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# Voices of Resistance: Social and Political Struggles in Angie Thomas's *The Hate U Give*

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# أصوات المقاومة: النضالات الاجتماعية والسياسية في رواية أنجي توماس "الكراهية التي تعطيها"

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**وزارة التربية المديرية العامة للتربية في بابل**

Abstract

The Hate U Give (2017), a novel by the African-American writer Angie Thomas, tackles how the female narrative voice serves as a vehicle for authority, empowering her to uphold her agency, confront social unfairness, and navigate the intricacies of her milieu with bravery and flexibility. Through this depiction, The Hate U Give efficiently shows how African Americans are treated with different racist acts till now. This study attempts to reveal the police violence towards black people, along with revealing how literature plays a crucial role in resistance. So, this study applies critical theory and African American feminism perspectives to Angie Thomas's The Hate U Give, unfolding the novel's depiction of systemic racism, police violence, and the endurance of Black societies. By focusing on the experiences of Starr Carter, a young Black girl, the study points out the intersections of race, gender, and social justice, underscoring the ways Black feminism confronts prevailing narratives and advocates for resistance and self-determination. The analysis reveals how the novel analyses institutional power structures while enhancing marginalized voices, contributing to wider debates on intersectionality and radical social change. **Keywords:** Angie Thomas, The Hate U Give, Racism, African-American feminism, Critical Race Theory

الملخص

تتناول رواية "الكراهية التي تعطيها " (٢٠١٧)، للكاتبة الأمريكية من أصل أفريقي أنجي توماس، كيف يُمثل صوت السرد الأنثوي أداةً للسلطة، مما يُمكّنها من تعزيز سلطتها، ومواجهة الظلم الاجتماعي، والتعامل مع تعقيدات بيئتها بشجاعة ومرونة. من خلال هذا التصوير، تُظهر الرواية ببراعة كيف لا يزال الأمريكيون من أصول أفريقية يتعرضون لممارسات عنصرية متنوعة حتى وقتنا الحاضر. تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى الكشف عن عنف الشرطة ضد السود، إلى جانب الكشف عن الدور المحوري للأدب في المقاومة. لذا، تُطبق هذه الدراسة النظرية النقدية ومنظورات النسوية الأمريكية من أصل أفريقي على رواية أنجي توماس "الكراهية التي تعطيها "، كاشفةً عن تصوير الرواية للعنصرية المنهجية، وعنف الشرطة، وصمود المجتمعات السوداء. من خلال التركيز على تجارب ستار كارتر، وهي فتاة سوداء شابة، تُشير الدراسة إلى تقاطعات العرق والجنس والعدالة الاجتماعية، مُبرزةً الطرق التي تُواجه بها النسوية السوداء السرديات السائدة وتدعو من خلالها إلى المقاومة وتقرير المصير. يكشف التحليل كيف تُحلل الرواية هياكل السلطة المؤسسية، مع تعزيز الأصوات المهمشة، مُسهمةً في نقاشات أوسع حول التقاطع والتغيير الاجتماعي الجذري. **الكلمات المفتاحية:** أنجي توماس، الكراهية التي تُعطيها، العنصرية، النسوية الأمريكية الأفريقية، نظرية العرق النقدية.

## 1. Introduction

One of the most critical issues tackled in the works of black writers is the matter of racism, which has a persistent and deeply rooted societal issue, needing critical discussion and assertive efforts to address its inclusive influence. Recently, there has been an increased confession of literature as an effective tool for tackling the intricate realities of racism. *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas is a prominent novel that presents a touching narrative that delves into the difficulties of racism and its deeply damaging effects on people, mainly within the African American society. This study aims to present a nuanced explanation of how *The Hate U Give* represent

resistance not only against racial abuse but also gendered extents within the black societies as a whole. Thomas's *The Hate U Give* is viewed as her famous novel, offering an important perspective on the real-world unfair treatment faced by black people. This study focuses on two critical theoretical approaches to illustrate the depth and impact of the novel. In African-American feminism, the theme of intersectionality is central, exploring how Starr Carter's identity as a young Black woman shapes her experiences of racial and gendered bias. On the other hand, Critical Race Theory offers insight into the racism established within social institutions, mainly underscoring the role of police brutality and its impact on Black cultures. Having these models, the study seeks to show how *The Hate U Give* not only uncovers inequalities but also presents the lived experiences and resilience of marginalized people.

**2. Exploring the Socio-Political situation of African American Through Angie Thomas's perspective**

The issues of black people in American was a topic of constant discussion. Some thought that the black people would never be recognized in American society, whereas others were positive about the prospect of unification between the black and white societies. For decades, the history of black people in American was eliminated from the history of American. It was not until the late 1960s that matters concerning black people started to be tackled. Parkhurst and Chesnutt saw blackness as a biological identity in conflict with the national race. On the one hand, Chesnutt understood that color in the United States solely reflected "a social structure [and] skin tone has proved no test of race" (Bercovitch, 1994, p.209). On the other hand, he asserts that African Americans would sometime join with white Americans in "so thoroughly absorbed into the general population that color will signify no social opprobrium, for all Americans will be a people of color" (Bercovitch, 1994, p.209).Angie Thomas (1988-) is an African American writer who wrote with this awareness. Through her personal experiences, she outlines the position of black people in the society. Thomas like other black writers, always asserts the black people's identity, faces the social bias that underestimates blackness. Thomas notes that when writers from subjected backgrounds share stories generated in their own experiences, outside observes often categorize those stories as a heavy or difficult to talk about (as cited in Rayane, 2021, p.2). She is prominent as a writer who embraces the literature of African-American, which present-day authors utilize the subject of slavery as a political agenda for their fiction, revealing the brutality of slavery.It also be mentioned that Angie Thomas's writings are renowned by their honesty and inflexible description of the defies experienced by deprived societies. Thomas's literary works have gained her recognition and made her an important voice in modern American literature. On the one hand, Thomas not only highlights the storytelling of racial brutality but also supports discussions about social fairness and justice. In her works, Angie Thomas knocks on how critical it is to identify and address the underlying causes concerning on the social unfairness. She encourages her readers to "face their preconceptions and actively fight to overthrow oppressive structures because it acknowledges that everyone is eventually impacted by the injustice and hatred meted out to marginalized groups" (Arya, 2024, p.17). Thomas is prominent for her distributions that focus on the African-American experience. Her writings concentrate on issues, especially racial injustice, identity, and the African-American experience. She produced successful works, such as *The Hate U Give*, On the Come Up, Concrete Rose, Blackout (co-authored), and Nic Blake and the Remarkables: The Manifestor Prophecy (Arya, 2024, p.6). So, a writer like Thomas within this field faces three issues: racial bias, systemic racism, and Eurocentric. Racialism refers to the belief that races vary biologically in moral and intellectual standards, leading to ideas of "superiority, inferiority, and purity based on the conviction that moral and intellectual characteristics…are biological properties that differentiate the races" (Tyson, 2006, 361). It leads to a hierarchy that justifies unequal power relations between races. The result of such sovereignty is the systematic discriminatory practices of persecution and segregation. So, Tyson (2006) asserts that racism works as a bridge of systemic hegemony rather than merely a subjective bias. By explaining the capability to be 'a racist' as product of political hegemony, Tyson asserts that racism needs the institutional authority to impose segregation, persecution, and control. Therefore, within the power structures of the West, this power is inextricably predicated to whiteness, distinguishing racism as a phenomenon of power not merely belief (p.361).Moreover, what made Angie Thomas considerable, her profound sympathy and interests for the miseries of black people described in her works. Also, this interests stems from her deep history, especially the intricate and controversial matters including race and gender. These features have deeply affected millions of people in deadly ways. So, Thomas focuses precisely on the matters that mostly exploited the native Africans and African Americans who are not white, underscoring the experiences of those marginalized and abused by systemic prejudice and social inequality. Additionally, her writings concerned with black women's conditions of being oppressed because of their inferior race and gender. As Peach (1995) notes, for African Americans, both men and women, literature

serves as an important medium to portray the social context, reveal disparity, racism and social unfairness and bringing people's disasters to the audiences (p.20).For example, what makes *The Hate U Give* (2017) so important is that it is a novel that offers a vigorous platform for debating the profound impacts of racial stereotypes, highlighting the pressing necessity to change changing and dismantle these destructive concepts in society. As an African-American novelist, Angie Thomas is renowned for her novels that concentrate on the details of African American people and remains a prominent young adult storyteller in America. Furthermore, her early life is similar to that of the main character in *The Hate U Give*, Starr Carter. Several of these facts are obvious in Thomas's notes and related to specific novel versions. In so doing, the events in *The Hate U Give* are narrated by the protagonist, Starr Carter, who recounts the events from her thoughts and experiences, and what is offered is her perspective of the whole novel. *The Hate U Give* is narrated from the protagonist, Starr, from the first-person viewpoint. Additionally, the character within a narrative works as a participant in disclosing events depicted by the narrative. Thus, in *The Hate U Give*, Angie Thomas uses the narration of her novel by her protagonist Starr, who is "telling of the story of events in which 'I' took part" (Thomas, 2017, p.10). In so doing, Thomas writes with a profound sense of black awareness outlining all the major subjects that concern to African American playwrights. Also, she can stress black women's privileges and rights by unfolding their dilemmas under the racial injustice and slavery system. She often offers her audience black characters with strong personas who help them confront their sufferings.

**3. Critical Race Theory**

Critical race theory emerged as a movement that shows into the relationship between race, racism, and power and inquired critical questions about societal systems and the administration of justice. This theory attempts to analyze how racism is experienced at the individual and institutional system to shed light on its the historical and contemporary effects and eventually promote societal justice and equity (Delgado and Stefancic, 2023, p.3). However, the particular focus of critical race theory is social, as Delgado and Stefancic (2023) also highlight the significance of narrative and storytelling in understanding and facing racial inequity. They believe that everyday experiences and viewpoints of individuals from marginalized communities have not been valued as they should and that by highlighting the value of listening to these stories, Delgado and Stefancic (2023) advocate for a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of how racism and race form our society (p.46). In Critical Race Theory (CRT), two keys of the concept are institutionalized racism and internalized racism. Institutionalized racism, according to Tyson (2006), denotes the embedded presence of racial inequality within various institutions, including law enforcement, the educational system, and the government. This concept applies to what is "written on the books and how it is implemented by the courts and police officials; health care" (p.361). All shapes of racism against African Americans are embedded within various disciplines such as healthcare, research funding allocation, and the corporate world. Thus, the prevalent nature of racial bias and discrimination across multiple fields, including healthcare, research funding allocation, and the corporate world. It highlights how systemic racism can appear in subtle yet impactful ways and affect decisions related to "its hiring and promotion despite whatever equal-opportunity policies it officially claims to have" (p.361). So, Tyson (2006) defines internalized racism as a form of psychological programming where a racist society constraints people of color to adopt "white superiority" as the basic truth. Thus, Tyson (2006) underscores that this is not a personal failure, but a psychological by result of living in a system that elevates one group as a high- ranking to others (p.362). Furthermore, Tyson (2006) underscores the damaging effect of racial bias on individuals' consciousness, psyche, and self-awareness. This sheds light on the significance of dismantling internalized biases and societal norms that enforce feelings of racial inferiority among marginalized societies.Bivens (2005) describes internalized racism by dividing it into different dimensions. One of these dimensions is the inner dimension, which denotes an individual's self-identity. When individuals of color confront oppression based on their physical characteristics, there is little space for a sense of esteem. This inner dimension can be evident in different ways, as emphasized by Bivens: feeling inferior to others, feeling trapped in victimhood, feeling overwhelmed, and being emotionally drained (p.46). Individuals experiencing these dimensions feel pressure to navigate interactions with white people and attempt to change their perceptions. According to Bivens (2005), one of the results of internalized racism is that black people often feel "damned if they do, damned if they don't" as they try to walk the tightrope between communities of color and the foundation world"(p.46). In other words, they often find themselves in a difficult position, feeling clashed when attempting to move between communities of color and inherently biased social organizations.Furthermore, Bivens (2005) states that the interpersonal dimension evolves from the inner dimension. This term is used to describe how internalized racism has a negative

impact on individuals of color's ability to preserve or create relationships within the same group or with those who have white privilege. In other words, when people continuously confront racism and face white privilege, it can erode their ability to shape and maintain healthy relationships with others, whether they are individuals of color or those who benefit from white privilege. Additionally, internalized racism appears as feeling invisible in relations, similar to being in a partnership with someone incapable of perceiving or recognizing viewpoints and skills. Thus, Bivens (2005) claims that the interpersonal dimension can be manifested in " projecting one's own sense of inferiority upon other people of color, resulting in not trusting each other's abilities or supporting each other's leadership" (p.47). Critical Race Theory (CRT) focuses on the idea that racism is not just about individual behaviors or isolated incidents but is deeply established and continuing within society's structures. This means Critical Race Theory shows the social, political, and economic inequity among groups recognizing that race intersects with other aspects such as gender, sexual orientation, and class. The way racism is understood differs greatly relying on person's social position. So, in critical race theory, storytelling and counter-storytelling are powerful due to it uncovers "reveals the racist acts people of color face daily while challenging the beliefs universally held by the majority" (Bowman et al., 2009, p.36). By telling, sharing and analyzing these stories helps relate individual experiences to broader concepts and systems of racism. It permits society to recognize how racism functions structurally and personally, paving the way to change attitudes, policies, and systems for a more equitable future.*The Hate U give* reveals how institutions conserve racial unfairness, showing CRT's idea of structural racism. Starr's personal experience with police violence underscores how racism is deep-rooted beyond isolated events. Furthermore, CRT underscores the intersectionality of race with factors like gender, class, and sexual orientation. Starr's identity as a Black girl navigating two different worlds the poor, mainly Black neighborhood where she lives and the school she attends, Williamson Prep, mostly white school. So, it shows how these intersecting identities influence her understanding and experience of racism. Starr explains, *"I shouldn't have come to this party. I'm not even sure I belong at this party. That's not on some bougie shit, either. There are just some places where it's not enough to be me."* (Thomas, 2017, p.7). In addition, the previous paragraph reveals how CRT points that perceptions of racism different depending on a person's social position. Therefore, the main character Starr struggles to balance between these contrasting realms confirms this, as her consciousness of racial injustice is figured by the different social spaces she engages. As Castle (2009) notes that people who face double consciousness usually face pressures from different environments and find themselves struggle to select between their societies. They can have " alienating and destructive effects on young men growing up black in the US" (Castle, 2009, p. 86).Individual racism in Thomas's *The Hate U Give* is clearly revealed when the main character Starr notices a white cop unjustly stops her friends Khalil's car, asking Khalil invasive and nonsensical questions such as "*Where are you two coming from tonight*?" or orders him to "*Get out of the car*." (Thomas, 2017, p.22) and in the end firing him, leading to Khalil's death. This behavior represents the idea that racism is not only systemic but also embedded in personal biases and prejudiced behaviors. The police officer's act reveals how personal attitudes denote to police brutality, underscoring how everyday racist practices support and persist systems of racial discrimination.Another shape of racism prevails in *The Hate U Give*, institutional racism which is clearly refers to the systemic policies and practices within social institutions that support racial unfairness and prejudice. So, in *The Hate U Give* this kind of racism is clearly reveal when Khalil is shot by the police officer, underscoring the racial unfairness rooted in law enforcement. The character Starr's reminiscence of her friend Natasha, who experienced a similar fate to Khalil, further highlights how these racial practices continue over the years. "I'm ten again, watching Natasha drop. An earsplitting scream emerges from my gut, explodes in my throat, and uses every inch of me to be heard" (Thomas, 2017, p.15). Therefore, the protagonist Starr in *The Hate U Give* reveals how institutional racism is deep- rooted in the societal structures, as she struggles both external pressure from the police forces and internal difficulties within her society while struggles for justice, unveiling the complex reality of systemic institutional racism. The theme of racism is a core idea in the novel *The Hate U Give* due to Angie Thomas concentrates on the extensive history of struggles confronted by Black societies. Thomas underscores on the severe consequences of police violence and racial bias, while also underscoring the power of activism. Further, Black novels such as *The Hate U Give* often represented historical realities that underscore how Black individuals were enslaved and prohibited of opportunities. So, Black novelists like Angie Thomas calls for to reveal evidence of the traumatic events experienced by Black individuals. These novelists often exhibit autobiographical stories depended on memories and personal experiences. On one hand, *The Hate U Give* shows the biases faced by both institutions and individuals, including the police and various organizations. Individual racism is demonstrated through

dehumanizing Black people and treating them as a lower status to white people. On the other hand, the African American society is also exposed to police force and brutality, as cops often use extensive force and show more aggressive act when interacting with Black individuals.

**4. African-American Feminist Approach**

The history of African American Feminism developed over two stages: during the abolitionist movement and the modern civil rights movement. During these enormous historical waves and the subsequent third wave, Mimes (2010) argues that the history of Black feminism is a progress of self- definition. By developing through these enormous historical waves, Black women did not just wait for rights to be allowed to them; they actively formed their own political identity, establishing a legacy of struggle that works independently of existing societal structures (p.4). Furthermore, using Black Feminism assists in disrupting the inherent racism in depicting Feminism as a movement precisely for white women. Additionally, the term Black feminism also evoke discomfort among African American women as it stimulates them to confront their own opinions on sexism and the exploitation faced by women. Thus, for Black Feminism to endure empowering and pertinent, it must shift away from the elusive goal of a perfect, consolidated image and instead embrace the variety of Black women's lives. Therefore, a movement that embraces the complexity of its members is inherently more flexible and capable of attaining real, lasting change than one that enforces rigid uniformity (Mims,2010, p.4-5).Padhi (2014) states that feminist movements in America gives a unique implications and experience for Black women, giving their feminism a distinct identity and meaning that differs from European feminist movements (p.39). Their struggle for justice have confronted both racial injustice and gender discrimination. This dual struggle gives African-American feminism a powerful, innate endurance that has contributed shape and maintain the movement over time. This is attributed to the feminists are preoccupied with changing political and social standards concerning matters about women's experiences, particularly within the black society. So, Black women's works are both a tool and a depiction for feminist contributions, profoundly embodying feminism innately. This is due to their work deeply "exhibits and constructs a Black women's literary tradition that is inherently feminist," (Padhi, 2014, p.39).The literature of African American is famous for its liberating themes and depictions. It shows the status of African Americans where they have been enslaved for a long time. Over time, African American women have often been marginalized from history because of racist ideological, seeking at preserving white dominance. These ideologies subjugated them in second hand position in society, depriving them recognition and power. Although, the African American feminists often obtain their own experiences reflect common social, political and economic matters confronted by the entire race, they become powerful examples as they speak about the liberation of their people, and mainly black women. Their efforts abound with experiences that are not only individual acts but also applicable to all the race of black people. In general, the aims they do are incorporated within the unifying goal of achieving better life and justice for their entire society.Although black American women have faced dual discrimination from both white dominance and male dominance within their own societies, so Black women have played a significance role in shaping feminism by focusing on their struggles. They synergized to evolve a comprehensive feminist theory that supports Black identity broadly while underscoring the specific difficulties faced by Black women as marginalized groups within that identity. Their efforts enhanced the feminist movement by addressing matters of race and gender intersectionality, giving new visions and voices that had formerly been ignored in mainstream feminism.Angie Thomas's The Hate U Give is not just a novel about racial injustice but also it is a deep examination of intersectional feminism. The main character, Starr Carter, moves a realm where her identity as a woman and her realm as a black individual are inseparable. So, The Hate U Give analyses Starr's journey, concentrating on moving from silence to activism and the recovery of female agency. At the beginning of the novel Starr is paralyzed by fear and silence. However, she ultimately recognizes that her voice is her only path to liberty. "What's the point of having a voice if you're gonna be silent in those moments you shouldn't be?" (Thomas, 2017, p.111). This quotation analyses Starr's first step towards feminist empowerment. Therefore, by selecting to speak, she defies the patriarchal and racial systems that advantage from the silence of marginalized women.Additionally, a significance part of feminist analysis is distinguishing between white feminism and intersectional feminism. The conflict between Starr and her friend Hailey exemplifies this division. Hailey represents a feminism that ignores race, whereas Starr represents a feminism that demands racial justice. This can be seen in tis quotation: "He was a drug dealer and a gangbanger," Hailey says. "Somebody was gonna kill him eventually." "Get over it?" I repeat.... One less drug dealer on the—" (Thomas, 2017, p.149).In the previous quotation Hailey's dismissal of Khalil's death reveals the failure of a feminism that does not account for race.

Starr's refusal to accept Hailey's gas lighting is a feminist act of self-preservation. She learns that real solidarity demands recognizing the unique dangers faced by black women.Feminism also underscores the significance of female role models and sisterhood. Starr's mother, Lisa, offers the moral and emotional outline for Starr's struggle. Starr's mother exemplifies a strong form of feminism. She teaches Starr that being a solid woman is not about being perfect or always winning; it is about consistent pursuit of justice. The mother-daughter bond is pillar of black feminist tradition. This condition is apparently shown in the following quotation: 'Sometimes you can do everything right and things will still go wrong. The key is to never stop doing right.'" She holds my hand the rest of the drive" (Thomas, 2017, p.71).The most intense part of the novel is the ultimate feminist moment because it shows a young woman taking full control of her life and her message. Starr finds her agency when she stands on top of the car during the protest, and starts being leader who uses her voice to demand change: My name is Starr. I'm the one who saw what happened to Khalil," I say into the bullhorn. "And it wasn't right." (Thomas, 2017, p.178).

**Conclusion**

Angie Thomas's *The Hate U Give* (2017) considers as a deep literary platform that seizures the complexities of living under overlapping systems of oppression. In this research, it has become evident that Starr Carter's journey is not just a coming-of-age story, but a sociological analysis of the interplay between race, gender, and class. In one hand, this study has revealed that the novel does not treat bias or racism as a series of isolated, individual prejudices, but also as a profoundly rooted institutionalized structure. The terrible death of Khalil and the subsequent legal proceedings validate the core tenets of CRT: that the legal and media systems often reinforce systemic white supremacy by criminalizing the victim and exonerating the perpetrator based on historical racial tropes. On the other hand, the research underscored the significance of Black Feminist thought through Starr's development. Starr faces a double burden, traversing a realm where she must fight both systematic marginalization and gendered silencing. Consequently, her changing from calculated silence to using her voice as her weapon demonstrates the empowerment of marginalized women who must continually negotiate their identities in both patriarchal spaces and white-dominated. Therefore, by synthesizing Critical Race Theory and Intersectional Feminism, this study concludes that confrontation begins with the reclamation of one's narrative. *The Hate U Give* encounters the reader to look beyond the code-switching and see the human cost of systemic inequality. Eventually, the novel confirms that social justice needs the dismantling of the very structures that confer privilege to some while dehumanizing others.

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