue of racial discrimination and how it impacts in the social conditions of society and it taken from the beginning of the novel until the ending. In analyzing data, the first thing that the writer does is read the whole story in the novel to understand the plot from the beginning to the end. Second, identifying the racial discrimination issue contained in the story by inputting the quotation as the data collection. Furthermore, the data that the writer collects is classified in this study and then analyzed. In data analysis, the writer classifies the data that have been collected into the critical analysis based on the quotation in the novel story and using the Critical Theory (2001) by Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic also Theory of Race and Racism (2000) by Les Back and John Solomos to answer the statement of problem in this thesis. These analysis results are to inform the readers about the main character, Starr Carter's struggle against racial discrimination towards black people who were discriminated against by white people detained knowledge the readers what Black Lives Matter mean. After that, the quotation is analyzed and written in an essay. To analyze the issues contained in the novel, the writer must read the novel first to

understand the plot and the characterization of the character, especially Starr Carter as the main character. By understanding the character, the writer finds an interesting discussion to analyze. This analysis uses a quotation as evidence that a piece of the dialogue is related to the issue that the writer discusses.

## C. Findings and Discussion

### 1. Racism Revealed in *The Hate U Give*'s Novel

In the novel *The Hate U Give*, Starr Carter defends her friend, Khalil, who became a victim of murder by a white police officer without committing a crime, the thoughts of racism and racial discrimination are still happening today in the world. White people oppress black people, they believe that they have great privileges, hence, they are happy to do negative things like racism and discrimination also spread hatred toward black people. African-Americans have become objects of discrimination in American history and become people in a black concept where white people make them an exception in the scope of society that has been embedded in American history, namely discrimination and prejudice against African-Americans (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001, p. 69). According to Delgado and Stefancic (2001), the concept of Power and the Shape of Knowledge can be related to the quotation of *The Hate U Give* story when the police have a prejudice against Khalil and Starr, the white police officer checks Khalil's car which is parked on the side of the road which in reality they just want to go home and talking for a while.

Starr and her family are used to two environments; Starr can be two different people when she is at school and home. At school, she had to get used to not carrying the habits that should be like black people in general. She was more used to listening to Taylor Swift songs which white people used to listen to. For black people, they are used to listening to rap songs; the rapper they usually listen to is Tupac. That's the difference between the two cultures that Starr had to deal with. Starr did this to prove that not all black people are different; they also have the same equality as white people. Black people also deserve a good education and think more broadly like the parenting done by Starr's parents, Maverick and Lisa. Like most teenagers, Starr came to the party in her town, Garden Heights, she also had to get used to the flesh and blood of her ancestors. Starr meets up with her friends, especially Khalil and Kenya, she tells Starr that her habits are different because she's used to a white group, but it's not. While Starr and Khalil were enjoying the party, suddenly an explosion was heard in the distance. They panicked and immediately saved themselves. This illustrates the act of discrimination reflected in the novel.

Pop! A shot rings out. I duck. Pop! A second shot. The crowd stampedes toward the door, which leads to more cussing and fighting since it's impossible for everybody to get out at once. —Khalil grabs my hand. "C'mon." There are way too many people and way too much curly hair for me to catch a glimpse of Kenya. "But Kenya—" "Forget her, let's go!"—

“Always some shit,” he mumbles. “Can’t have a party without somebody getting shot.” (Thomas 2017, p. 11-12)

## **2. The Impact of Racial Discrimination Towards The Main Character in The Hate U Give novel**

As the novel tells about Starr’s personality as the main character, she is a brave girl, she always ignores the things which can make her be bullied. The stereotype, prejudice, and racism she can face with her happy smile. Starr is very wise to make the decision, because of that she rarely feels annoyed by other people who see her as a black person. but the situation has changed when Khalil died. It was a big hurt for Starr until she must receive the impact of the racial discrimination action which makes her psychologically destroyed and it gives the huge trauma for her.

The discrimination action that was experienced by Starr as the main character always stick tight in her mind. She is flashing back to the time when Natasha was killed. The shot happened when the attackers came and then shot Natasha twice and it made her unsafe. This reflection of Natasha’s tragedy comes back after Khalil was killed too by the brutal cop, and it makes Starr traumatized and affect her social behavior. Because of that, the trauma experienced by Starr makes her feel down and depressed because of Khalil's departure. The impact of racism in this modernity still gives the tensions and traumas for those minority races who being discriminated (Back and Solomos 2000. p. 224-225).

Starr felt that the parties who interfered in the killing of Khalil were not defending Khalil but were cornering Starr. Such racism still exists when truly wrong conditions cannot be punished, such as the killing of Khalil by racist police. Black people's rights were always restricted and they had no right to justice and were forced into silence. Delgado and Stefancic state that the privilege of black or brown people cannot be supported. The privilege does not apply to black people who if they kill a white person the penalty is 10 times greater (2001, p. 110-111).

I mean, anytime he finds out a black person is with a white person, suddenly something’s wrong with them. I don’t want him looking at me like that.

Luckily, Momma hasn’t told him. She refuses to get in the middle of that fight. (Thomas, p. 23)

## **3. The Main Character Struggles Against Racial Discrimination**

*The Hate U Give* novel by Angie Thomas represents African Americans Struggles. The novel’s story highlights how their struggle to get their rights, life survive as a minority race, often feel insecure because there is so much that white people do to do racism and discrimination. African-Americans live above the perspective and prejudice that makes them feel unfree lives. Starr Carter as the main character describes African-Americans which mean that although she is a teenager the

writer gives a brave characterization to her to imagine how African-American's struggles are revealed.

Starr Carter's struggles depict the movement of Black Lives Matter which aims to get equal rights as white people. There are so many troubles for Starr, she has to forget the event when she saw Khalil's body full of blood because of the shooting until he died. Starr is psychologically disturbed and she is trying to recover from the trauma and dares to speak up to bravely take herself to the streets to do a "Khalil Lived" movement to get his rights and punish the cop who shot him.

The struggles that African-Americans do are not as easy as what is expected. They are the minority race which the rights cannot get easily. The United States are full of racist perspectives towards African-Americans and they have a big power to maintain their interest, especially their rights. It is a term of egoism in American civil rights to exploit African-Americans. According to Delgado and Stefancic (2001, p. 18), the minority has a chance to achieve their freedom, because the equality rights of white and black must have the same acts.

When I was twelve, my parents had two talks with me.  
...The other talk was about what to do if a cop stopped me. Momma fussed and told Daddy I was too young for that. He argued that I wasn't too young to get arrested or shot.  
"Starr-Starr, you do whatever they tell you to do," he said. "Keep your hands visible. Don't make any sudden moves. Only speak when they speak to you." (Thomas 2017, p. 14)

#### **D. Conclusion**

In this study, the writer summarizes that the discrimination experienced by African-Americans is because it is inherent in the history of them as immigrants. African-Americans are a low-class minority who do not have the power to fight for their rights as black people who are considered criminals and drug dealers which affect their social activity. Racial discrimination still occurs because of the differences power race that revealed in *The Hate U Give* novel, the minorities are difficult in achieve their rights and equal humanity treat. The impact of racism influences African-Americans mentally and physically as a minority race, especially toward Starr Carter as the main character. African Americans struggle to this day still uphold the equality of their rights because of these racist actions that have an impact on life, the economy and also political and social problems which every human being needs to get rights. Although times have changed and their generations are not all like that, but their history marked as African-Americans, as follows; minorities, poverty, slavery, also objects of crime. Their skin color is also a symbol of racism that occurs which makes prejudice and stereotypes appear to them. Racial discrimination has a bad impact on African-Americans as victims. As their writer analyzes the impact of racial discrimination experienced by Starr Carter as the main character. This study stated

that racial discrimination harms a person's mentality which is psychologically disturbing and greatly affects a person's daily life. Starr Carter had a critical trauma when she was a victim of racial discrimination and as witnessed the death of her friend, Khalil who was killed by a police officer. As a result, Starr Carter became afraid to socialize and speak up about what happened to Khalil's murder because it would threaten the lives of her and her family as African-Americans. The writer would like to suggest this thesis she has written to everyone interested in learning and reviewing novels or other literary works that discuss racial discrimination as a form of research or media of knowledge. Basically, the discussion about racism will always be an important discussion to make us open-minded in addressing someone who has differences with us as well as how we value racial diversity. Therefore, it can make minorities feel embraced and supported by their rights, especially their mental problems which we must protect as well. Every human being must humanize other human beings and that is the main goal of the author in analyzing this topic of racial discrimination. For English Department of Literature students or anyone who will later analyze racial discrimination and find this research, they are required to read also understand the object and theory carefully first so that later they can easily collect data and analyze it.

## **E. References**

- Abrams, D. (2010). *Processes of Prejudice: Theory, evidence, and intervention. Equality and Human Rights Commission Research Report.*
- Abrams, M. H. (1981). *A Glossary of Literary Terms.* New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.
- Back, L., & Solomos, J. (2000). *Theories of Race and Racism.* London. and New York Routledge. Retrieved from [https://student.cc.uoc.gr/uploadFiles/181-%CE%91%CE%9D%CE%98%CE%9A342/Back\\_Solomos-Theories%20of%20Race%20and%20Racism.pdf](https://student.cc.uoc.gr/uploadFiles/181-%CE%91%CE%9D%CE%98%CE%9A342/Back_Solomos-Theories%20of%20Race%20and%20Racism.pdf).
- Bracey, J. H., Meier, A., & Rudwick, E. M. (1970). *Black nationalism in America.* Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill. Retrieved from <https://www.freedomarchives.org/Documents/Finder/Black%20Liberation%20Disk/Black%20Power!/SugahData/Books/Bracey4.S.pdf>.
- Casad, B. J., & Bryant, W. J. (2016). Addressing stereotype threat is critical to diversity and inclusion in organizational psychology. *Frontiers in Psychology.* <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.00008>.
- Delgado, R., & Stefancic, J. (2001). *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction.* New York: New York University Press.

- Dewi, T. P. (2019). *The Spirit to Struggle Against Racism In Amiri Baraka's Poems Entitled Notes for A Speech and Ka'ba*. Semarang: Semarang State University.
- Goffman, E. (1963). *Stigma; Notes on the management of Spoiled Identity*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J :Prentice-Hall.
- Idris, M. M. (2017). *An Analysis of the Racial Discrimination Suffered by Edgar Allan in John Neufeld's Edgar Allan*. Yogyakarta: State University of Yogyakarta.
- King, L. J. (2020). Black History is Not American History: Toward a Framework of Black Historical Consciousness. *Social Education* 84(6), 335-341. <https://www.socialstudies.org/sites/default/files/view-article-2020-12/se8406335.pdf>.
- Leavy, P. (2017). *Research Design: Quantitative, Qualitative, Mixed Methods, Arts-Based, and Community-Based Participatory Research Approaches*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press. Retrieved from <https://lms.su.edu.pk/download?filename=1606884489-research-design-quantitative-qualitative-mixed-methods-arts-based-and-community-based-participatory-research-approaches-pdfdrive.pdf&lesson=40744>.
- McIntosh, P. (1998). White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack. In M. McGoldrick (Ed.), *Re-visioning family therapy: Race, culture, and gender in clinical practice* (pp. 147–152).
- Murphy, M. J. (1972). *Understanding Unseen: An Introduction to English Poetry and the English Novel for Overseas Students*. London: George Allan and Unwin Ltd.
- Nasution, A. F. (2017). *Racial Discrimination Racial Discrimination Portrayed In Flannery O'connor's Short Stories: A Good Man is Hard To Find Everything That Rises Must Converge*. Retrieved from <https://repositori.usu.ac.id/bitstream/handle/123456789/10744/130705144.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>. Universitas Sumatera Utara.
- Nurani, A. A. (2008). *Marguerite's Struggle Against The Practices of Racial Discrimination as Seen Maya Angelou's Gather Together In My Name*. Yogyakarta: Sanata Dharma University.
- Parks, B. (2020). *Leaked Police Bodycam Video Shows New Details of Goerge Floyd's Fatal Arrest.* CNN. <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/08/03/us/george-floyd-police-body-camera-video-leak/index.html>. Accessed on February 1, 2022.

Robert, E. V., & Jacobs, H. E. (1987). *Fiction: An Introduction to Reading and Writing*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Rohrberger, M. & Samuel H. W. (1971). *Reading and Writing about Literature*. New York: Random House.

Siscoe, T. (2016). #BlackLivesMatter: *This Generation's Civil Rights Movement*. University Honors Theses.

Thomas, A. (2017). *The Hate U Give*. London: Walker Books Ltd.