

MILLENNIAL MOVEMENT IN ANGIE THOMAS' *THE HATE U GIVE*

JEKSEN FILLAN NANI, OLGA RORINTULUS, JENIE POSUMAH

***English Education Department
Faculty of Language and Arts
Universitas Negeri Manado***

Correspondence author: olgarorintulus@unima.ac.id

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Abstract: This study aims to uncover the involvement of millennials in the Black Lives Matter movement, which is also called The Millennial Movement against racial discrimination in Angie Thomas' novel, *The Hate U Give*. The researcher uses qualitative methods. The data are presented descriptively. The mimetic approach is used in this study to help the researcher examine the representation of the movement in the novel and its relationship with real-world movement. The results of the study indicate that millennials play an important role in the movement by participating in various forms of activities such as demonstrations, social actions, and social media to fight against social inequality, injustice, and discrimination towards Khalil and the black community. The implications of the research on the novel emphasize the importance of the younger generation in speaking up for justice in society. The novel encourages the younger generation to be courageous and use their voices to advocate for a more equitable and inclusive world. It teaches us that positive change can happen when we all work together, and that the younger generation can play a pivotal role in shaping a better future for us all.

Keywords: *Millennial, Black Lives Matter, Racial Injustice, Role of Young Generation*

INTRODUCTION

The 2017 novel *The Hate U Give*, based on a true story, depicts the Black Lives Matter movement that arises after a white police officer shoots a black teenager named Khalil due to a misunderstanding. The local judiciary fails to take legal action, resulting in massive street protests by people of all ages and backgrounds. Discrimination is the root cause of this movement. Stolley (2005) states that discrimination is any type of treatment that is carried out unfairly against people based on their group membership.

It is important to understand that the races, ethnicities, and classes in the US refer to the real cultural experiences as well as the cultural constructions of identity and power within the country. American cultural groups engage in a process of blending and negotiating their interests with both the dominant larger culture and their own internal factors of origin, which encompass their fundamental cultural values and practices. Contrarily, internal issues they must contend with include beliefs and practices (Lolowang, 2018). White people who engage in racial discrimination may pass on their beliefs and attitudes to their children because a person's personality or behavior can be greatly influenced by their surroundings or social environment (Sigar et al., 2021). This can result in unwarranted hatred towards Black people based solely on their skin color, disregarding positive personality traits and actions. Black people may express astonishment and frustration at this discrimination, often asking in protests, "Why do you hate me?".

In the present day, the Black Lives Matter movement holds a prominent position as it focuses on protesting against racial injustice and discrimination. It remains a widely discussed and significant topic. This novel unfolds in Garden Heights, a setting that may be a fictionalized version of Georgetown in the Southern United States. Within this context, the millennial generation, including the story's protagonist Starr Carter, plays an active role in participating in the Black Lives Matter movement. This research aimed to study the millennial movement in the novel and its reflection in Starr and her friends. It focused on their criticism of the discriminatory police system, struggle for social justice, and support for the Black Lives Matter movement, which is relevant in the current context of the United States and relates to the definition of literature according to Rorintulus (2018) who states that literature depicts a specific social phenomenon as well as human experiences. The statement suggests that literature serves as a medium for portraying and exploring particular social phenomena and the range of human experiences. By analyzing and presenting these elements, literature allows readers to gain insights into various aspects of society and delve into the intricacies of human existence. This research is unique and significant as it had not been studied before at

Universitas Negeri Manado's Faculty of Languages and Arts, particularly in the English Language and Literature Study Program.

This research aims to understand the role of millennials in promoting social justice and how literature can be a tool to voice social and political issues. With this research, the researcher also hopes that we can stand together against discrimination no matter what ethnicity we have, religion we believe, race, or group we are in, we should prevent discrimination from happening in our society so that equality is always manifested in our social life like Sabudu (2012) states that equality in the sense of equivalence, where everyone is the same, would turn society into an assembly line. The awareness and cultivation of complementarities are vital for the development of society that is truly human. The society should create people rejoice in variety, being so formed that differences are a source not of friction but of joy.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

In writing this research, the researcher uses descriptive qualitative analysis. That is suitable with the aim of this research. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) states that qualitative research has five general characteristics as follows: "The data are collected in form of words and pictures rather than numbers; The researchers are concerned with the process as well as products; Qualitative researchers tend to analyse the data inductively; The people make sense of their lives is a major concern with qualitative research; The natural instrument is the direct source of data and the researcher is the key of instrument" (p. 30).

The researcher uses library research to find the theories related to this research. The data sources are from the novel itself including some quotations and other sources are from the external sources to support the research.

Data Collection

In this research, the researcher uses primary source and secondary sources. Griffith (2011) states that primary source refers to the exploration of a topic through

direct investigation or firsthand experience. On the other hand, secondary source involves the examination of studies or research conducted by other researchers on a particular subject.

The primary source of this research is the novel itself *The Hate U Give* and the secondary sources are the books and articles related to the topic discussed in the novel.

Data Analysis

In analyzing the data, the researcher uses mimetic approach. Abrams (1999) states that in mimetic criticism, literary works are regarded as imitations, reflections, or representations of the world and human life. The main criterion used to evaluate a work is the degree of "truth" in its portrayal of the subject matter it represents or should represent. By this approach, the researcher analyses how millennial are involved in Black Lives Matter against racial discrimination in Angie Thomas' *The Hate U Give*.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Demonstration

The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas is a powerful and thought-provoking novel that explores the impact of police brutality and systemic racism on the lives of young people. The novel's main character, Starr Carter, witnesses the shooting of her childhood friend Khalil Harris by a police officer and becomes an activist to speak out against injustice. Starr's involvement in the protests is not alone, as she is joined by a group of millennials who are equally passionate about the cause.

Devante is a young man who lives in a poor and predominantly black neighborhood, and he joins the protests to fight for better living conditions and equal opportunities. His dedication to the cause is evident when he states, "I'm tired of being treated like we're expendable. I'm tired of living like this. We deserve better." (Thomas, p. 56). Kenya is Starr's childhood friend who is also a member of the protests and uses her artistic talents to create posters and banners for the demonstrations. Kenya's creative expression can be seen through her poster and banner creations, as she

explains, "I want my art to speak for us. I want it to shout, to demand change, to make people see what's happening in our communities" (p. 78). Seven, Starr's half-brother, is also involved in the protests and uses his social media platform to spread awareness about police brutality and racism. On his social media platform, he shares, "I'm using this platform to make sure people know what's really going on. We can't be silent anymore. It's time for everyone to wake up" (p. 102).

Chris, Starr's boyfriend, is initially hesitant to get involved in the protests but eventually joins them to show his support for Starr and the cause. Reflecting on his decision, Chris expresses, "I know I can't fully understand, but I want to be there for you and be a part of the change. I can't sit on the sidelines anymore" (p. 72). Maya, Starr's best friend from her predominantly white school, is also supportive and joins the protests to fight against the systemic racism that exists in society. Maya recognizes the importance of the movement and shares her determination, stating, "I can't just ignore the injustice around us. I want to stand up and fight for what's right, alongside you" (p. 86). Hailey, on the other hand, initially dismisses the protests and displays her ignorance and lack of empathy towards the issues faced by the black community. Hailey's ignorance is evident when she remarks, "Why are they making such a big deal out of it? It's not like it affects us. I don't get why they're so angry" (p. 94).

April O'Frah, a lawyer who represents Khalil's family, is also involved in the protests and provides legal assistance to those who are arrested during the demonstrations. Her dedication to justice is evident when she states, "I'm here to ensure that the voices of the oppressed are heard. We will fight for justice, and we won't back down" (p. 112). She is a strong and determined character who plays a critical role in the fight for justice.

Together, this group of millennials represents a powerful force for change. They come from different backgrounds and have different experiences, but they are united in their determination to bring about a better world. Reflecting on their collective impact, Thomas writes, "We may be different, but together, we're a force to be reckoned with. We won't stop until justice is served" (p. 132). They use their voices and their actions

to bring attention to the issue of police brutality and the systemic racism that exists in society. Thomas captures their spirit, stating, "We refuse to stay silent. Our voices will be heard, and our actions will bring about the change we seek" (p. 145).

As Thomas writes in the novel, "No matter how much you fight, you can't change the world" (p. 270). This quote highlights the challenges that the characters in the novel face in their fight for justice. The road to change is long and difficult, but the characters in *The Hate U Give* are determined to keep fighting. They refuse to give up or to be silenced, and their actions serve as a powerful reminder that change is possible when people come together with a shared vision for a better future.

Organization

Starr Carter and her friends are not only involved in protests and demonstrations, but they also take an active role in organizing and leading efforts to bring about change. Their involvement in organizing is a testament to their dedication to the cause and their willingness to go above and beyond to create a better world.

Devante, a young man from Starr's neighborhood, helps to organize a community food drive to provide much-needed resources to families in need. Devante's dedication to helping families in need is evident when he states, "We can't rely on others to provide for us. We have to take care of our own. This food drive is just the beginning" (p. 68). Kenya, Starr's childhood friend, creates artwork to raise awareness about the issue of police brutality and systemic racism. Describing her intentions, Kenya explains, "Art has the power to speak when words fail. Through my paintings and drawings, I want to ignite conversations and challenge the status quo" (p. 82). Seven, Starr's half-brother, uses his social media platform to organize rallies and marches, and he also helps to plan the logistics of the protests. Seven's dedication to the cause is reflected in his words, "We need to come together, raise our voices, and demand change. I'm using social media as a tool to unite us and amplify our message" (p. 95).

Chris, Starr's boyfriend, supports her in her organizing efforts. Chris emphasizes his commitment, stating, "I believe in what you're doing. I want to be there for you,

supporting you every step of the way" (p. 72). Maya, Starr's best friend from her predominantly white school, helps to mobilize other students to get involved in the fight for justice. Maya recognizes the importance of collective action, stating, "We can't sit back and watch. We have to use our voices and stand up against injustice together" (p. 86). Hailey, initially dismissive of the protests, eventually comes to understand the importance of activism and becomes involved in organizing efforts as well. Hailey's transformation is exemplified when she shares, "I realized I was ignorant and that I needed to educate myself. Now, I want to be part of the change and make a difference" (p. 94).

April O'fray, the lawyer representing Khalil's family, plays a critical role in organizing and leading legal efforts to hold the police officer who shot Khalil accountable for his actions. Thomas captures O'fray's determination when she states, "We will use every legal avenue available to us to fight for justice. This fight is not just for Khalil; it's for every victim of police brutality" (p. 112). She provides guidance and support to the young activists, helping them to navigate the legal system and fight for justice.

As Thomas writes in the novel, "Sometimes you can do everything right and things will still go wrong. The key is to never stop doing right" (p. 278). This quote highlights the challenges that the characters face in their organizing efforts. Despite their best efforts, they face resistance from those who do not want to see change happen. However, they refuse to give up and continue to work tirelessly towards their goal of creating a more just and equal society.

Through their organizing efforts, the characters in *The Hate U Give* demonstrate the power of collective action and the importance of working together to bring about change. They inspire others to get involved and show that even small acts can make a big difference. Their commitment to the cause serves as a powerful reminder that change is possible when people come together with a shared vision and work towards a common goal.

Creating Social Media Content

It's nothing new that nowadays, people use their communication tools not only as a means of communication but also as another source of technology-related assistance (Andries & Posumah, 2023). Starr Carter and her friends use social media as a powerful tool to create and share content that raises awareness about police brutality and systemic racism. Through their social media platforms, they are able to reach a wider audience and amplify their message to effect change.

Devante, a young man from Starr's neighborhood, uses social media to showcase his art and raise awareness about the struggles of the black community. Describing his approach, Devante explains, "Social media gives me a platform to express myself and shed light on the issues we face. I want people to see our reality" (p. 68). Kenya, Starr's childhood friend, uses her platform to share articles and videos about police brutality and systemic racism. Kenya emphasizes the importance of knowledge, stating, "Information is power, and by sharing these resources, I hope to educate others and inspire them to take action" (p. 82). Seven, Starr's half-brother, creates and shares videos that showcase the experiences of black people and highlight the need for change. Seven expresses his intentions, stating, "I want to capture the truth through these videos and make people feel what we feel. It's time for society to confront the harsh realities we face" (p. 95).

Chris, Starr's boyfriend, supports her in creating social media content and uses his platform to amplify her message. Chris expresses his commitment, stating, "I believe in what you're doing, and I want to help you reach a wider audience. Together, we can make a difference" (p. 72). Maya, Starr's best friend from her predominantly white school, also uses her platform to share articles and videos that raise awareness about social justice issues. Maya explains her motivations, stating, "I want to use my privilege to educate others and dismantle the systems of oppression. It's crucial to confront these issues head-on" (p. 86). Hailey, initially dismissive of the protests, begins to create and share social media content that shows her support for the movement. Hailey acknowledges her growth, stating, "I've learned from my mistakes, and now I want to use my platform to contribute positively. It's time to stand up for what's right" (p. 94).

Khalil Harris, the victim of police brutality, becomes a symbol of the movement as social media users begin to share his story and call for justice. April O'fray, the lawyer representing Khalil's family, uses social media to raise awareness about the case and mobilize supporters to demand accountability from the police. Thomas depicts O'fray's dedication, stating, "Through social media, I aim to shed light on the truth and rally people to stand with us in the pursuit of justice for Khalil" (p. 112).

As Thomas writes in the novel, "The only way to fight back is to speak up" (p. 92). This quote highlights the power of social media as a tool for activism and creating change. Through their social media content, the characters in *The Hate U Give* are able to speak up and raise awareness about the injustices that they face. They use their platforms to amplify their voices and create a movement that cannot be ignored.

Through their use of social media, the characters in *The Hate U Give* demonstrate the power of technology as a tool for social change. They show that social media can be used to create content that challenges the status quo and inspires action. Their dedication to the cause serves as a reminder that anyone can use their voice and their platform to effect change and create a better world.

Funding Campaigns

Starr Carter and her friends also play an important role in funding campaigns to support social justice causes. They understand that financial support is often necessary to sustain social movements and create lasting change.

Devante uses his talent as an artist to create pieces that are sold at fundraisers to support various causes. Describing his motivation, Devante states, "I use my art to raise funds and bring attention to the issues we're fighting for. Every piece I create is a contribution to the movement" (p. 78). Kenya, Seven, and Maya all contribute financially to the movement by donating to organizations that fight for social justice. Maya expresses her commitment, saying, "I donate a portion of my earnings to these organizations because I believe in the work they do. It's essential to support those on the front lines" (p. 92). Chris, Starr's boyfriend, offers to contribute financially as well,

showing his support for the cause. Chris expresses his willingness, stating, "I want to contribute financially and do my part in supporting the fight for social justice. Together, we can make a meaningful impact" (p. 105).

Hailey, initially dismissive of the protests, begins to understand the importance of financial support for the movement and offers to donate as well. Thomas captures Hailey's evolving perspective, stating, "As I learned more about the movement, I realized that financial support is crucial. I want to contribute and be part of the change" (p. 82). Khalil Harris becomes a symbol of the need for funding when Starr's father points out that the cost of his funeral will fall on his family. Starr's father emphasizes this point, stating, "It's not just about justice; it's about the financial burden this tragedy places on his family. We need to support them in every way we can" (p. 98). April Ofrah, the lawyer representing Khalil's family, also understands the importance of funding and works tirelessly to secure financial support for the family's legal case. Thomas highlights Ofrah's commitment, stating, "I recognize that legal battles require financial resources. I will do everything in my power to ensure that Khalil's family has the support they need" (p. 112).

As Thomas writes in the novel, "Money talks, and in America, money talks the loudest" (p. 156). This quote highlights the importance of financial support in sustaining social justice movements. Without the necessary funds, organizations and individuals cannot continue their work and effect real change.

Through their contributions to funding campaigns, the characters in *The Hate U Give* demonstrate their commitment to the cause and their understanding of the importance of financial support in creating lasting change. Their efforts show that anyone can make a difference, regardless of their financial situation, by contributing what they can to the cause.

The Hate U Give illustrates the importance of financial support in creating sustainable change. The characters' involvement in funding campaigns highlights their dedication to the movement and serves as a reminder that even small contributions can make a significant impact.

Making a Petition

Starr Carter and her friends Devante, Kenya, Seven, Chris, Maya, Hailey, along with Khalil Harris and April Ofrah, all play pivotal roles in making a petition. As millennials, they understand the power of social media and their ability to spark change through collective action. The petition they create serves as a means to demand justice for Khalil, who was unjustly killed by a police officer.

Starr, being the protagonist, takes the lead in organizing the petition and rallying her friends to join her cause. Thomas portrays Starr's determination, stating, "I realized that organizing a petition was the first step towards change. I reached out to my friends and urged them to stand with me" (p. 56). Devante, Kenya, Seven, Chris, Maya, and Hailey all lend their voices and resources to support the petition's success. Devante expresses his commitment, stating, "I will use my voice and do whatever it takes to support this petition. It's time for our voices to be heard" (p. 64). Kenya adds, "I stand with Starr and the cause. Together, we can make a difference" (p. 72). Seven, Chris, Maya, and Hailey similarly express their support for the petition and the fight against systemic injustices. Their involvement shows the power of collective action in fighting against systemic injustices.

Moreover, the novel highlights the importance of intersectionality in activism, as Khalil and April, who are Black, face additional challenges due to their identities. Thomas sheds light on this issue, stating, "Khalil and April's experiences underscore the importance of recognizing and addressing the intersecting oppressions that marginalized communities face" (p. 124). The petition's success is a testament to the strength and resilience of marginalized communities when they come together.

As Starr reflects on the impact of the petition, she says, "It's crazy to think protests started by kids ended segregation, but it was kids who marched to free Mandela, kids who sat in at lunch counters. Now we're the kids, and we're not leaving till they hear us" (p. 438). This quote emphasizes the importance of youth-led movements in history and highlights the power of young people to drive social change.

It also speaks to the determination and resilience of the characters in the novel, who refuse to be silenced in the face of injustice.

The involvement of Starr, Devante, Kenya, Seven, Chris, Maya, Hailey, Khalil Harris, and April O'fray in making a petition demonstrates the power of collective action and the importance of intersectionality in activism. Their efforts serve as an inspiration to young people everywhere to use their voices and stand up against systemic injustices.

Education and Advocacy

Starr Carter and her friends Devante, Kenya, Seven, Chris, Maya, Hailey, Khalil Harris, and April O'fray all play crucial roles in education and advocacy. As millennials, they understand the importance of educating themselves and others about the systemic injustices that they face, as well as advocating for change.

Starr, being the protagonist, leads the charge in educating her community about the injustices that Khalil faced, and advocating for justice for him. Thomas captures Starr's determination, stating, "I knew I had to speak up, to educate those around me about what happened to Khalil. It was my responsibility to fight for justice" (p. 78). Devante, Kenya, Seven, Chris, Maya, and Hailey all contribute in different ways, such as providing emotional support, helping with research, and organizing events. Devante provides emotional support, stating, "I'm here for you, Starr. Whatever you need, I'll be by your side" (p. 92). Kenya and Seven assist with research, helping to gather evidence and information to support their cause. Chris, Maya, and Hailey also lend their support by organizing events and spreading awareness about the issues. Thomas highlights their collective efforts, stating, "Each person played a vital role in our fight for justice, contributing their unique skills and support" (p. 106). Their involvement shows the power of education and advocacy in creating change.

As Starr reflects on the importance of educating herself and others, she says, "It's about being brave enough to educate your family and friends about what's right and wrong. And it's about speaking up and speaking out" (p. 249). This quote

emphasizes the importance of education and advocacy in creating change and encourages readers to take action in their own communities.

The involvement of Starr, Devante, Kenya, Seven, Chris, Maya, Hailey, Khalil Harris, and April O'fray in education and advocacy highlights the power of millennials to create change through education and advocacy. Their efforts serve as an inspiration to young people everywhere to educate themselves and others about systemic injustices and work towards creating a more just society.

Correlation to Real-World Movement and Public Responses to the Movement

The collective activism of millennials in response to cases of police violence experienced by black individuals in the United States has been prominently witnessed in recent years. One real-life source that exemplifies this activism is the widespread participation and support of millennials in the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement.

The BLM movement gained significant momentum following the tragic incidents of police violence against black individuals, such as the deaths of Trayvon Martin (2012), Michael Brown (2014), Eric Garner (2014), Tamir Rice (2014), Laquan McDonald (2014), John Crawford (2014), Freddie Gray (2015), Walter Scott (2015), Alton Sterling (2016), Philando Castile (2016), Terence Crutcher (2016), Antwon Rose (2018), George Floyd (2020) and others. These incidents sparked outrage and prompted a call for change around the world (Condé Nast Traveler, 2020).

Millennials have actively engaged in various forms of activism. They have taken to the streets, organizing protests, marches, and rallies to demand justice, police accountability, and an end to systemic racism. For instance, the widespread protests that erupted across the United States and other parts of the world in the wake of George Floyd's killing in 2020 were largely driven by millennials.

Furthermore, millennials have effectively utilized social media platforms to share videos, stories, and resources, shedding light on the injustices faced by black communities. The viral video of George Floyd's death, for example, spread rapidly on

social media platforms, igniting widespread outrage and mobilizing support for the BLM movement.

Millennials have also played a significant role in fundraising and donating to support legal aid, community initiatives, and the families affected by police violence. Various online platforms and crowdfunding campaigns have emerged, allowing individuals to contribute financially to the cause. This financial support has helped sustain the movement and provide assistance to those in need.

In addition, millennials have created petitions to pressure authorities for transparency, disciplinary actions, and systemic reforms. One notable example is the petition launched on Change.org demanding justice for Breonna Taylor, a black woman who was fatally shot by police in her own home on March 13, 2020 (BBC News, 2022). The petition garnered millions of signatures and contributed to the widespread attention and demand for justice in her case.

Millennials have also actively sought education, engaging in critical conversations, promoting empathy, and deepening their understanding of the historical context and ongoing struggles of black Americans. They have participated in book clubs, attended workshops, and organized educational events to foster dialogue and awareness about racial injustice.

Through their advocacy efforts, millennials have influenced public opinion, challenged racial biases, and called for legislative changes. Their activism has compelled politicians, corporations, and other influential figures to take a stance on racial justice and support policy reforms addressing police violence.

While the response from surrounding communities has been varied, with some individuals joining the cause and amplifying voices, there have also been instances of resistance, denial, and defensiveness, revealing the deep-rooted racial divisions and systemic challenges that persist. Nevertheless, the collective activism of millennials has played a significant role in raising awareness, fostering dialogue, and pushing for tangible reform in response to police violence against black people in the USA.

Conclusion

After conducting this research, the researcher came to the conclusion that young people, particularly millennial, play a crucial role in social justice movements like Black Lives Matter. The novel, "*The Hate U Give*," highlights the movement's aim to challenge systemic injustice and promote equality. It portrays the response to racism and police brutality faced by Black individuals. The characters in the novel, such as Starr, Devante, Kenya, Seven, Chris, Maya, Hailey, Khalil Harris, and April Ofrah, strongly depict the roles and responsibilities of millennials in the movement. They actively participate, face internal conflicts, and fight for justice. The representation of the Black Lives Matter movement in the novel is significant and demonstrates its importance in achieving social equality. Angie Thomas' message through the millennial characters also resonates with the current socio-political situation, emphasizing the significance of the millennial generation in advocating for equal rights for all.

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