

INSTITUTIONAL RACISM IN ANGIE THOMAS'

THE HATE U GIVE

AN ARTICLE

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ABSTRACT

Yanti, N. R. and Fanani, Abu (2020). *Institutional Racism in Angie Thomas' The Hate U Give*.

Keywords: racism, institutional racism, African American literary criticism.

This article tries to analyze a novel written by Angie Thomas entitled *The Hate U Give* and focuses on the main character named Starr Carter. The purpose of this article is to know racism that occurs in the novel and the way Starr has to deal with it.

The method used in this study is qualitative research or library research, it means the data are concerned with texts, written words, phrases or symbols. Primary data source of this research is taken from the novel while secondary data sources are taken from articles, journals, websites, and books that relate with this analysis. The collected data are analyzed by applying institutional racism theory in African American literary criticism.

As the result of the analysis it is found that there are three parts of institutional racism portrayed in this novel, those are ignorance toward Black Panthers' Ten-Point Program, the shooting in license checking, and physical punishment in police patrol.

ABSTRAK

Yanti, N. R. dan Fanani, Abu (2020). *Rasisme Institusional dalam Novel The Hate U Give karya Angie Thomas*.

Kata Kunci: rasisme, rasisme institusional, kritik sastra Afrika Amerika

Artikel ini mencoba untuk menganalisis sebuah novel yang ditulis oleh Angie Thomas dengan judul *The Hate U Give* dan memfokuskan pada karakter utama bernama Starr Carter. Tujuan dari skripsi ini adalah untuk mengetahui rasisme institusional yang terjadi dalam novel dan cara Starr harus berurusan dengan itu.

Metode yang digunakan dalam studi ini adalah penelitian kualitatif atau penelitian kepustakaan, itu berarti data berkaitan dengan teks, kata-kata tertulis, frase atau simbol. Sumber data utama dari penelitian ini diambil dari novel sementara sumber-sumber data tambahan diambil dari beberapa artikel, jurnal, situs, dan buku yang berhubungan dengan analisis ini. Data yang terkumpul dianalisis dengan menerapkan teori rasisme institusional dalam kritik sastra Afrika Amerika.

Sebagai hasil dari analisis ditemukan bahwa ada tiga bagian dari rasisme institusional digambarkan dalam novel ini, antara lain pengabaian terhadap Sepuluh Program Pokok dari Black Panthers, penembakan saat pengecekan surat izin, dan hukuman fisik saat patroli polisi.

INTRODUCTION

In original idea from the worth of literary understanding that highlights its ability for education or development, literature functions as a probable basis of values, perceptions, or living habits that may be better than someone or those presented in current civilization (Bruns, 2011: 13). Positive books allow a reader to embrace on or remembrance an emotional municipal or position, vital for creating that municipal obtainable to awareness for assumed and consideration which can bring to other potential improvements of self-experience and vision (Bruns, 2011:19). Literature can mark the world by manner of its readers definitely over the marked experiences that reading facilitates (Bruns, 2011:22). So, literature has important role in human development because of its values, experience, and reflection that the reader got while reading.

Further, Wellek and Warren (2010: 95) state that the connection between literature and society is usually discussed by opening with

the phrase that literature is an expression of society. Furthermore, Scott (2009: 126) states that the relationship between literature and society is mutual. Literature does not only function as the influence of social reasons, but it is also the reason for social influence. So, literary work expresses human life in society. There is a strong connection between literature and society.

Novel, poetry, drama, and short story are types of literary works. Out of these different forms of literature, the researcher choses to analyze a novel because a novel is worth to be a subject in research. Novel is in its widest meaning a personal, a direct impression of life: that, to begin with, changes its worth which is greater or less based on the intensity of the impression (Miller, 2010: 33). Another definition, a novel is a book-length story in prose, whose author wants to make the similar that during we read, we experience a real life (Kennedy, 2009:312). So, we can take a lesson from the novel and apply it in real life.

The Hate U Give is a novel about the fighting of the main character to get justice over racism case. The researcher chooses this novel because this novel is entertaining and delightful with an interesting plot and it makes the reader get good lessons for life. *The Hate U Give* tells about a teenager named Starr Carter and she is sixteen years old. Starr is the witness when White police does the fatal shooting toward her Black friend named Khalil. After that, this racism case becomes public attention on headline news in their country. White people judge Khalil as a thug, a drug seller or a gangbanger. Meanwhile, Black people do protest on the street of this unfair case. People want to know the facts on Khalil case and the only person who can tell the truth is Starr.

It is interesting to discuss racism. Racism is discrimination to one group in society by another group. In 1903, W. E. B. Dubois said that the matter of color or race is important in the United States of America in the 20th century. Dalton and Duster as quoted in Solorzano stated in dealing with the issue of

color or race, the United States of America is conscious with color and it makes an American point of view based on color. This statement shows that the United States of America is a country that still has a problem with racism. The way of American view the world is influenced by color and race. Racist activities happen in many forms in society, such as in institution (Solorzano, 2012: 8). In this case, racism is done by the police institution. The study of racism has become an important aspect of people in America. Meanwhile, the researcher realizes that there are so many problems in society and one of them includes institutional racism. We must be aware of it and it is important to know how to deal with it.

THEORY

Racism

Racism definitely means predictive of judgments and rules on race thoughts that has aim to subordinate and uphold the power of a racial group (Pilkington, 2011:4). Berdichewsky (2012: 27) states that the word racism is used to mean acts of discrimination based on racial

prejudice. Discrimination is definite manners, the repetition of differential and unequal action of other groups of people, usually about racial, religious or cultural shapes (Parillo, 2014:78). Therefore, discrimination act that done by Whites as a dominant group toward Blacks as the sub-ordinate group is studied in racism.

Analysis of Institutional Racism Ignorance toward Black Panthers' Ten-Point Program

Blacks are often treated racist by police institution. There is Black Panthers' Ten-Point Program as the rule of institutional racism. It used to protect Blacks' civil rights that ignored by Whites and it becomes the base of Blacks in facing racism in society.

“Black people, minorities, poor people. Everybody at the bottom in society.”

“The oppressed,” says Daddy.

“Yeah. We're the ones who get the short end of the stick, but we're the ones they fear the most. That's why the government targeted the Black Panthers, right? Because they were scared of the Panthers?”

“Uh-huh,” Daddy says. “The Panthers educated and empowered the people. That tactic of empowering the oppressed goes even further back than the Panthers though. Name one.”

Is he serious? He always makes me think. This one takes me a second. “The slave rebellion of 1831,” I say. “Nat Turner empowered and educated other slaves, and it led to one of the biggest slave revolts in history.” (Thomas 81-82)

Black Panther or the Panthers is a nickname for Black who educated the other Blacks as oppressed people in society. Government as an institution in the state has done racist act by targeted the Panthers because they were scared if the slave revolts happen again. To prevent it happen again, the government controls the Panthers by prohibiting their activity. This kind of racist rule and performs make the activity of empowered Blacks is difficult to do by the Panthers. It is the consequence of being the Panthers.

“Point one of the Ten-Point Program. Say it.”

My brothers and I learned to recite the Black Panthers' Ten-Point Program the same way other kids learn the Pledge of Allegiance.

“We want freedom,” I say. “We want the power to determine the destiny of our black and oppressed communities.” (Thomas 151)

The Black Panthers’ Ten-Point Program contains the demand of Blacks in facing racism. Freedom is mentioned in point one, it shows that the control of Whites as the dominant group makes Blacks as the subordinate group becomes oppressed. In institutional racism, Blacks can not determine their destiny, so they need the power to do that.

“Point seven.”

“We want an immediate end to police brutality,” I say, “and the murder of black people, other people of color, and oppressed people.” (Thomas 151)

Point seven of Black Panthers’ Ten-Point Program is the reaction toward polices who used their power background in racist action. Polices that mostly Whites are often do criminality toward Blacks as civilian, for example of their cruelty in racist action is the murder of Blacks. In this case, the polices are over in using their power. The murder of Blacks is the

criminality as the result of racist action. And this police brutality must be ended.

“And what did Brother Malcolm say is our objective?”

Seven and I could recite Malcolm X quotes by the time we were thirteen. Sekani hasn’t gotten there yet.

“Complete freedom, justice, and equality,” I say, “by any means necessary.” (Thomas 151)

Brother Malcolm refers to Malcolm X, a Black activist who has an impact on the policy about equality between Whites and Blacks. The mistake of

American society is that Whites as the dominant group that have higher level position than Blacks as the subordinate group. This inequality leads to injustice toward Blacks and they do not have freedom as Whites have. So, Malcolm X makes goal for Blacks to do possible ways in fighting to get equality.

‘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. *By any means necessary* didn’t keep Brother Malcolm from dying, possibly at the hands of his own people. Intentions always look better on paper than in reality.’ (Thomas 151)

By structural ways, Ten-Point Program is still ignored by Whites in practice. Whites' custom toward Ten Point Program is they keep racist action in the institution. The impact of this Whites' manner toward Blacks as people of African generation is bad experience based on history that makes Blacks pessimist. It indicates that the goals on Ten-Point Program are difficult in the realization.

The Shooting in License Checking

Shooting is one of the examples of institutional racism in Angie Thomas' *The Hate U Give*. In this novel, institutional racism is done by police institution toward Black people who become minority in US society. Black people in this case are Starr and Khalil who get bad treatment when the officer checking the license.

'The officer approaches the driver's door and taps the window. Khalil cranks the handle to roll it down. As if we aren't blinded enough, the officer beams his flashlight in our faces.

"License, registration, and proof of insurance.'" (Thomas 16)

While checking license, the officer named Officer Cruise does

racist acts by beams his flashlight in Starr's and Khalil's face. His action shows anti-Black behavior. The flashlight makes them glare. The officer does uncommon thing. In appropriate treatment, the officer just asks license without beams the flashlight. What the officer does make Starr and Khalil as civil people become uncomfortable and disturbed by his action. The officer takes unnatural actions.

"Your taillight's broken."

"So are you gon' give me a ticket or what?" Khalil asks.

"You know what? Get out the car, smart guy."

"Man, just give me my ticket—"

"Get out the car! Hands up, where I can see them."

Khalil gets out with his hands up. One-Fifteen yanks him by his arm and pins him against the back door.

I fight to find my voice. "He didn't mean—"

"Hands on the dashboard!" the officer barks at me. "Don't move!" (Thomas 16-17)

Institutional racism was noticed on officer's manner in this checking license practice. First, the officer snapped at Khalil and Starr before they ended their talk. The second, he treats Khalil unreasonably

in which he asks Khalil to raise his hand then the officer yanks Khalil by his arm and pins him against the back door. What Officer Cruise does is violating the license checking procedure. This officer's manner extent to discrimination is because this racist actions are done towards Khalil and Starr as Black people. It is impossible if the officer does this rude action when checking the White race. One Fifteen is White officer, he does racist action because he does not aware that Black people as minority have the same rights as White people as majority to treat properly in license checking by the officer.

‘He pats Khalil down. “Okay, smart mouth, let’s see what we find on you today.”

“You ain’t gon’ find nothing,” Khalil says.

One-Fifteen pats him down two more times. He turns up empty.

“Stay here,” he tells Khalil. “And you.” He looks in the window at me. “Don’t move.” (Thomas 16)

Institutional racism is a misunderstanding of White people that Black people perceive as matter. The officer or One Fifteen as White person considers Khalil to be a guilty Black person. The officer dubs

Khalil with the call of smart mouth, assuming that Khalil was just a liar teenager. This misunderstanding of White people is the main cause of institutional racism against Blacks. The officer is sure he will find something bad like drug or sharp tool or gun on Khalil. Therefore, he pats Khalil down two more times to prove his guess. But he finds nothing and forbid Khalil and Starr to go. Officer Cruise's suspicion was increasingly visible when he decides return to his patrol car for retrieve his detector.

‘It’s not smart to make a sudden move.

Khalil does. He opens the driver’s door.

“You okay, Starr—”

Pow!

One. Khalil’s body jerks. Blood splatters from his back. He holds on to the door to keep himself upright.

Pow!

Two. Khalil gasps.

Pow!

Three. Khalil looks at me, stunned.

He falls to the ground.’ (Thomas 17)

The officer shoots Khalil without any suspicion made by Khalil. Khalil just does a sudden move that is open the driver's door but the officer immediately shoots

him. This is because institutional racism includes universal action of anti-Black manners and performances. What Khalil did must be hated by the White officer. Without knowing what Khalil actually did, the police immediately shoots Khalil without think deeply. Even before Khalil finish his talk, the police shoots him brutally. The officer does not give Khalil the chance to defend himself. Starr also can not do something because the shooting that was done suddenly, Starr only can see Khalil die slowly after the officer shoots him three times. What the officer does is inhumane.

‘I blink through my tears. Officer One-Fifteen yells at me, pointing the same gun he killed my friend with.

I put my hands up.’ (Thomas 17-18)

The officer performs racist actions that remain inhumane, unfair, and destroys the rules of essential principles. His act that points the gun to Starr spontaneously after shooting Khalil breaks the rule of essential principles as human being. The officer points a gun as he will shoot

Starr like he does to Khalil. The officer is unfair when points the gun to Starr because Starr does not threaten him, instead the officer makes Starr frightened. The officer also destroys the rule of essential principle as human being. By pointing his gun to Starr, he threatened Starr without care about Starr who still shocked by the death of his friend, Khalil. Here, Starr is powerless to resist the officer who has killed Khalil. Starr also can not defend herself. The officers’ action is very barbaric.

‘The cops rummage through Khalil’s car. 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.

One-Fifteen sits on the sidewalk with his face buried in his hands. Other officers pat his shoulder and tell him it’ll be okay.

They finally put a sheet over Khalil.’ (Thomas 19)

The polices come there after shooting incident but they focus to check Khalil's car and evidence things for investigate the case. They ignore Khalil’s corpse which they

must care first. This institutional racism involves the cooperative failure of police institution to offer a proper service to Khalil because he is Black race. This institutional racism called cooperative failure because it involves several officers who do racist acts together. One of the officers closed Khalil's corpse a long time after he shows his care to One Fifteen, the shooter. Another officer tells One Fifteen that this shooting is not a serious problem and guarantees that this case will not cause One Fifteen to go to jail. A perspective of officers as White that they are superior if compare with Black people. It is the type of racist perspective that pervade society openly because it is done in place of crime scene where everyone can see include Starr.

Physical Punishment in Police Patrol

The next example of institutional racism in Angie Thomas' *The Hate U Give* is physical punishment in police patrol. In this case, institutional racism is done by two officers while

patrol in Black neighborhood. These two police officers act racist to Starr's father who is Black.

'A familiar *whoop-whoop* sound alarms us.

Oh God.

The patrol car with flashing lights cruises down the street. It stops next to Daddy and Mr. Lewis.

Two officers get out. One Black, one White. Their hands linger too close to the guns at their waists.

No, no, no.

"We got a problem here?" the Black one asks, looing squarely at Daddy. He's bald just like Daddy, but older, taller, bigger.

"No, sir, officer," Daddy says. His hands that were once in his jeans pockets are visible at his sides.

"You sure about that?" the younger White one asks. "It didn't seem that

way to us.'" (Thomas 92)

White officer as part of the dominant group acts racist toward Starr's father who is Black person as part of subordinate group. Black officer looks directly at Starr's father, and the White officer denies Starr's father's statement. White officer does not believe what Starr's father said that there are no problems between him and his White neighbor, Mr. Lewis. White officer also stressed that his partner Black officers have

the same opinion. This is because these two officers are in the same institution, and have the same principle of treat White as superior and discriminate against the Black person. Black cop ignores the reality that he should defend Starr's father who is in the same race with him. Police institutions dominated by White officers, so Black officers must follow the majority rule.

“We were just talking, officers,” Mr. Lewis says, much softer than he was minutes ago. His hands are at his sides too. His parents must've had the talk with him when he was twelve.

“To me it looks like this young man was harassing you, sir,” the Black one says, still looking at Daddy. He hasn't looked at Mr. Lewis yet.’ (Thomas 92)

Black officer accuses that Starr's father harassed Mr. Lewis, although Mr. Lewis says that he and Starr's father are only do usual talk. Black officer follows what White officer does in discriminating Starr's father. The Black officer acts discriminately by looking at Starr's father with suspicion. This institutional racism involves actions of officers that broaden the different level position toward the subordinate

group that Whites are upper Blacks. Mr. Lewis as White person get privilege while Starr's father who is Black is accuse without any evidence. The officers show their position which is higher than Black by discriminates Starr's father. The institutional racism that occurs in this case is to make Whites as the dominant group that have privileges and free from bad prejudices, while Blacks are positioned as subordinate group that can be harassed and Whites can act arbitrarily to them.

“You got some ID on you?” the Black cop asks Daddy.

“Sir, I was about to go back to my store—”

“I said do you have some ID on you?” (Thomas 92)

Black officer does racist act by cut off Starr's father's talk, he does not care about what Starr's father will say. Black officer asked Starr's father to show his ID by force. This racist way in checking ID has influence Black officer to be intolerant. Black officer does it based on institutional procedures and ignores the fact that he has done racist act to his own race. The racist act of the Black officer has prompt

him to be intolerant toward Starr's father. Officers just asked to check ID of Starr's father, they do not check Mr. Lewis' ID. This action is clearly racist.

'Daddy's hand slowly goes to his back pocket, and I look from his hands to theirs, watching to see if they're gonna make a move for their guns.

Daddy removes his wallet, the leather one I bought him for Father's Day with his initials embossed on it. He shows it to them.

"See? My ID is in here."
(Thomas 92)

Perseverance of this institutional racism depends on the active exploration of negative manners by the officers. Their exploration is discriminate against Starr's father who is suspected of making a mistake. It makes Starr's father feel oppressed as an effect of negative manner by the officers. Starr's father is powerless, the only thing he can do is to obey the officers' command.

'The Black officer takes the wallet and opens it. "Oh," he says. "Maverick Carter."

He exchanges a look with his partner.

Both of them look at me.

My heart stops.

They've realized I'm the witness.

The Black officer looks at him. "Get on the ground, hands behind your back."

"But—"

"On the ground, face-down!" he yells. "Now!" (Thomas 92-93)

Institutional racism can work with responsiveness of principal group members or their deputies. When see Maverick Carter on Starr father's ID, the officers spontaneously signaled that they are deal with the father of witness in Khalil case. The Black officer immediately discriminates Starr's father by asking him to lie down with a forced tone. This physical punishment is inhumane because the officers do not have reason to do this. The officers increasingly show their racist attitude by discriminates against Starr's father. Institutional racism is done with a response to the physical victim.

"Now, wait a minute, Officer," Mr. Lewis says. "Me and him were just talking."

"Sir, go inside," the White cop tells him.

"But he didn't do anything!" Seven says.

"Boy, go inside!" the Black cop says.' (Thomas 93)

The maintenance of institutional racism is dependent to the main racial group that maintaining their power background. As work in police institution, these two officers have power because they are under official institutions in the state. They use their power background to control society so no one can prevent them from doing racism. Mr. Lewis as a privileged person and Seven, Starr's brother has defended that they are not proper to discriminate Starr's father but the officers forbid them from interfering the officers' business. Their power background ignores the race that prevents them from racist act. Whether Black people who surely not impact them nor White people who are their same race, it can not stop the officers to do racist.

'The Black cop keeps his knee on Daddy's back as he searches him. He pats him down once, twice, three times, just like One-Fifteen did Khalil.

Nothing.

"Larry," the White cop says.

The Black one, who must be Larry, looks up at him, then at all the people who have gathered around.

Larry takes his knee off Daddy's back and stands. "Get up," he says.

Slowly, Daddy gets to his feet.' (Thomas 93)

The exposure of institutional racism is trust by force or obligates to do so. Black officer obligate to do racist while pats Starr's father until three times. This shows that he suspected Maverick as White officer does. Black officer is forced to do this because he gets command from his White partner. White officer stopped his racist act in barbaric ways. Institutional racism is done clearly and attacks physically. The officers stop their physical punishment when realize that their racist act become public concern that Black neighborhood.

'Larry glances at me. Bile pools in my mouth. He turns to Daddy and says, "I'm keeping an eye on you, boy. Remember that."

Daddy's jaw looks rock hard.

The cops drive off. The car that had stopped in the street leaves, and all of

the onlookers go on about their business. One person hollers out, 'It's all

right, Maverick.'" (Thomas 93)

Institutional racism caused by mistake of the institute overtly and effectively to forward its presence by pattern. The officers' mistake are done their racist act overtly in open place where everyone in that neighborhood can see. Larry as White officer effectively forward his racist presence by glance at Starr then say his last words for Starr's father before leave. It indicates that White officer gives a signal to Starr that he threatened Starr's father because Starr included in Khalil case, a case that involves both White race and Black race. The pattern in this institutional racism is when the officers leave, the problem is over and as someone at that Black neighborhood says, everything will be fine as before. It indicates that the officers' presence is source of Black race's problems.

CONCLUSION

The researcher comes to the conclusion that racism happens in the form of ignoring Black Panthers' Ten-Point Program, shooting in License Checking and physical punishment in Police Patrol

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