

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of study

On April 2020, two Georgia high school students were expelled for posting a racist video. The video shows us two students, a girl and a boy who were recording video in front of a bathroom mirror. They tried to follow cooking challenge video that went viral on TikTok by making Black people as a joke. They told people how to make a real Nigger (they truly wrote “Nigger instead of “N-word”) as the “recipe” and mentioned all negative stereotypes about African Americans as “ingredients” (Padilla, 2020).

Two students were making jokes by saying negative stereotypes such as “we have Black”, “don’t have a dad”, “rob people, specifically whites”, “go to jail”, “eats watermelon and fried chicken” and still many more. Further, Friedman argued if he was deeply disappointed by Carrollton City School's decision that prefers to expel students instead of educating them. Prejudice is born of ignorance and replacing ignorance with knowledge is precisely a mission that is supposed to do by the public school as an educator (Friedman, 2020). It was supported by a previous study if racism is not being applied in educational administration programs (Young, 2000).

Mcwhorter (2019) explained the new form of racist today means not only burning a cross on someone’s lawn or even asking someone to go home but also

telling someone what their unpleasant feels about their race or to be a part of one race. It clearly portrayed on previous viral racist TikTok video that was made by 2 Georgia students.

PEW Research Center (2019) conducted an online survey about current racism in America that was taken by 6,637 adults of Americans. Two of survey results show us the facts of since Trump was elected, most Americans (65% of 6.637) said the practice of expressing racist has become more common for people in America and they (45% of 6.637) also said it has become more acceptable to be racist today.

“The acts of oppression are not just immediately harmful; they carry long-term effects for over fifteen generations” (Feagin, 2001). Racial oppression is designed to deny, disregard, and delegitimize a certain social group in which makes their status beneath the oppressor group (Allen (1997) in Kartika, O, 2017). In the U.S, racial oppression often will be manifested through Individual racism, Institutional racism, Cultural and Linguistic racism, Environmental racism, Militarism as applied racism, Economic racism and Health system racism (The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond in Lawrence & Keleher, 2014).

Racism is race prejudice plus power (The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond in Lawrence & Keleher, 2014). According to Australian Human Rights Commission (2014), racism takes many forms including prejudice, discrimination, or hatred directed at someone because of their colour, ethnicity, or national origin. Racial jokes can be identified as racism practice too. According to ADLO, they

defined Racism as the belief that a particular race is superior or inferior to another. It can be also stated as the belief that another person is less than human — because of skin colour, language, customs, and place of birth, or any factor that supposedly reveals the basic nature of that person (Anti-Defamation League Organization, 2020).

“Being Black in the United States means always having to be prepared for anti-Black actions by White in most places and at many times of the day, week, month, or year. Being Black means living with various types of racial discrimination from cradle to grave” (Feagin in Burt, 2012).

“In the United States, racist thought, emotion and action are structured into the rhythms of every day of life” (Feagin, 2014). In opinion of Feagin, he viewed Racism is economically and systemically constructed (2001). Feagin (2014) believed racism is systemic and webbed across all sectors of society. He adds, Whites still dominate almost every sector including economy, resource, politic, education, and law. To make it worse, police officer violence against African Americans still happens and it can be seen in recurring instances of police malpractice and brutality.

“Systemic racism was not an accident of history, but it was intentionally created by powerful White Americans and systemic racism can lead to racial inequality” (Feagin, 2006). As Feagin (2010) argues “systemic racism is not just about the construction of racial images, attitudes, and identities. It is, even more, to create, develop, and maintain White privilege, economic wealth, socio-politic



power over four centuries. It is about hierarchical interaction and dominance. It is also about the racial hierarchy between an oppressor and an oppressed (Feagin, 2010).

Feagin (2006) develops a theory of systemic racism to interpret the highly racialized character and development of society in the U.S. “Like a hologram, each major part of U.S. society—the economy, politics, education, religion, the family—reflects the fundamental realities of systemic racism” (Feagin, 2019). Feagin (2006) stated that White domination is all about wealth, status, and privilege generations at the expense of racialized “other” by Whites.

“Six-features of systemic racism are including 1) White racial frame & its imbedded ideology 2) Alienated social relation (control & loss of control) on systemic racism 3) constant struggle and resistance 4) racial hierarchy with divergent group interest 5) White unjust enrichment 6) unjust impoverishment and other costs for the oppressed and related racial domination through systemic racism theory” (Feagin, 2006).

According to Amazon UK (2017), *The Hate U Give* is Angie Thomas’s debut novel, but surprisingly, it got lots of awards such as No. 1 New York Times Bestseller, Winner of the Waterstones Children’s Book Prize 2018, Winner of the Children’s Book of the Year 2018 at the British Book Awards, A *Teen Vogue* Best YA Book of the Year, etc. SparkNotes Editors (2005) stated that *The Hate U Give* novel tells about Starr Carter who is struggling with racism, police brutality, and two weird worlds that she should live at the same time (She lives in poor Black

neighborhood and attend to prep White school that was dominated by wealthy White students).

The Hate U Give tells about Starr Carter's life. Since her best friend Khalil was shot by the cop, Starr should be the sole witness over Khalil's death. They were driving together when the incident happened. Starr is overwhelmed by the pressure of testifying before a grand jury and the responsibility of speaking out in Khalil's memory. At the same time, she was also so stressed because the carefully built-up boundary between Starr's two worlds begins to crumble. She lives all-days with her Black family and spends her school days at a private, majority-White school. She really lives in two worlds for years (Diamond, 2017).

Angie Thomas is well-known author for Young Adults genre. She is 29-year-old woman from Jackson who has written novel The Hate U Give. The novel is telling about the most sensitive issues in America today: race, privilege, and the killings of unarmed Black people at the hands of the cop. Angie's genre novel is a contemporary Young Adult (YA), the genre that is loved and admired by many people for the last years. The background story of The Hate U Give was based on Thomas's own childhood, growing up poor in the predominantly Black Georgetown neighborhood of Jackson, Mississippi. The incident of Khalil who is murdered by the cop also was based on a true incident that Thomas had experienced. (Hirsch, 2017).

There are several previous related studies of this research. A study was conducted by Kartika, O. D. and Soelistyarini, T. D. (2017) entitled Racial

Oppression against African American Slaves in Harriette Gillem Robinet's *Forty Acres and Maybe a Mule*. The researchers tried to examine how systemic racism works and relates to White economic domination in the novel. This result of the study showed how Pascal as the main character and other Black characters experienced many kinds of racial oppression that led to stereotypes, prejudice, and marginalization that further reinforced the roles of the White as a powerful oppressor and the Black as the oppressed. Six-features on systemic racism theory by Joe R. Feagin were applied to examine the study.

The second study was conducted by Yanti, N. R. (2019) entitled *Starr Carter's brave decisions against Institutional Racism in Angie Thomas' The Hate U Give*. The researcher tried to find out how the practice of Institutional racism occurs in the novel and the way Starr has to deal with it. The study found that there are five parts of institutional racism portrayed in this novel, those are ignorance toward Black Panthers' Ten-Point Program, the shooting in license checking, physical punishment in cop patrol, justifying White officer in detective investigation, and injustice in grand jury announcement. The acts that show Starr's brave decisions against institutional racism are telling the truth about brutality murder by the police in a TV interview and joining the protest chant. The result of the study can be concluded that institutional racism that has been done by cop institution toward Black people is inhumane and this experience makes Starr decides to keep fighting to get justice for Black people in America. Institutional racism theory by African Americans criticism and Library research theory by Laurence Neuman was applied to this study.



The last study was conducted by Yunitri, N. W., Rajeg, I. M., and Maharani, S.A. (2019) entitled Racism in The Novel The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas. The researchers tried to find out the extrinsic elements that were exposed in the novel and to analyze how the story reflected the racism in America. The result of the study showed the five extrinsic elements namely; Biography, Psychology, Society, Ideas, and Other Forms of Art were found in the novel, and the author was influenced by the extrinsic elements in writing the novel. Furthermore, it was found that racism in America was reflected through a realistic depiction written based on the real phenomenon that happened in America. The extrinsic theory by Wellek and Warren and the sociological approach by Laurensen and Swingewood were applied to this study. Both studies above were conducted using The Hate U Give novel as the data.

By developing the previous related studies, this study does not investigate the extrinsic factors of racism or the practice of Institutional racism that happened in the novel but aim to reveal how the systemic racism works in Angie Thomas' *The Hate U Give* novel. The study applies six-features of systemic racism theory by Feagin.

The theory will reveal the work of systemic racism in The Hate U Give by seeing how White framing relates to racial prejudice, how the placement and treatment of Black people in the U.S society should be based on racial hierarchy, how Black people should response the act of racism, how Black people is supposed to control their own lives, but in reality Whites still control all aspect in

society including Black people and color people's lives in the U.S. How systemic racism affects unjust White enrichment and unjust Black unjust impoverishment.

## **1.2 Research Question**

How the systemic racism works in *The Hate U Give* novel by Angie Thomas?

## **1.3 Purpose of the study**

The main purpose of this research is to reveal how the systemic racism works in Angie Thomas' *The Hate U Give* novel by applying six-features of systemic racism theory by Joe R. Feagin.

## **1.4 Scope of the study**

This research focuses on narrations that indicate the practice of racial oppression. The oppression theory by Joe R. Feagin, specifically six-features of systemic racism are used to reveal how the systemic racism works in Angie Thomas's *The Hate U Give* novel.

## **1.5 Significance of the study**

The result of this study is expected to give deeper understanding about racial oppression concept and systemic racism theory. For researchers, this study could be the reference source if the researcher wants to conduct another further research about how the works of systemic racism in the U.S. society by applying Feagin's six-features of systemic racism theory.