



Shades of Difference: An Analysis of Racial Segregation and Intersectionality in 'The Hate U Give'

Aqdas, Shayan¹

Ain, Noor UI²

^{1,2}Department of Cultural Studies and Languages, University of Stavanger, Stavanger, Rogaland, Norway

Corresponding Author: Aqdas, Shayan

Phone: 4746252709

e-mail: shayanaqdas@gmail.com

Article citation: Aqdas, Sh. & Ain, N. (2024). Shades of difference: An analysis of racial segregation and intersectionality in "The Hate U Give"; Journal of English Literature and Cultural Studies, 5(2): 39-51.

Received Date: July 25, 2024

Accepted Date: December 21, 2024

Online Date: June 18, 2024

Publisher: Kare Publishing

© 2024 Journal of English Literature and Cultural Studies

E-ISSN: 2407-1159

ABSTRACT

Enduring prolonged experiences of racial discrimination can lead the marginalized group to internalize injustice and rationalize acts of oppression and subjugation. This study examines the influence of racial segregation, intersectionality, and racial profiling on law enforcement issues as portrayed in Angie Thomas' 'The Hate U Give'. Critical Race Theory serves as the contextual framework for this analysis. The study aims to investigate various manifestations of racism within the novel, shedding light on racial prejudice and systemic violence in the United States by establishing connections with real-world events. Qualitative research, also known as library research, has been employed to gather primary and secondary data. Primary data for this research consists of words, sentences, dialogues, and phrases extracted from the novel. Secondary data sources are derived from online and printed materials related to the primary data source. As a result of this analysis, it becomes evident that numerous instances of institutional racism and systemic violence are exposed in the novel. These include the Black Panthers' Ten-Point Program, unjust or brutal shootings during license checks, physical abuse and biased behavior in police patrols, unfair detective investigations, and racially biased grand jury verdicts. All of these factors underscore the mistreatment of people of color, particularly Black individuals, in the United States due to their biological characteristics and skin color..

Keywords: Racial prejudice; law enforcement; racial profiling; intersectionality; systemic violence; institutional racism.

1. Introduction

In a world marked by increasing diversity and social complexity, the exploration of racial dynamics, discrimination, and the profound impact of segregation takes on a heightened significance. Race and racial dynamics have played an indelible role in shaping the world's history and continue to be defining factors in our contemporary society. Throughout the centuries, the concept of race has been constructed and deconstructed, dividing, and uniting communities, and leaving a profound impact on individuals' lives. It's a narrative of both oppression and resilience, as well as a story of deep-seated prejudice and the ongoing struggle for social justice. From colonialism to the civil rights movements, the world's history is marked by episodes of racial tension, discrimination, and, at the same time, remarkable movements of unity and change. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for addressing the complex issues of our time and

striving for a more inclusive and equitable world. American Psychological Association (VandenBos, 2015) has defined the terms which have been repeatedly used in this study, race has been defined as 'a socially defined concept sometimes used to designate a portion, or 'subdivision,' of the human population with common physical characteristics, ancestry, or language.' (p. 875), racial discrimination is 'the differential treatment of individuals because of their membership in a particular racial group' (p. 875) and racism is 'a form of prejudice that assumes that the members of racial categories have distinctive characteristics and that these differences result in some racial groups being inferior to others.' (p. 875). African Americans have been combating racial prejudice and bias throughout history. Prejudice consists of disrespectful behaviour and preconceived notions that are unacceptable toward any member of society. Prejudicial behaviours have significant impacts on the personal, social, and political lives of people of colour in a predominantly white society. Belonging to a marginalized group means that an individual must develop resilience and fortitude against the racist attitudes and negative stereotypes perpetuated by White supremacy.

Acts of racial segregation result in numerous disadvantages for the oppressed, leaving lasting psychological effects that persist through generations. Even with the occurrence of various racial liberation movements in the United States, racism has not been entirely eradicated and continues to persist. Today, the struggle to eliminate the psychological aftermath experienced by minority groups, including the internalization of racism, prejudice, and racial bias, remains a significant challenge. However, the nature of racism in society has evolved into a new form that often goes unnoticed, making it difficult to identify the true culprits. Angie Thomas' novel, 'The Hate U Give,' illuminates the racial prejudice faced by African Americans in the modern-day America. 'The Hate U Give' by Angie Thomas is a powerful and thought-provoking young adult novel that addresses issues of racial prejudice, police violence, and the experiences of Black teenagers in America. The story revolves around the main character, Starr Carter, who witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood friend Khalil by a police officer. This tragic event forces Starr to confront the complexities of her identity, her place in her predominantly Black neighborhood, and her life at a predominantly white private school. As the only witness to the shooting, Starr faces immense pressure to speak out about what she saw, even as the incident stirs national outrage and protests. The novel delves into the emotional and social challenges Starr and her community face as they grapple with issues of racial injustice and inequality. Through Starr's journey, the book explores themes such as systemic racism, activism, code-switching, and the importance of finding one's voice and standing up against injustice. 'The Hate U Give' offers a compelling and honest portrayal of the impact of racial discrimination and police brutality on individuals and communities. It has been widely praised for its relevant and engaging narrative and has sparked important conversations about race and social justice.

The author penned a story about racial discrimination following the death of Oscar Grant, a Black man who was tragically killed by the police. Witnessing numerous instances of police brutality in the USA, Thomas felt compelled to expand her short stories and articles into this novel. Through various examples of prejudice and bias, she portrays the impacts of racial subjugation and police violence. She aims to emphasize that intersectionality often results from misconceptions and stereotypes about people of color, highlighting the cases of brutal police killings of Black individuals. For instance, the novel touches on the tragic death of Alton Sterling. This novel has been chosen for research due to its realistic portrayal and compelling exploration of the phenomenon of racism in a diverse America. A qualitative exploration has been undertaken to elucidate the impact of racial oppression and the propagation of negative Black stereotypes, coupled with systemic violence, as presented through the lens of the novel 'The Hate U Give.' This analysis firmly establishes the novel's connection to contemporary racial practices in the United States. Drawing inspiration from the civil rights movement, particularly the 'Black Lives Matter' movement, Thomas' work not only offers insight into fictional issues but also reflects the stark realities that people of color confront in America today. Events, such as the tragic death of George Floyd, an African American at the hands of the police, have brought heightened awareness to the pervasive issue of racial discrimination perpetuated by the system, encompassing police brutality and systemic racism. These incidents have sparked a nationwide urgency that transcends racial boundaries, uniting people from diverse

backgrounds in the fight against racial injustice and the dissemination of knowledge on this critical issue.

For an extended period, African Americans have endured racial disparities, stemming from the 1883 US Supreme Court decision that sanctioned their isolation. This legislation fuelled a climate in which White individuals humiliated and viewed Black people as intruders in their predominantly White societies. Presently, instances of Black individuals being killed by both vigilantes and law enforcement have tragically become all too common in the United States. The current research endeavours to dissect the roles of both individual and institutional discrimination, alongside the phenomenon of anti-blackness within the context of White hegemony. This analysis is conducted by utilizing 'Critical Race Theory' and is anchored in Thomas' work, 'The Hate U Give'. This study is substantial as it reflects the exploitation, oppression and discrimination in the legal system of the USA where African Americans are still facing inequalities due to their skin complexion either from individuals or institutions. Racism is mostly perceived as America's problem but unfortunately it is still present and practiced all across the world. The Indian subcontinent is permeated with post-colonial racist attitudes and approaches; such attitudes are embedded and rooted in the culture, language, preference for fair skin complexion, even in the sales of skin-lightening creams, for instance, 'the caste system in the Indian subcontinent is a social phenomenon according to which certain groups claim a birthright to privilege and superiority.' (Bajwa, Maur, & Stephan, 2023). Pakistan is a home to South Asia's largest African diaspora community, but rather than to celebrate this diversity, it is treated as a curiosity, and at worst discriminated against Sheedis (an ethnic group inhabiting India and Pakistan). Its members are mostly descended from the Bantu peoples of Southeast Africa), leaving them marginalized and in poverty. This study would benefit future research aiming on racial disparity and anti-blackness applying Critical Race Theory and providing valuable information and results that might focus on systemic violence and intersectionality which is an analytical framework for understanding how the aspects of a person's social and political identities combine to create different modes of discrimination and privileges.

The objectives of this particular research are as following:

1. To enlighten the role of racial segregation, intersectionality and prejudices on law enforcement in Thomas' novel and the effects of these factors on the main characters.
2. To discuss the consequences of discrimination by illuminating the authentic representation of racist actions in America by linking it with the main events of the Thomas' 'The Hate U Give'.

The objectives are studied through the following research questions:

1. How are African Americans facing racial profiling in this novel?
2. How are deep racial and ethnic inequalities being practiced in multiracial America in the 21st century?

This research is delimited and restricted only on the contextual analysis of Thomas' 'The Hate U Give' by focusing on racial segregation, intersectionality along with the systemic violence as a type of institutional racism by solidifying its connection to the authentic and real events occurring in multiracial America.

2. Literature Review

The exploration of race and racism in literature is a vital and enduring theme that has been pivotal in shaping the way we understand and engage with societal issues. Literature serves as a powerful medium for reflecting, critiquing, and challenging racial dynamics, both historically and in contemporary society. Throughout history, literature has played a crucial role in shedding light on the experiences of marginalized racial groups. Early works such as Frederick Douglass's autobiographical narratives illuminated the horrors of slavery and the resilience of Black individuals (Douglass, 2009). These texts not only raised awareness but also catalysed the abolitionist movement. As it is evident that 'language through literature offers the reader an opportunity to empathize with certain characters and to project their hatred towards others' (Aqdas, Aslam, & Ahmed, 2023).

The Harlem Renaissance, 'the efflorescence of African-American cultural production that occurred in New York City in the 1920s and early 1930s' (Nash, 2017, p. 153), brought forth a surge of African American literary voices, with figures like Langston Hughes; exploring African American culture, identity, and the struggles of his time, 'his discourse is directed at the feminine African American collective' (Fernández-Alonso & Barros-Del Río, 2021). Another prominent figure was Zora Neale Hurston exploring the complexities of racial identity and heritage, her writing is characterized by its use of African American dialect and folklore, providing a rich and authentic portrayal of Black life in the American South, 'female critics honored Hurston for portraying the life and struggle of African American women, and womanhood in general, under male dominance.' (Qashgari, 2017, p. 35). Their writings celebrated African American culture and challenged prevailing stereotypes.

The mid-20th century saw the emergence of the Civil Rights Movement, a period during which literature became a powerful tool for activism. 'Letter from Birmingham Jail' by Martin Luther King Jr. while King was incarcerated in 1963, articulates his philosophy of nonviolent resistance and addresses the moral imperative of fighting against racial injustice. (King, 2018). Likewise, the autobiography of Malcolm X provides an intimate look into his life and transformation, as he evolved from a criminal to a civil rights leader advocating for Black empowerment (X & Haley, 1989). Another prominent name during these times was James Baldwin, he explored the themes of race, religion, and family in his novel and his collection of essays, including a letter to Baldwin's nephew, offers insightful commentary on racial issues in America and the path toward understanding and reconciliation (Baldwin, 1990).

'The Hate U Give' narrates the life incidents of people of color in America by imprinting Black negative stereotypes and discernment of legal system in the white hierarchy. It is directed and formed on the ideologies of the 'Black Lives Matter' movement as it discovers the complexities of Blackness in both post-racial and communal spaces. A sociological perspective has been employed to analyze the biases and mistreatment directed at Black individuals, with a specific focus on Black maids. This examination exposes instances of racial oppression and inequitable treatment that were prevalent during the 1960s in the Southern United States. The societal injustices and segregation experienced by Black maids profoundly disrupted their social and familial spheres. These unjust practices instigated a response from the Black community, as detailed by Maurilla (2015).

Another research by discusses the external factors apart from the typical racial biasness exposed in 'The Hate U Give' by Angie Thomas. By applying extrinsic methodology, it has been revealed that the psychological and psychosomatic factors, the culture, the notions and believes of people living in any society pave a major role in the thinking and behavior of any individual (Yunitri, Rajeg, & Isnu Maharani, 2019). Heidi W. Durrow's novel, 'The Girl Who Fell from the Sky,' places a significant emphasis on the protagonist, Rachel Morse, who is born of mixed ancestry. As the story unfolds, Rachel gradually comes to terms with the one-drop rule, a social concept that asserts the significance of skin color in determining an individual's racial classification and how society perceives them as Black. This revelation compels her to grapple with a sense of double consciousness and a profound feeling of not fully belonging. The resulting anxiety takes a toll on her authentic identity and forces her into a complex negotiation with the prevailing views of the dominant society (Hapsari & Soelistyarini, 2015). Additionally, police brutality is a distressing facet of systemic violence and racial profiling, where White law enforcement officials employ trivial pretexts to harass, assault, shoot, or even fatally harm Black individuals. These acts of cruelty encompass verbal abuse, physical violence, or lethal force directed at people of color, stemming from the hatred for black people. 'Police brutality also disproportionately impacts minoritized groups, especially Black people' (Alang, VanHook, Judson, Ikiroma, & Adkins-Jackson, 2022, p. 211). People of color face an elevated risk of experiencing injustice and mistreatment at the hands of law enforcement agencies compared to their White counterparts. In the United States, various media outlets have presented compelling evidence of racial profiling, drawing from extensive surveys, interviews, and statistical analyses. The findings underscore the alarming reality that Blacks are particularly vulnerable to these unlawful practices and prejudiced attitudes. Collected data reveals that African Americans are 25% more likely to face police violence during their lifetimes compared to individuals who are not targets of anti-Black bias (Peebles, 2020).

While the aforementioned studies concentrate on the manifestations of racial discrimination at the grassroots level, this research seeks to delve into the novel to emphasize the critical aspects of racial profiling, intersectionality, and systemic injustice. Drawn from a review of relevant literature, this study serves to shed light on the dimensions of racial disparity in contemporary America. It aims to provide a contextual analysis of intersectionality and the various forms of individual and institutional racism as they relate to the diverse characters within the novel 'The Hate U Give.'

3. Research Methodology

This research constitutes a literary analysis focused on exploring the themes of racial segregation and racial profiling within Thomas' debut novel, 'The Hate U Give.' The study aims to uncover the maltreatment endured by Black individuals in white-dominated societies, where they face segregation, degradation, and systemic discrimination throughout their lives.

3.1. Research Design

In this study, content analysis, a qualitative research method, is employed to examine 'The Hate U Give.' This novel serves as the primary subject of analysis due to its rich use of language and narrative elements. The focus of the research is on content analysis, aiming to elucidate the various aspects within the novel that explicitly portray instances of racism.

3.2. Data Collection

Data for this research is drawn from two primary sources: primary and secondary sources. The primary source is the novel itself, and the initial phase involves a comprehensive reading and deep understanding of the text, scrutinizing dialogues, sentences, and word choices. Secondary data sources encompass related articles, information about the author, film adaptations, online resources, and various racial theories.

3.3. Research Procedure

To address the research questions, library research has been employed. As described by Neuman (2013) library research involves the meticulous gathering of both quantitative data and written text materials. It serves as a methodical approach to delving into the subject matter and extracting meaningful insights. Library research is a methodical approach to investigating and exploring a specific subject or topic, relying on a wide range of sources that are typically text-based. It involves collecting a broad array of written and textual materials, including books, academic journals, articles, reports, theses, and other publications. The goal is to obtain a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the chosen subject. A fundamental characteristic of library research is its systematic and methodical nature. Researchers follow a structured process of searching, accessing, and evaluating relevant materials, ensuring that the information is reliable and authoritative. Furthermore, Neuman emphasizes the importance of critically evaluating the gathered materials to assess the credibility, relevance, and quality of the sources to determine their suitability for the research. It further operates within a theoretical framework, allowing researchers to situate their investigation within the existing body of knowledge and draw upon established theories and concepts.

4. Research Procedure

This paper is framed within the context of Critical Race Theory (CRT), a perspective rooted in the understanding that race is a socially constructed concept (Delgado, Stefancic, & HARRIS, 2012). Those who hold racist beliefs erroneously assert that biological traits inherently dictate human

behavior. Even in today's more advanced world, the lingering effects of racism are still pervasive across many regions. Developed nations continue to erroneously equate an individual's physical or biological attributes with their competencies and skills. Consequently, individuals of color are unjustly deemed as inferior and insignificant beings. CRT emerged in the United States in the late 20th century as an outgrowth of the civil rights movement and legal scholarship, aiming to address the limitations of traditional civil rights approaches and the persistence of racial disparities.

Racism according to Delgado and Stefancic discuss that the racial disparity distinguishes the suppressed people from those who uninterruptedly enjoy the privileges associated with being White. CRT posits that race is not an inherent, biological characteristic but rather a socially constructed concept. It is created and perpetuated by society and institutions. It also recognizes that race does not exist in isolation but intersects with other aspects of identity, such as gender, class, and sexuality, these intersections result in unique and layered experiences of discrimination and privilege. Furthermore, civil rights advancements occur when the interests of racial minorities align with the interests of the majority or dominant group, thus, progress is more likely when it benefits those in power as well. CRT is an interdisciplinary approach that has been applied in various fields, including law, sociology, education, and political science. It encourages scholars and activists to critically examine the role of race and racism in shaping societal structures, policies, and everyday interactions. By doing so, CRT aims to promote social justice and equity by raising awareness of the ongoing challenges faced by marginalized communities.

Within this research, the following principles of Critical Race Theory have been incorporated to spotlight issues related to race:

Individual Racism: This aspect pertains to a person's consciously or unconsciously held racist beliefs, attitudes, or actions that lead to personal prejudice and bias.

Material Determinism: This facet underscores how an individual's ethical, social, intellectual, and occupational choices are influenced by materialistic factors.

Social Structure: This dimension examines an individual's interaction with their environment and their behavior within a group of people, influencing and impacting society.

Systemic Racism: This concept refers to the perpetuation of negative Black stereotypes and racial discrimination by dominant groups, particularly within legal and law enforcement institutions, resulting in the marginalization and deprivation of essential opportunities for Black individuals.

Intersectionality: This concept considers the interplay of factors such as race and ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, and sexuality within the framework of social stratification, leading to unique identities.

Voice of Color: This phenomenon encapsulates the strong aversion, extreme hatred, and fear directed towards people of color and their cultures.

By integrating these tenets of Critical Race Theory, this research aims to shed light on the complex issues of racial disparity and its multifaceted manifestations. These core tenets collectively emphasize that races are products of social construction rather than inherent biological attributes. Society consistently categorizes groups based on factors like ethnicity, race, religion, or economic status. Consequently, favorable traits such as innocence, virtue, grace, and superiority are frequently ascribed to White individuals, while people of color are unfairly linked to qualities like vice, corruption, and aggression. Subjugated groups are consistently associated with notions of sinfulness, danger, and threat. In addition to these principles, the paper takes into account the historical circumstances of Black individuals who continue to be perceived as victims of societal mistreatment and injustice.

5. Analysis

In this section, the research article delves into the questions posed through the lens of Critical Race Theory. The approach encompasses several essential steps to comprehensively address the research objectives. Firstly, a meticulous examination of the primary source was conducted, with

a focus on extracting pertinent notes and key insights that would contribute to the subsequent analysis. Secondly, the research process involved the identification of relevant theories and the gathering of supplementary secondary sources to serve as points of reference, enriching the analytical framework. Thirdly, a systematic compilation of data and information from these diverse sources was undertaken, laying the foundation for an in-depth and rigorous analysis. Central to this analysis is the novel 'The Hate U Give' by Thomas, acknowledged as a work of social justice literature with a profound intention to elevate awareness and consciousness regarding the lived experiences of Black individuals. Within the narrative, a poignant exploration of the harsh realities of police brutality and the dehumanizing treatment of Black bodies unfolds. Simultaneously, the novel sheds light on the intricacies of Black life in the context of assimilation and acceptance within the dominant American culture. In this research, the primary focus remains on unraveling the far-reaching consequences of racial bias and disparity, as Black individuals persistently grapple with these enduring challenges in a diverse, multiracial America.

The novel 'The Hate U Give' masterfully captures the essence of racism in the contemporary era. Through this work, Thomas intricately explores the cyclical nature of racism and its profound impact on the socio-dynamics of minority communities, leading to issues such as poverty, crime, and police brutality, all of which disproportionately affect African Americans within the context of White supremacy. Racism, in this context, encompasses a systemic practice in which people of color, notably African Americans, face severe exploitation and systematic suppression at the hands of dominant groups, primarily Whites, who deliberately obstruct their progress and attainment of a sustainable societal position. Such degrading and inhumane treatment not only undermines the self-esteem of Black individuals but also leaves enduring psychological scars, hindering their ability to lead balanced and healthier lives. Consequently, Black individuals find themselves consistently relegated to lower rungs in social, cultural, economic, and financial hierarchies.

This pervasive racism, deeply entrenched in traditional and cultural expressions, undergoes critical examination through the lens of 'Critical Race Theory.' This particular theory views racism as a systemic condition that is pervasively and eternally rooted in the ideology of the masses. Racism is usually labelled as an outbreak on approaches, predispositions, declarations, and activities of Blacks which sides the hostile groups of leading and powerful people. Racism is also viewed as obliviousness because it is totally dependent upon the physical appearances, ethical norms and conventions of an individual instead of his services, competencies and knowledge. Hence, Whites are openly violating the rules of human rights by differentiating, humiliating tyrannizing, abusing, and killing the minority. This theory provides a comprehensive view of racism as a deeply ingrained systemic condition rooted in the collective mindset. Racism is commonly portrayed as a contagion that influences the attitudes, predispositions, statements, and actions of Black individuals, pitting them against the powerful and dominant groups. Furthermore, racism is perceived as a form of ignorance, as it hinges entirely on an individual's physical appearance, ethical norms, and societal conventions, rather than their skills, competencies, and knowledge. Consequently, Whites openly violate the principles of human rights as they engage in discrimination, humiliation, oppression, abuse, and even violence against minority populations.

It also acknowledges that legislative and legal institutions in the United States are fundamentally structured in a manner that perpetuates and reinforces societal, economic, and structural disparities, with African Americans bearing a disproportionate burden. Black individuals encounter discrimination in almost every aspect of their lives and frequently endure dehumanizing treatment at the hands of White counterparts. Remarkably, even in the contemporary era, they continue to endure unjust treatment and are persistently categorized based on their race, skin color, and biological attributes. This entrenched racist attitude perpetuates a cycle that impedes their social mobility, unveiling a harsh reality in a nation that professes to uphold human rights (Bonilla-Silva, 2014). Bonilla-Silva (2014) further argues that contemporary racism has evolved to be more subtle and coded, often operating under the guise of color-blindness. His research explores how systemic racial inequalities persist through various forms of denial and structural mechanisms. He suggests that acknowledging the existence of such covert racism is essential in addressing and dismantling racial disparities in society. Systemic racism hinges on the consolidation of unjust and biased rules

and regulations embedded within institutions that govern society at all levels, be it federal, state, or local. Moreover, institutional disparities manifest as the systemic failure of institutions to provide equitable opportunities to individuals due to their biological characteristics or ethnic backgrounds. These disparities are often evident in behaviours, practices, and conduct that are rife with bias, ignorance, prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination (Feagin & Sean, 2013).

'The Hate U Give' vividly portrays the injustices and pervasive negative stereotypes faced by African Americans as a minority group in the United States. It meticulously documents how all the Black characters within the narrative fall victim to the pernicious forces of racism, emanating from both individuals and institutions predominantly governed by Whites. The harrowing incident etched in the novel's narrative is the fatal shooting of Khalil Harris by a White police officer, an incident triggered by a minor change in Khalil's posture and the simple act of holding a hairbrush, mistaken for a weapon, 'they leave Khalil's body in the street like it's an exhibit' (Thomas, 2018). The officer's actions resulted in Khalil's untimely death, highlighting the tragic consequences of racial bias. The practice of routine license checks carries fatal implications for all Black residents in the community, and particularly for Starr, the novel's protagonist. Witnessing Khalil's murder firsthand takes an immense psychological toll on her, leading to days of profound distress, 'I'm at school, trying not to think about what he'll look like in the coffin, how many people will be there, what he'll look like in the coffin' (Thomas, 2018). This anguish is further compounded by the subsequent legal trials and investigations she must endure as a witness to the incident. Consequently, Starr grapples with the erosion of her self-esteem and a growing disillusionment with the justice system. She comes to the stark realization that being a member of a minority group in the context of White supremacy does not guarantee justice, as Whites often extend preferential treatment to non-colored individuals, even in cases where guilt is established. To comprehensively examine the multifaceted themes of systemic violence, racial profiling, anti-blackness, and intersectionality, the researcher has deconstructed this novel into distinct parts, facilitating a focused exploration of these critical issues.

5.1. Black Panthers' Ten-Point Program

This program as depicted in the novel 'The Hate U Give,' is a powerful response by African Americans to the persistent racial profiling they endure. It serves as a means of defending Black civil rights, which are often marginalized by the White population. The Black Panthers, a prominent figure in the story, played a crucial role in educating and inspiring other Black individuals to raise their voices against the pervasive injustices in society, 'Daddy believes in Black Jesus but follows the Black Panthers' Ten-Point Program more than the Ten Commandments' (Thomas, 2018). At the heart of the Black Panthers' ideology lies their 'Ten-Point Plan,' which mirrors the novel's exploration of racial disparities. This plan emphasizes the belief that all individuals are created equal by a higher power, regardless of their physical attributes or abilities. However, in both the novel and reality, governing bodies have systematically categorized individuals, relegating Black people to positions of lesser significance, 'Because the Ten-Point Program didn't work for the Panthers. Huey Newton died a crackhead, and the government crushed the Panthers one by one.' (Thomas, 2018).

As the story unfolds, the protagonist, Starr, becomes increasingly aware of this stark reality, and her journey symbolizes the awakening of Black voices. Just as in the novel, it led to a groundswell of demands for equality and justice, echoing the principles of the American Dream. 'We want freedom, we need the power to determine the destiny of our Black and oppressed communities' (Thomas, 2018). The Black Panthers' 'Ten-Point Plan,' outlined in the story, represented the specific needs, and demands of people of color. These demands were firmly directed at the government, which exhibited reluctance to address them. Instead, they resorted to suppressing Black voices and activities, culminating in widespread violence and bloodshed. The narrative in 'The Hate U Give' powerfully illustrates the resilience and determination of the Black community in the face of systemic oppression. The novel's vivid portrayal of these themes mirrors the enduring struggle for justice and equality, emphasizing the need for change.

Freedom takes center stage in this narrative, serving as a stark representation of the power

dynamic where Whites assume the role of rulers and Blacks, the role of subordinates. Within the realm of racism, this inherent bias disempowers Blacks, leaving them without agency to shape their own destinies. Hence, the quest for power and authority becomes paramount, allowing them to assert their existence as central and significant. As aptly noted in the novel, the demand is clear: 'We want an immediate end to police brutality and the murder of black people, other people of color, and oppressed people.' (Thomas, 2018) This demand directly confronts the police institutions that wield their power, control, and supremacy against marginalized communities. Police brutality, exemplified in the narrative through the callous killings of Black individuals, highlights the unjust actions perpetrated by those in positions of authority. It underscores the egregious misuse of power by Whites in the story, reflecting the harsh realities of racial biasness.

Malcolm X, a prominent African American leader and activist, centered his focus on the principles of Black Nationalism and the pursuit of equality between Whites and Blacks. He passionately advocated for 'complete freedom, justice, and equality, by all means' (Thomas, 2018). His tireless efforts were fueled by the undeniable dilemma present in American society: the consistent position of Whites at the top of the hierarchy, perpetuating inequality. Malcolm X's mission was to awaken Black individuals to their inherent worth and empower them to fight for their rights, even if it required self-defense against White aggression by any means necessary. Unfortunately, the 'Ten-Point Program,' as championed by Malcolm X, remains disregarded by the dominant group in the United States, perpetuating the struggle for true equality.

5.2. License Checking Practice

The senseless killing of innocent Black individuals without any discernible justification becomes painfully evident in the case of Khalil's murder within this particular novel. It underscores the grim reality that Blacks are disproportionately prone to experiencing systemic violence and racial profiling. Law enforcement officers subject people of color to harassment, physical assaults, shootings, and even fatalities, often driven by unfounded fear and baseless suspicion. In the narrative crafted by Thomas, a seventeen-year-old girl named Starr, along with her childhood friend Khalil, tragically falls victim to such brutal actions. One haunting scene in the story encapsulates this ordeal when, on a dark road, 'The White officer beams his flashlight straight into our faces. He asks for license and registration' (Thomas, 2018). In this moment, Officer Cruise deems these two teenagers, a girl and a boy, as suspicious, subjecting them to a barrage of uncomfortable inquiries. His use of the flashlight, aimed directly at their faces, contributes to a sense of racial bias without being overtly noticed. It becomes evident that the officer's request for their license could have been made without shining the harsh beam into their faces.

Racial segregation becomes glaringly evident in the officer's conduct, as he blatantly deviates from the standard license checking procedure. The scene unfolds as 'The officer tugs Khalil by his arm and pins him against the back door and yelled at Starr to not move' (Thomas, 2018). This incident starkly illustrates racial prejudice, a skewed perception that reduces Blacks to objects of suspicion and insignificance. The officer, fueled by baseless preconceptions, labels Khalil, a Black teenager, as a liar and is determined to find something incriminating in his possession. Consequently, he proceeds to frisk Khalil, probing his pockets in a bid to substantiate his unwarranted suspicions, but his efforts prove futile. Officer Cruise's mistrust remains unquenched, prompting him to return to his patrol car to retrieve a metal detector for a more thorough inspection, as he remains unsatisfied with his initial search. Tragically, the situation takes a deadly turn as Khalil, in a misguided attempt to check on Starr, makes a sudden movement toward the car's door. In response, Officer Cruise instinctively opens fire, the brutal sequence unfolding before Starr's eyes: 'POW! One. Khalil's body shakes. POW! Two. Khalil pants. POW! Three. Khalil looks at me, shocked. He falls to the ground' (Thomas, 2018). The officer, driven by a deep-seated fear, assumes Khalil is reaching for a weapon and acts preemptively, taking Khalil's life callously. This act embodies anti-blackness, a sentiment characterized by universal hatred and fear of Black actions and responses, Khalil's actions are gravely misconstrued by the White officer, leading to a tragic and irreversible outcome.

The officer's actions are deeply condemnable, undermining the very essence of fundamental

human rights. Even after taking the life of the young Black boy, the officer's behaviour remains erratic as he directs the same threatening gun towards Starr, who is left in a state of shock and vulnerability, 'I try to tell them to stop. Please, cover his body. Please, close his eyes. Please, close his mouth. Get away from his car. Don't pick up his hairbrush. But the words never come out' (Thomas, 2018). Even in the wake of Khalil's murder, the police exhibit bias towards Black victims. Another officer even assures Officer Cruise that he won't face imprisonment or conviction, justifying the killing as an act of self-defence or self-protection. This stark violation of basic human rights persists openly in American society, even in the 21st century, where Whites continue to deprive Black individuals of their fundamental right to life.

5.3. Physical Punishment and Retribution by Police Officials

Another compelling illustration of racial profiling surfaces in the context of physical abuse during a police encounter. An incident transpires involving Starr's father and his white neighbour, Mr. Lewis, resulting in the arrival of two police officers, one White and one Black, at the scene. Regrettably, these officers exhibit racial bias by subjecting Starr's father, a member of a minority group, to demeaning and humiliating treatment. This scenario resonates with the concept of systemic racism, where institutions perpetuate discriminatory practices that disadvantage minority groups (Bonilla-Silva, 2014). Amid the altercation, Big Mav attempts to reassure the officers that all is well between him and Mr. Lewis. However, the White Officer, representing the dominant group, remains sceptical of his statements, influenced by negative stereotypes associated with Black individuals. On the other hand, the Black Officer, constrained by his position in a department predominantly controlled by Whites, aligns with his colleague's scepticism. Despite being a member of the Black race, he refrains from challenging the prevailing orders, effectively adhering to the majority's perspective. The behavior of the Black Officer, driven by institutional constraints, underscores the notion that even individuals within minority communities may be complicit in perpetuating racial biases due to systemic pressures (Feagin & Elias, 2013).

This act of police brutality exemplifies various forms of torture and oppression inflicted upon a marginalized group. It underscores a stark example of racial segregation that persists within the framework of White hegemony, where non-colored individuals enjoy rights, independence, sovereignty, and liberty, while Blacks are relegated to a submissive position, subject to harassment, agitation, and undermining. The inhumane actions of the officers come to the forefront when they demand Starr's father to present his identification, 'You got some ID on you?' the black cop asks Daddy' (Thomas, 2018). Their demeanor takes a racially biased turn when they realize he is the father of the witness in Khalil's case. The Black officer adopts a derogatory tone, shouting and threatening him to get on the ground, face-down with hands behind his back. The officer places his knee behind Starr's father's back. This physical punishment, unjustified and inhumane, is solely inflicted because of his Black identity. This scenario reflects the persistence of systemic violence, even in a supposed 'post-racial era.' Such incidents occur regularly when the police and private security specifically target Blacks for degrading and often terrifying detentions, searches, and pursuits without any evidence of criminal activities. Racial profiling intentionally violates the core guarantees of equal protection and defense for all individuals, as enshrined in the U.S. Constitution, safeguarding against unreasonable searches, seizures, and arrests, 'It corrodes relationships between police and communities, leaving people of color knowing that they have been treated unfairly and understandably resentful of police; in the bargain, it does nothing to fight crime or make us safer.' (Harris, 2020, p. 17).

5.4. Institutional Racism in Detective's Inquiry

Systemic racism plays a pivotal role in perpetuating a racial hierarchy, with Whites at the top as the dominant group and Black individuals positioned as subordinates, effectively treated as objects. Detective Gomez's interactions with illustrate this systemic racism. When Starr recounts how Officer Cruise pulled Khalil out of the car, Gomez responds with a loaded question, 'Because

Khalil was hesitant, right?' (Thomas, 2018). Her careful wording is a subtle attempt to manipulate Starr into believing that Khalil's own actions caused his tragic death, thereby exonerating Officer Cruise of any wrongdoing. Gomez goes further in her efforts to label Khalil as a criminal and a thug. She questions whether Khalil obeyed orders when asked to stay put during the vehicle check, insinuating that Khalil failed to follow protocol. This choice of words reveals her inclination to accuse Khalil rather than critically assess the situation.

Gomez, as a White detective, embodies the actions of the dominant group within the police institution. Her actions subjugate Starr within this institutional network. Under pressure from Detective Gomez, Starr reluctantly admits her knowledge of Khalil's involvement in drug dealing, a decision he made to financially support his family. This admission reflects the complexity of systemic racism, where even Black individuals like Starr can be coerced into reinforcing negative stereotypes about their own community members. The concept of anti-blackness transcends white privilege, which empowers and privileges Whites as rightful heirs, enforcers, and protectors of spaces perceived as 'white.' It manifests as a form of mental, physical, and emotional violence against people of colour, particularly Black individuals. Anti-blackness stands as the antithesis to white entitlement and privilege, operating on the presumption of the inherent malignancy of Blackness and the perceived threat that people of colour, especially Black Americans, pose in the United States, 'police violence is a leading cause of death for young Black men in the United States. Approximately 1 in every 1,000 Black men is killed by police' (Braveman, Arkin, Proctor, Kauh, & Holm, 2022, p. 174).

5.5. Prejudice in Grand Jury Verdict

In this novel, a glaring example of racial disparity unfolds within the grand jury's verdict. Here, the inherent racial isolation within the law and justice system becomes starkly evident. Starr, the protagonist, solemnly pledges on the Bible to speak the truth to the jury, a promise silently extended to Khalil, the victim. The outcome of the grand jury's decision holds immense weight within the Black community. African American scholars, such as Michelle Alexander (2010) in 'The New Jim Crow' meticulously dissect the racial biases entrenched within the criminal justice system, shedding light on the disparities faced by people of color, especially when it comes to jury decisions. Randall Kennedy's work (1997) delves into the intricate interplay between race, crime, and the law, offering crucial perspectives on how racial biases affect verdicts and legal outcomes. Additionally, Kimberle Crenshaw's groundbreaking theory of intersectionality (1989) provides nuanced insights into the multifaceted nature of discrimination, emphasizing how race intersects with various factors, including legal proceedings, shaping outcomes in complex ways. Angela Davis further contextualizes the struggle for racial justice by exploring the intersection of race, gender, and class (Davis, 1983). Her work underscores the historical backdrop against which racial disparities in legal verdicts unfold. Within this context, the grand jury's decision in Khalil's case becomes emblematic of a broader societal struggle. Starr's pursuit of justice for Khalil is complicated by the overwhelming presence of White jurors, as noted in Crenshaw's analysis, perpetuating a system where Black voices often go unheard. This narrative mirrors the enduring fight against racial injustice, highlighting the need for comprehensive reform within the legal system to dismantle deeply ingrained biases.

The grand jury's role within the legal process is paramount, and as Angela Davis (1983) elucidates, it often operates within a system that perpetuates racial biases, particularly against African Americans. This context underscores the profound impact of their decisions on the Black community. When the grand jury concludes its deliberations, the announcement is broadcast on the radio, revealing that Officer Brian Cruise Jr. will not face any charges in the death of Khalil Harris, thereby securing his freedom. The novel, reminiscent of works like Michelle Alexander's 'The New Jim Crow' (2010), portrays the police department's readiness to label Khalil as a criminal, exposing the harsh and unfeeling treatment often endured by Black individuals. This prevailing issue highlights the pervasive nature of institutional malice towards African Americans in the United States, as extensively discussed by Kennedy (1997), he sheds light on the deep-rooted biases within law enforcement agencies that perpetuate racial disparities in arrests and legal outcomes. Notably, Kimberle Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality (1989) illuminates how race intersects with other social identities, such as gender and class, and impacts individuals' experiences within the criminal justice system. This framework deepens our understanding of how various forms of discrimination converge to create unjust outcomes. The novel captures the collective response to this unilateral and racially biased grand jury verdict within the Black community. The sense of rejection and disillusionment that the verdict evokes is akin to the historical struggle for civil rights in America, it underscores the ongoing fight for justice, equality, and fairness that remains a central concern in the lives of African Americans.

Institutional racism, rooted in the amalgamation of systemic discriminatory practices and policies across various domains of governance, continues to plague our society. It manifests itself in numerous instances, such as the tragic case of Khalil, who fell victim to unwarranted suspicion and racial profiling by law enforcement. As eloquently articulated by Kendi (2019) in his seminal work, this incident exemplifies how institutional racism perpetuates stereotypes, leading to the fatal shooting of an unarmed Black individual like Khalil, 'Racism itself is institutional, structural, and systemic.' (Kendi, 2019). The contemporary landscape is marked by the emergence of powerful social movements that challenge the deeply ingrained racial injustices. One such movement is the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, which gained prominence in 2012. As highlighted in Crenshaw's intersectional framework (2017), BLM is a direct response to the intersection of

racial and systemic violence disproportionately affecting Black communities, particularly through incidents of police brutality. The case of Khalil and the rise of movements like Black Lives Matter represent a pivotal moment in the ongoing struggle against institutional racism.

6. Conclusion

In a nutshell, 'The Hate U Give' explores themes deeply rooted in Enlightenment philosophy, echoing the principles articulated by notable French philosophers like Voltaire, Rousseau, and Montesquieu, who championed the idea that all individuals are inherently born free and equal. These philosophical underpinnings, indirectly interwoven by Thomas in the narrative, serve as a thematic backdrop for the novel, inviting readers to reflect on the enduring relevance of these principles. Profound and prolonged exposure to racial segregation can result in the normalization of prejudice and the rationalization of oppressive actions. The novel encapsulates this phenomenon through the experiences of an African American girl navigating the aftermath of her friend Khalil Harris's tragic murder. The paper adeptly delves into how racial profiling and anti-blackness are depicted within the narrative and their profound impact on the characters. Drawing from the critical insights of Critical Race Theory, which delves into the intricate dynamics of racism in society, the narrative highlights the cyclic nature of racial discrimination that entraps Black individuals.

Nonviolent resistance, while it may not always yield immediate tangible change, plays a pivotal role in empowering the oppressed, providing psychological fortitude, and fostering a healthier racial identity. The paper successfully illustrates how the tenets of respectability politics have been ingrained in Black culture and manifest within Black communities. This form of respectability serves as a mechanism for societal assimilation and acceptance, a theme poignantly reflected in Starr's encounters with prejudice and racial profiling. The narrative underscores the enduring reality that Black individuals continue to be targets of police brutality, mass incarceration, and systemic racism, thus underscoring the persistent racial disparities. The research thoughtfully unveils instances of racism, both on an individual and institutional level, mirroring the real-life experiences of multiracial America.

Individual racism manifests through the belittling of African Americans, while institutional racism operates by systematically limiting opportunities for Black individuals to excel and surpass. The novel successfully dissects the multifaceted nature of racism and its corrosive impact on the lives of those it ensnares. Within the broader context of police violence in the United States, a distressing pattern emerges, encompassing unwarranted, excessive, and often illegal use of force by law enforcement against civilians. This array of misconduct includes assaults, attacks, beatings, torture, and, tragically, murder. In addition to these forms of police brutality, systemic violence encompasses harassment, intimidation, verbal and physical abuse, and various other forms of mistreatment. Thus, the self-proclaimed champion of human rights, the United States, is tragically implicated in violating the basic rights of its citizens of color in a manner that is both overt and indefensible.

References

- Alang, S., VanHook, C., Judson, J., Ikiroma, A., & Adkins-Jackson, P. B. (2022). Police Brutality, Heightened Vigilance, and the Mental Health of Black Adults. *Psychology of Violence*, 12(4), 211-220. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1037/vio0000418>
- Alexander, M. (2010). *The New Jim Crow*. New York: The New Press.
- Aqdas, S., Aslam, Z., & Ahmed, A. (2023). Unraveling Madness: Linguistic Complexities in 'Waiting for the Barbarian' and 'The Secret History'. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences*, 8(5), 177-184. doi:10.22161/ijels.85.28
- Bajwa, M. J., Maur, I. v., & Stephan, A. (2023). Colorism in The Indian Subcontinent—Insights Through Situated Afectivity. *Phenom Cogn Sci*. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-023-09901-6>
- Baldwin, J. (1990). *The Fire Next Time*. London: Penguin Classics.

- Bonilla-Silva, E. (2014). *Racism without racists: color-blind racism and the persistence of racial inequality in America*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Braveman, P. A., Arkin, E., Proctor, D., Kauh, T., & Holm, N. (2022). Systemic And Structural Racism: Definitions, Examples, Health Damages, And Approaches To Dismantling. *Health Aff (Millwood)*, 41(2), 171-178. doi:10.1377/hlthaff.2021.01394
- Crenshaw, K. (1989). Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 139-167.
- Davis, A. Y. (1983). *Women, Race & Class*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Delgado, R., Stefancic, J., & HARRIS, A. (2012). *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*, Second Edition. NYU Press.
- Douglass, F. (2009). *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave, Written by Himself*. Harvard University Press. doi:https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvjghxcp
- Feagin, J., & Sean, E. (2013). Rethinking Racial Formation Theory: A Systemic Racism Critique. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 36(6), 931-960. doi:https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2012.669839
- Fernández-Alonso, A., & Barros-Del Río, M. A. (2021). Gender and Race in Langston Hughes' Poetry of the Spanish Civil War. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 671-683. doi:10.1080/09589236.2021.1927682
- Hapsari, L. I., & Soelistyarini, T. D. (2015). Negotiating Biracial Identity as the Effect of Double Consciousness in Durrow's *The Girl Who Fell from the Sky*. *Allusion*, 4(2).
- Harris, D. A. (2020). Racial Profiling: Past, Present, and Future? *Criminal Justice*, 34. Retrieved from https://ssrn.com/abstract=3543744
- Kendi, I. X. (2019). *How to Be an Antiracist*. New York: One World.
- Kennedy, R. (1997). *Race, Crime, and the Law*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- King, M. L. (2018). *Letter from Birmingham Jail*. Penguin Books.
- Maurilla, A. P. (2015). Racial Discrimination in Kathryn Stockett's 'The Help'. *Lexicon*, 4(1), 50-59. doi:https://doi.org/10.22146/lexicon.v4i1.42135
- Nash, W. R. (2017). Harlem Renaissance. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Literature*, 153-159.
- Neuman, W. L. (2013). *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Pearson Education Limited.
- Peeples, L. (2020). What the Data Say About Police Brutality and Racial Bias - and Which Reforms Might Work. *Nature*, 583(7814), 22-24. doi:10.1038/d41586-020-01846-z
- Peeples, L. (n.d.). What the Data Say About Police Brutality and racial bias - and which reforms might work.
- Qashgari, S. (2017). Racism, Feminism and Language in Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. *AWEJ for Translation & Literary Studies*, 1(2), 32-41. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awejtls/vol1no2.3
- Thomas, A. (2018). *The Hate U Give*. London: Walker Books.
- VandenBos, G. R. (Ed.). (2015). *APA Dictionary of Psychology (2nd ed.)*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. doi:https://doi.org/10.1037/14646-000
- X, M., & Haley, A. (1989). *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Yunitri, N. W., Rajeg, I. M., & Isnu Maharani, S. A. (2019). Racism in *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas. *Humanis*, 23(2), 81-89.