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Cultural Hegemony in Angie Thomas' *The Hate U Give* (2017)

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Dedications

I dedicate my dissertation to my family and my friends. A special feeling of gratitude to my parents, my mother NADIA and my father ABDERRAHMAN whose words of encouragement helped me accomplish this work. My sister DIHIA, and my brothers BELKACEM, KOUCEILA, and ROUWAD. To my best friends, TARIK OUARAB and ALI SADOUNI who were present and supported me in the most difficult moments. Last but not least, to the most special woman I have ever met MERIEM ATROUN, who has always supported and encouraged me. I am infinitely grateful for your care and support.

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Abstract

The present study is an effort to apply the Postcolonialist theory of Cultural Hegemony, tackling the contemporary author Angie Thomas novel *The Hate U Give* as a case-study. It aims at analyzing the racial discrimination black people encounter in post-slavery American society, as well as identifying the aspects of hegemony to which they are subjugated. It introduces the reader to the theory of Cultural Hegemony as defined by Antonio Gramsci, and explains how Racial discrimination and state institutions are used as hegemonic tools to dominate minorities, in this particular case, the African American community.

Key Words: Angie Thomas, The Hate U Give, Postcolonialist, post-slavery, Cultural Hegemony, Racial Discrimination.

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Introduction

Post-colonial theory is one of the major theories used in literary criticism. It is a body of thoughts primarily concerned with the understanding of colonialism, and Post-colonialist societies. It looks at issues such as power, culture, religion, economics, politics, and how these elements work in relation to colonial dominance, as well as the effects of colonization on “subaltern” cultures and societies, and those societies’ response. In literature, Postcolonial critics examine the content of literary texts, focusing on the context in which they were written, and reveal the colonial ideologies concealed within. Post-colonial theory is not only pertinent for historical literary texts; it is also relevant for contemporary writings since it addresses themes such as cultural dominance, quest of identity, and racism. Themes that author Angie Thomas deals with, in her novel entitled *The Hate U Give*. The title refers to *THUG*, or Thug Life (The Hate U Give Little Infants F***s Everybody) which is a concept coined by the late American rapper Tupac Shakur. It is an acronym for a vicious cycle of societal violence, and racial discrimination to which African Americans are subjugated. The novel relates the story of a young black teenage girl who grapples with racism, police brutality, and activism after witnessing her black friend murder by a white police officer.

Cultural Hegemony is a very interesting idea of Postcolonial theory that applies heavily to *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas. As described by Marx, and later on developed by Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci, Cultural Hegemony is the domination or control exercised by a dominant class over a society, using different means to retain power so that their domination gets accepted. Dr. Lisa Cole in “What is Cultural Hegemony?” explains that Cultural Hegemony refers to domination or rule maintained through ideological or cultural means. It is usually achieved through social institutions, which allows those in power to strongly influence the values, expectations, and behavior of the rest of society. This domination is done and maintained through various state apparatuses such as the media, the press, entertainment

industry, and the various institutions attached to power such as schools, political parties; scientific, academic, and artistic institutions. When English translation of Gramsci's works (mostly written in the 1920s and 1930s) got available in the 1970s, scholars enthusiastically welcomed his concept of Cultural Hegemony as an important tool for cultural analysis and social criticism.

The 20th century witnessed the rise of the United States as a hegemonic power culturally, economically, and militarily. Even before the internet, America's film, television, entertainment, and other cultural industries were the world's largest, and most exported products in the world. However, talking about American culture cannot be properly done without raising the racial issue, which is a persistent problem in American society. Different races have been part of the creation as well as the history of the United States, and all of them at one time or another were victims of discrimination, harassment, and abuse. Race relations are subject to debate since they go against all the principles, and moral values that the United States fought for during the two World Wars, such as democracy, freedom, and equality.

The last century has seen the proliferation of segregation, lynching, as well as the frequent murders of black Americans especially in southern states. Events of extreme violence against black people took place. For instance, the Red Summer of 1919, where several American cities were destroyed with violence against blacks, and the massacre of African Americans that took place in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Harper Barns in *Never Been A Time (2008)* explains that violence against black people did not take place only in Oklahoma but spread to other states. He declares "violent racial riots against blacks due to the labor tensions broke out in East St. Louis, Illinois and Houston, Texas"(4). The situation has not changed much in the contemporary era despite the abolition of segregationist laws. Racial tensions and brutality have just changed shape. For instance, it manifests through policing. Police brutality has reached an alarming level resulting in hundreds of black victims, the latest being that of George

Floyd in 2020, which caused the world to explode in grief and anger. Thousands of people have protested in Minneapolis, in cities across the US and around the world in response to Floyd's death.

It is a similar event that inspired Angie Thomas to write *The Hate U Give*, coming as a reaction to the murder of an unarmed American black man by a white police officer. Through a story inspired by her own experience, Thomas portrays the apprehension and distress that black communities experience on a daily basis. The novel deals mainly with the issue of racism, and examines how society uses stereotypes of black people to justify violence and prejudice against them.

The murder of a young black man by a white police officer leads to an exploration of institutional racism in the judicial system. *The Hate U Give* moves the reader to understand the struggle black people go through to get justice, and offers an authentic view of the American society.

2. Biography of Angie Thomas and Summary of *The Hate U Give*

2.1 Biography of Angie Thomas

Angie Thomas was born in 1988, and grew up in Jackson, Mississippi. She lives in the suburbs of Georgetown. She holds a B.F.A. in Creative Writing from Belhaven University in Jackson, Mississippi. Attracted by literature very early, she wrote a short story entitled "The Hate U Give" in 2009 after the death of Oscar Grant, a young black man killed by the police. In 2015 she was secretary to a bishop, and at the same time as she worked she took up her short story to make a novel for young people. While her previous attempts to get published have always been unsuccessful, she submitted her novel to a non-profit organization "We Need Diverse Books" which rewarded her work by winning the Walter Dean Myers Grant. Her novel was published by HarperCollins in 2017. It was a finalist for the National Book Award, and

honored with the prestigious Printz Honor and William C. Morris Award in 2018. It held the first place of the New York Times bestseller list for young adult literature. The novel has also been adapted for theaters in 2018; directed by George Tillman Jr., starring Amandla Stenberg as Starr Carter. Since the apparition of the book, Angie Thomas took on meeting her readers more and more. She gives lectures about racial issues in schools, in the United States and abroad, in person or virtually through Skype or other mediums. In 2019, she published her second novel, "*On the Come Up*."

Acclaimed by both critics and the public, Angie Thomas's book, unknown a few months earlier, throws a harsh light on the condition of young African-Americans in the contemporary era. Thomas was able to reach the hearts of African Americans and described with sincerity the daily life and issues that young African Americans face today.

2.2 Summary of *The Hate U Give*

The Hate U Give appeared in the United States in 2017, and it was a literary phenomenon: 300,000 sales in 8 months, No 1 on the New York Times Young Adult list for 32 weeks, a film adaptation in progress (produced by Fox), and rights sold in 18 countries for translations.

According to Alexandra Alter from the New York Times in "New Crop of Young Adult Novels Explores Race and Police Brutality", when "*The Hate U Give*" came out, it became an instant critical and commercial hit, with more than 100,000 copies in print. The novel — one of several new children's books that use fiction to address police shootings of unarmed black teenagers — debuted at the top of the New York Times' Young Adult bestseller list, and has drawn ecstatic praise from critics, librarians, booksellers and prominent young-adult novelists. John Green, the author of "The Fault in Our Stars," called the work "a stunning, brilliant, gut-wrenching novel that will be remembered as a classic of our time."

The Hate U Give written by Angie Thomas is a novel about Starr Carter, a sixteen-year-old black girl living in the ghetto neighborhood of Garden Heights. Ironically, it is a place that does not reflect the beauty of its name, since it is plunged into misery and gang violence. She is black and lives in a difficult neighborhood, punctuated by gang wars, drugs and police raids. Every day, she goes to her white high school located in a chic suburb; every day, she makes the big gap between her two lives, her two worlds. But everything is shattered the night her childhood friend Khalil is killed right before her eyes, shot three times by a white policeman during a police check. Starr is the only witness, and as her neighborhood flares up, the police seek to bury the case, and the gangs pressure her to shut up, Starr learns to cope with her grief and anger while seeking justice for her best friend.

Soon after, Khalil's death makes the main headlines on the news, and newspapers. Some say he was a *thug*, maybe even a drug dealer, and a gang member. Starr's best friend at school Hailey even suggests that he has been looking for it. When it becomes clear that the police have no interest in investigating the incident, protesters storm the streets and Starr's neighborhood turns into a war zone. Everyone wants to know what really happened that night. And the only living person who can answer that question is Starr.

3. Review of Literature

Angie Thomas' novel *The Hate U Give* can be approached through different perspectives. Although it is a young adult novel. It deals with important issues such as racism, discrimination, and stereotyping. Different studies have been carried out on the novel, dealing with various themes. Ni WayanYunitri in his article entitled "*Racism in The Hate U Give (2017) by Angie Thomas.*", approaches the novel applying two theories; the extrinsic approach that was proposed by Wellek and Warren, and the sociological approach proposed by Laurensen and Swingewood, to analyze how racism is reflected in America. He proceeds by

focussing on sentences, dialogues, and narration taken from the novel. Yunitri demonstrates that the novel reflects both the racism that is done by individuals or institutions namely; police and state companies. He maintains that individual racism is done by humiliating and discriminating the African-American people as inferior people (87).

The African-American people are often mocked by white people who address them by humiliating terms. Besides, African-American people are the target of unnecessary force and brutality from the police. The latter tend to use excessive force leading to abusive behaviors when interacting with black people. Yunitri's work shows that racism, prejudice, and discrimination are still present in American society, and Thomas' novel *The Hate U Give* is a depiction of that condition.

Jay Shelat in "I Swear Those Things Are So Fresh": *Sneakers, Race, and Mobility in The Hate U Give*" approaches the novel in a pretty original way by using the sneakers that the protagonist Starr wears in the novel as a symbol of how Starr navigates between the two worlds she lives in. While she lives in Garden Heights, a predominantly poor, black neighborhood, she attends a rich, mostly white high school called Williamson Prep. Since the two worlds Starr inhabits are polar opposites, she has to split herself in order to function in each one of them. To do so, the protagonist uses sneakers to cross these lines between her home and school, allowing the shoes to act as a material representation of the social and racial boundaries she traverses daily (70).

Thomas highlighted this distinction between the two worlds Starr crosses daily in an interview with NPR, where she explains, "But there's Williamson Starr who does not speak about where she's from. And it comes from a small place of shame, but it's also a place of trying to fit in because she's in a school where it's mostly white, and it's mostly upper class". Shelat argues that Starr maintains her black identity in a white environment making of her shoes a

symbol for physical movement from home to school, and represents her educational growth and success. This situation makes Starr's relationship with herself and her community uncertain and confused, not only because of the opposite worlds she lives in, but also because of the historical trauma, and violence black people face in America.

The Hate U Give deals with the systematic discrimination and criminalization of black people, depicting the struggle often felt by people of color between who they are and how they are perceived. It is a novel that is connected to post-colonial studies since it expresses issues such as Dubois's "double consciousness" a concept which refers to the psychological challenge, that a black person experiences always looking at one's self through the eyes of a dominant white racist society. In *The Soul of Black Folk* (1903), Dubois describes double consciousness as "a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" (8). It is exactly what is happening to African Americans, who find themselves in constant internal conflict of identity.

Homi K. Bhabha explains this situation of being trapped between two identities, and two cultures in his theory of cultural hybridity, which is quite similar to Dubois's double consciousness. In *The Location of Culture* (1994) Bhabha argues that the hybrid subject is forced to always identify with both "us" and "them," and mirroring himself through the expectations of others around him, stating that: "colonial specularly, doubly inscribed, does not produce a mirror where the self apprehend itself; it is always the split screen of the self and its doubling, the hybrid" (114). Considering Bhabha's analyses on cultural hybridity, one can say that African Americans' identity issue fits to the concept, since they have their own culture, and have embraced the American culture as well. In *The Hate U Give*, Starr is the perfect example that reflects hybridity in the novel, being trapped in between two different cultures, and therefore has to switch code and navigate between two different worlds to survive.

The double consciousness concept, as well as the concept of hybridity are relevant to the study of the novel, since the main protagonist Starr faces the same psychological challenge of identity crisis. It gives an insight, and explains the experiences of black people living in post-slavery America.

3.1 Thesis Statement

This study aims to show how racial discrimination and state institutions are used as hegemonic tools to control and subordinate the African American community in Angie Thomas' *The Hate U Give*. I will argue that despite the abolition of slavery and segregation, African Americans are still dominated, and this domination manifests itself in different aspects, and through the different state institutions in the novel.

1.2 Research Problem

There are several problems that will be discussed in this study. Since the novel deals heavily with racial discrimination against black people, the first problem is how racial discrimination is depicted in Angie Thomas *The Hate U Give*. There are numerous anti-black attitudes appearing in the novel in the form of stereotypes and assumptions towards black people.

The second problem is related to the way that racial discrimination and stereotyping affect black people in Angie Thomas *The Hate U Give*. The novel depicts the reality that black people live and how racial discrimination affects their daily life. The last problem is the aspects of Cultural Hegemony to which black people are subjugated in the novel shows this domination through the treatment that black people get from their environment, and the different state institutions such as the media, the penal system, the media, and law enforcement.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are linked to the research problem. The first objective is to explore and expose racial discrimination in Thomas' novel *The Hate U Give*, analyzing both the characters and main events of the novel. The second objective is to analyze the effect of racial injustice and stereotyping in *The Hate U Give* on black individuals and communities. Such practices provoke significant consequences on black people as individuals, as well as a community.

The last objective is to analyze the various means of white domination on black people in *The Hate U Give*. The latter is reflected in the American state institutions, mainly in the impartiality of the judicial system regarding black people, police brutality, the media, and the social condition of black people.

1.4 Research Methods

The approach that I will use in this study is the Sociological approach, which focuses on the social condition in the novel. I will use the theory of Cultural Hegemony relying on Gramsci's discussion, Althusser's texts on ideology, and Clovis Semmes analysis of hegemony on African American community.

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

This dissertation consists of an introduction, two chapters, and a conclusion. (here I have mentioned which chapters are going to be divided) Chapter one and two are divided into several sections.

Chapter one includes the theory of Cultural Hegemony in a general context, and its effects on African American community. Extrinsic elements such as racial discrimination stereotypes,

and prejudice will also be discussed. It deals mainly with the works linked to the research topics, including articles and an overview of the major texts related to the theory of hegemony.

Chapter two deals with the analysis of the novel, which refers to the theoretical framework. The analysis provides an answer to the problems mentioned in the research problem. It focuses on the content of the novel and analyzes how racial discrimination is depicted in *The Hate U Give*. It also identifies the aspects of Cultural Hegemony as explained by Gramsci and Semmes. The conclusion sums up both the analysis, and the theoretical framework. It reiterates and, summarizes the main points of evidence regarding the research topic.

Chapter One: Theoretical Framework

This chapter will discuss the theory of cultural hegemony in a general context, and regarding the African American community. Extrinsic elements such as Racial Discrimination, Stereotypes and Prejudice will also be discussed.

1- Cultural Hegemony

The concept of Cultural Hegemony was developed by the Italian philosopher and politician Antonio Gramsci. The notion shows the relation between the state which represents the system or the ruling class, and society. The main idea is that the dominant ideology in a society reflects the beliefs of the ruling class. Gramsci's theory of hegemony was contrived in the first place to explain why the revolutions predicted by Marx in the Communist Party Manifesto (1848) did not take place. According to Alan Bullock and Stephen Trombley in *The New Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought* (1999) cultural hegemony is the dominant ideology of society: the beliefs, explanations, perceptions, values, and morals that reflect that of the ruling class (387-88). The dominant ideology justifies the social, political, and economic Status Quo which makes it appear as natural, perpetual, and beneficial for everyone rather than as an artificial social constructs that benefits only the ruling class. Gramsci argued that this process of cultural dominance is achieved through the different institutions of the elite, such as schools, churches, courts, and the media among others, leading the dominated class to accept, and believe that their social condition is normal. Stuart Hall in *Representation, Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices* (1997) explains the idea of cultural hegemony in simple terms stating; "In any society not totalitarian, then, certain cultural forms predominate over others; the form of this cultural leadership is what Gramsci has identifies as hegemony" (260).

Gramsci believes that the control of those institutions means the control of public opinion, influencing it in such a way that serves the ruling class interests. According to Walter L. Adamson in his *Hegemony and Revolution Antonio Gramsci's Political and Cultural Theory*(2006), “The state, through its manipulation of public opinion, is now able to force its point of view over a reluctant populace in a way that is hardly distinguishable functionally from more traditional, and openly forceful means like intimidating threats to life or livelihood” (225).

The war waged against Iraq is a perfect example which shows how the American state has manipulated the public opinion through a media campaign, by systematically showing Iraq as an ally of terrorism. After a massive media campaign focused mainly on the themes of terrorism, and threats to democracy and freedom, the American state succeeded in having the support of the people to wage a war against Iraq. Surveys conducted on the population to find out whether they are for or against the war in Iraq, have revealed that the majority of American citizens were for it, therefore convinced of the necessity of war.

Gramsci also believes that the manipulation of the population by the elite is achieved through the "common sense" concept, a set of false, and illusory ideas to justify the ruling system. In *Gramsci and Education*(2002), Carmel Borg et al, show Gramsci's description of the chaotic, and contradictory nature of common sense, presenting it as “a chaotic aggregate of disparate conceptions, and one can find there anything one likes. It is an ambiguous, contradictory, and multiform concept” (qtd. in Borg et al, 267).

Gramsci believes that "common sense" has a powerful ideological power. In *Selection From Prison Notebooks* (1971), he suggests that power can not only be maintained through violence, political and economic coercion, but also through ideology, arguing that hegemony's operation can be understood using the concept of common sense (326). In order to maintain this

position of power, the bourgeoisie has developed a hegemonic culture, which propagates its ideas, values and norms so that these become the “common sense” values of all. As an example, the concept of the "American dream which appeared and spread during the westward expansion, is an idea rooted in the American culture. However, the idea that any American citizen can reach success and live the American dream is clearly false and illusory because it does not take into consideration the social status of the citizen, his race, or even his origins. In other words, if one believes that it is enough to work hard to be successful, it would imply that the system put in place is fair and valid. It would also mean that those who have succeeded economically have done it fairly; hence, those who struggle economically deserve their state of impoverishment.

This form of “common sense” puts the responsibility of failure and success on only the individual, and in doing so hides the racial, gender and class inequalities implanted in the capitalist system. The same racial inequalities that Angie Thomas tackles in *The Hate U Give*, regarding Afro American people in the United States’ capitalist system. The Marxist philosophy certainly plays an influential role in characterizing "common sense" in such a disparaging manner. Louis Althusser (1918-1990), for his part, in “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses”(1970) describes "common sense" as "pure illusion, pure dream, that is to say, nothing" (99). Besides, he argues that this ideology corresponds to "a representation of reality, but necessarily distorted, because it is necessarily oriented and tendentious because its objective is not to give men objective knowledge, but the contrary of giving them a mystified representation in order to maintain it (as such)"(30). In this way, any public expression of “common sense” is reduced to manifestations based on illusory knowledge, imposed on individuals by social institutions endowed with the power of inflection necessary to "subject" them to false truths. Schools, media and the institutions aiming to the dissemination of culture correspond here to “ideological state apparatuses.” Althusser in *On The Reproduction of*

Capitalism(2014) explains that even the political system is an ideological state apparatus since the principle of its functioning is based on the illusory ideology of the freedom and equality of the individual voters, whereas it is only a means to impose the dominant class ideology (222).

1.2 Cultural Hegemony and African American Community

African Americans are the largest ethnic minority in the United States, and are largely the descendants of enslaved people who were brought from their African homelands by force to work in the New World. Their rights were severely limited, and they were long denied a rightful share in the economic, social, and political progress of the United States. Nevertheless, African Americans have made basic and lasting contributions to American history and culture.

Feagin argues in *Racist America, Roots Current Realities and Future Reparations*(2000)that:

Over nearly four centuries, tens of millions of African Americans have had their labor and wealth regularly taken from them. In contrast to other groups, their original languages, cultures, and family ties were substantially obliterated by their being torn from Africa, and the oppression faced under slavery and segregation were extremely dehumanized, racialized, and systematic.(3)

He explains that a racist ideology has been created on purpose, and implemented in the American society in order to see racism as something normal and legitimate. He explains that the early exploitative relationships that whites developed in regard to African Americans and Native Americans were quickly rationalized. He states that "from the beginning, racism has been webbed into most arenas of American life, including places of work and residence, and activities as diverse as eating, procreating, and child rearing (70).

In order to represent the experience of black Americans, Clovis E. Semmes in his *Cultural Hegemony and African American Development* (1995), analyzes the different aspects of hegemonic culture to which black Americans are submitted to. Taking into consideration the cultural, political, and economic aspects, Semmes gives a more detailed explanation of cultural hegemony, and its effect on Afro-American population. He believes that it is not only a means of dominance, but also a systematic negation of a race or a culture (01). He argues that cultural hegemony has turned into the main issue that creates social problems in all fields within African-American community. Semmes pushes further his analysis linking hegemony with race, arguing that the way which this exploitation is executed involved the broader dimension of race and culture, stating that “racism emerged from an extant cultural complex of alienation, color prejudice, xenophobia, and became operationalized as white supremacy” (02). This entails that racism and other forms of hostility towards African Americans became hegemonic tools to subordinate and keep the minorities under permanent control.

2- Racial Discrimination, Stereotypes and Prejudice

2.1 Racial Discrimination

According to Richard J. Perry in *Race and Racism: The Development of Modern Racism in America* (2007), racism is the way of grouping people because of their physical appearance, which leads to social discrimination. It can manifest itself under different aspects, and areas such as the educational system, penal system, the professional environment, and social relations (2). The Afro American community in the United States is one of the most affected by anti-black racism despite the numerous political changes, reforms, and the abolition of slavery. Feagin shows the gravity and the extent of racism within American society, stating that “In the United States racism is structured into the rhythms of everyday life. It is lived, concrete, advantageous for whites, and painful for those who are not white. Each major part of a black or

white person's life is shaped by racism" (2). Feagin adds that one of the great tragedies today is the inability or unwillingness of most white Americans to acknowledge this racist reality. Among whites, including white elites, there is a commonplace denial of personal, family, and group histories of racism.

Racial discrimination has taken root in American society through the various stages of its history. In order to understand the systematic racial discrimination that black Americans encounter today, it is necessary to go back to the history of the United States. Dating back to the establishment of the constitution which would later be known as the "first democratic nation" that took place in 1787 in Philadelphia. Most of the fifty-five men who participated in its elaboration were slaveholders, or involved in some way or another in slavery. George Washington was one of the major figures in establishing this constitution, and was one of the richest men of the colonies thanks to the profits gained from slave trade, and the hundreds of black slaves he owned (Feagin 9). That is to say that the first democratic nation was created only for the whites, denying and excluding the enslaved population. This racial discrimination will be maintained to defend white privileges, and keep black people in a state of subordination: "White Americans have developed a strong ideology defending their own privileges, and conditions as meritorious, and accenting the alleged inferiority and deficiencies of those being oppressed. A critical aspect of systemic racism is a racist ideology that defends white group's position" (Feagin32).

In addition, it will manifest itself in different forms, notably through the Black Codes of the 19th century as Dan Monroe and Bruce Tap explain in *Shapers of The Great Debate on The Civil War* (2005) The Black Codes bring together local laws passed to regulate the rights of blacks in the territory of a state. In the 19th century, several legislative decisions demonstrated that not only were blacks not considered as true American citizens, but they were associated

with personal property or animals. Monroe and Tap argued that these laws had positive aspects concerning minor issues, but remained segregationists bringing in a different form of slavery:

Although a few features of the Black Codes were positive, providing for such things as property ownership and legal marriages, other aspects were primarily intended to control black and were little more than disguised slavery. The most egregious features of the codes punished vagrancy, prohibited interracial marriages, and allowed for segregation in public places. (136)

Non-slavery states, free northern states like Indiana and Illinois, have instituted very restrictive Black Codes. While the southern states feared losing their slave labor, some northern states wanted to guard against a possible "invasion" of blacks from the south into their territory and industries. The end of the American Civil War puts an end to slavery. The former slave states then promulgated new black codes, setting in motion a long and terrible process of racial segregation that would last throughout the 20th century. These black codes attempt to establish laws as restrictive as slavery. To counter them, new constitutional amendments granted citizenship status to all blacks, and dismantled gradually the black codes.

The Southern response to the black codes was the establishment of the Jim Crow laws, which took effect in Southern States and municipalities between 1876 and 1964. These laws adopted by the Supreme Court in 1896 presented citizens as separate, but equal. These racial laws restricted the rights of black people. Despite the fact that some rights were granted, several issues came along in their application. Although, the right to vote was allowed, the requirements for it were impossible to meet. Schools were separate, as were transportation, hotels, cemeteries and fountains... black people could not set foot in certain parks, restaurants and libraries.

Racial discrimination continued to affect all aspects of social life, such as marriage and freedom of speech, enforcing segregation in housing and employment: “Into the late 1940s numerous northern and western states, including Michigan, Colorado, Oregon, and California had laws banning marriages between white and black Americans. Beyond these laws, with northerners openly enforced racial segregation in housing and employment by informal means” (Feagin62).

Despite the many changes in the US state policy, reforms such as The Civil Rights Act of 1964, which ended segregation in public places, and banned employment discrimination, African Americans have faced systematic discrimination. In addition, they have been disadvantaged in terms of education and housing, and have lacked access to economic opportunities. For this particular category of people, there was no American dream.

2.2 Stereotypes and Prejudice

Stereotypes, as described by Stuart Hall in his *Representation, Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices* (1997), are the “production of the meaning of the concepts in our minds through language which enables us to refer to either the ‘real’ world of objects, people or events, or indeed to imaginary worlds of fictional objects, people and events” (23). In his research, Hall has suggested that there are two systems of representation, the first system regarding direct associations of events, people and objects that have certain mental representations, and concepts that people have in their minds. Meaning is therefore dependent on these correlations. Hall’s second system of representation is language; to produce meaning, the concepts must be translated into common language (19). Hall refers to language as anything from written words, spoken sounds and visual images, to music, fashion and even facial expressions. A stereotype is a form of representation; but a stereotypical representation is often inaccurate, partial, negative and limited. According to Hall, a stereotype is an exaggerated,

misleading and distorted representation of a group of people, or a person through the reduction of that group or person to a few essential characteristics (249).

Feagin explains that anti-black stereotyping and prejudice is racism. Racial prejudice is a set of false beliefs and antipathic behavior towards another race. Meanwhile stereotypes can be defined as negative beliefs about a racial group. These beliefs and assumptions are, of course, based on faulty generalizations. White people even have racist terms to call blacks, as if all of them are the same, such as ghetto, slum, gangs, and the poor. In the early days of state slavery in the United States, black people were presented as docile and content with their situation.

Popular culture and cultural materials described them as grateful to their white masters, who had "saved" them from their "savage condition" on the "black continent." Black men were portrayed as simple-minded, and childish. From the 1820s until the 1950s, American society promoted, in the form of stereotypes, images of black Americans, which entered American culture through comics, movies, songs, commercials, television shows or household items, especially during the post Civil War period. Micheal Fitzgerald gives a clear insight of this particular situation in his *The Ku Klux Klan: Property Crime and the Plantation System in Reconstruction Alabama* (1997), where he states "After the Civil War and during the reconstruction period, black calls for equality did not only provoke a violent reaction from whites, it has also led to the emergence of the Ku Klux Klan terrorist organization, violently opposing changes in the system" (71).

According to Thomas P. Boncsar in "Prevalence of Imprisonment in The U.S Population" statistics published in the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), each year in the United States, more than 2.2 million arrests of black people are made and 390,000 blacks are currently incarcerated, in prison or in a penal institution. At least half of black prisoners are

under 30, and over a million of them are not even of voting age. Most of the prisoners were unemployed at the time of their arrest; the remainder earned less than 8,000\$per year in the year prior to their incarceration; and roughly 45% of the 1,500 men awaiting death sentences are African Americans. As Lennox S-Hinds, former National Director of the National Conference of Black Lawyers put it, “a poor black person who tries to get a few hundred dollars by stealing, has a 90% chance of being accused of theft with a sentence ranging from 94 to 138 months imprisonment. A white businessman who has embezzled hundreds of thousands dollars has only a 20% chance of being charged and sentenced to between 20 and 48 months”. It implies that Justice is not color-blind when the accused are black.

The stereotypes of the black criminal or drug dealer is one of the most persistent in American society, leading to unjust arrests and in some cases to unnecessary murders; tragic events like the recent murder of George Floyd by a police officer, have become rather common events and occur more frequently than one might think. As Feagin points out in *Racist America*, “Police harassment and brutality directed at black men, women, and children are as old as American society, dating back to the days of slavery, and Jim Crow segregation” (2). Although the racial profusion in police actions against people of color is not fully recognized by the authorities, the reality show the opposite; some people argue that attitudes, and the actions of police officers are not based on race, but on their skills, training, knowledge and experience. Feagin states that “Police surveillance, and the targeting of black Americans is a common practice of many law enforcement agencies across the United States” (01).

The American political and economic system promises equality, but has never given it to African Americans. In fact, the system uses the rhetoric and myth of equality to cover up the processes of oppression. Both by legal and illegal means, black people are subordinated, marginalized, and oppressed.

Stereotypes are a major issue facing young black youth. Everyday events indicate that stereotypes, assumptions and expectations of some people sometimes lead to false accusations, differential treatment and conflict. Stereotypes influence the way young blackpeople are treated by authorities and adults in general. In a context of racism; stereotypes, racial profiling, and discrimination limit the opportunities and possibilities available to young people from racial minorities.

Chapter Two: Analysis of the Novel

This chapter analyses Racial Discrimination, and aspects of Cultural Hegemony in *The Hate U Give*. The writer uses quotes, and dialogues from the novel to answer the problems cited in the research problem. The analysis focuses on the main characters of the novel, Khalil and Starr to explore racial discrimination, as well as its effects on African American communities. In addition, the writer analyzes and identifies the aspects of Cultural Hegemony appearing in the novel, which manifest through the various state institutions such as the penal system, media, and law enforcement. The story of Khalil reveals a palpable white domination on black people in post slavery America.

1. Racial Discrimination in *The Hate U Give*

Racial discrimination is the unequal treatment of persons or groups on the basis of their race or ethnicity. It occurs when a person is treated less favorably, or not given the same opportunities, as others in a similar situation, because of their race, their ethnic origin, skin color, or their birth country. It can take many forms but in many countries around the world, there are laws prohibiting any form of discrimination. In *The Hate U Give*, Angie Thomas tackles the issue of racial discrimination, and gives it an important status in the novel. Racial Discrimination can be seen through the characters that suffer from racial mistreatment by white people.

This novel tells the story of Khalil, a black young man, who got shot by a white policeman, and the only witness of the tragedy is Starr Carter, her childhood best friend. Starr tries to get justice for Khali's death, another victim of police brutality. Starr, as the only witness of the crime tries to speak up and tell the truth about Khalil's death. Many characters in this novel undergo racial discrimination treatment by white people, including Starr's family and her

whole neighborhood. Racial discrimination is clearly portrayed in the novel, and whenever there is discrimination, prejudice and stereotypes are involved.

1.2 Starr Carter

Starr is one of the major characters of the novel who got racist treatment by the police officer who arrested her with her childhood friend Khalil. In the novel she lives in two different worlds, in Garden Heights which is a predominant black neighborhood where she feels good despite gang violence. However, she has to adapt and act like her white friends in order to be accepted at her all-white school Williamson “The ironic thing is though, at Williamson I don’t have to ‘play it cool’ I’m cool by default because I’m one of the only black kids there It’s dope to be black until it’s hard to be black” (11). Starr has to adjust her behavior and habits to get along with her white friends at Williamson, because of the persistent discrimination that is still present.

Starr’s father, Maverick, takes things so seriously when it comes to black and white issues that he advises his daughter on what to do if a cop(white) arrested her. Even at a young age, he estimates that Starr should know how to behave in such instances. He does so because he knows that things can quickly go down the wrong road. He is well aware of the prejudiced views held by white cops when it comes to the African American communities. Unfortunately, Starr’s father is right and Khalil’s death is another event that crystallizes his fears. It is shown in Starr’s statement “the other talk was about what to do if a cop stopped me. Momma fussed and told daddy I was too young for that. He argued that I wasn’t too young to get arrested, or shot” (14). From this situation, it can be seen that black people perceive white cops as a threat, and a possible danger for them. Because they are black, they have to be careful with white people, especially police officers. After the incident, Starr is traumatized and depressed while

trying to understand what happened to her and Khalil, and being the only witness makes it even worse.

He didn't do anything, I say. We didn't do anything. Khalil didn't even have a gun. Besides the cop, I'm the only person who was there,

I've seen it happen over and over again: a black person gets killed just for being black, and all hell breaks loose. I've tweeted RIP Hashtags, reblogged pictures on Tumblr, and signed every petition out there. I always said if it happens to somebody; I would have the loudest voice, making sure the world know what went down. Now, I'm that person and I'm afraid to speak. (34-35)

Starr explains to her parents that she and Khalil didn't do anything wrong, and that Khalil didn't even have a gun, meaning that the police officer didn't have any reason to arrest them, and even less to shoot Khalil. It is clear that the policeman had racist thoughts towards black people, which pushed him to react violently and shooting Khalil: "One-fifteen killed him" I say, and he wasn't doing anything wrong."(103).

Even during the investigation, when Starr is called to the police office, detective Gomez kept asking questions about whether she and Khalil had consumed alcohol, or drugs which is not the main point in the case. The attention is put on them rather than the police Officer who just killed a kid

"Did you consume any alcohol at the party?" She asks.

She is trying to discredit me. No. I don't think

"Did Khalil?"

"Whoa, wait a second," Momma says, "Are y'all putting Khalil and Starr on trial or the cop who killed him? You haven't asked my child about the cop yet, you keep asking her

about Khalil, like he's the reason he's dead. Like she said, he didn't pull the trigger on himself.' (103).

Starr faces racist behaviors even at her school Williamson She gets along with her two friends Hailey and Maya, who are both white, until Hailey makes a racist joke during a basket ball game. When Hailey sees that her team is losing, she tells Starr to imagine the ball as a fried chicken, so she can catch it. It is showed in the conversation they had “‘Pretend the ball is some fried chicken.’ ‘Lighten up! It was only game talk.’ A fried chicken joke was only game talk? Really? I ask. Her eyes widen. ‘Oh my God. You think I was being racist?’ You made a fried chicken comment to the only black girl in the room. You can say something racist and not be a racist” (112).

From the heated conversation between the two friends, it is showed the extent to which Hailey, and it is important to remember that she is part of the white society, is clueless about the whole racial war that underplays right before her eyes. To her, it was just a joke, but she doesn't realize that her joke is hurtful for Starr. The stereotype of fried chicken is directly attached to black people; during slavery, chicken has become part of southern diet. Chicken based dishes were particularly practical to slaves since they were cheap and a good source of protein. This incident points to the fact that racist behaviors can come in many shapes and forms. They can even seem completely unharful.

1.3 Khalil

Khalil is a young black man who became the victim in the novel. He is a victim of police brutality which caused his death. After leaving the party where he was with Starr, he gets pulled over by a police officer for no apparent reason except his blackness. Besides,

when Khalil asks the officer why he is pulling him over, the officer responds violently, assuming that he was a criminal. The arrest and his subsequent shooting goes as follow:

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

‘Hands on the dashboard!’ The officer barks at me. ‘Don’t move!’

He patts Khalil down. ‘Okay, smart mouth, lets see what we found on you today.’

‘Stay here,’ he tells Khalil. ‘And you. He looks in the window at me. ‘Don’t move.’

Khalil does, he comes to his door. 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 the door to keep himself upright. Pow! Two. Khalil gaps. Po! Three. Khalil looks at me, stunned. (22-23)

This passage which depicts the most shocking scene of the novel shows how the cop is particularly ruthless with the two young people, especially with Khalil. The officer has biased views about him as a black man, and he doesn’t waffle to shoot him at the first move he makes. Khalil wanted just to check on Starr, and see if she was all right, but the cop took it as a threat, and shot him three times. Even if the officer’s father later on tried to explain his act, to make it seem as an accident, it is clearly an act of violence that is deliberately done, otherwise he wouldn’t shoot him three times. The officer justified his act by saying that he thought that Khalil was going to take his gun from the car, but it turned out that it was just a hairbrush. This attitude, which leads to the murder of an innocent young man, shows that the cop had discriminatory thoughts and assumptions about black people.

1.3 Black Community

In the story it is not only individual characters who are victims of racial discrimination, but it is the whole black community. When the case is revealed to the public,

huge riots erupted in the streets with hundreds of people demand justice for Khalil, and chanting “A brush is not a gun.” This reaction from black people is due to the fact t the policeman who shot Khalil was not arrested, and did not go to jail, eventhough he was clearly found guilty. This decision makes all the black community, including Starr, seeth with anger. What is discriminatory is the way with which the government responded to the riots,sending the police to disperse the crowd and ask them to leave the street, while they have the right to protest, and give their opinion especially in such a case:

‘You need to exit the street,’ a voice announces from a loudspeaker,

‘You are unlawfully blocking the traffic.’

‘A hairbrush is not a gun! A hairbrush is not a gun !a voice chants from another loudspeaker.’

‘They point black hairbrushes into the air, the protestors are on Carnation, where it happened.’(407)

All the protestors join their voice together to make it as loud and clear as possible. They protest against the grand jury’s decision, and the government responds by denying them the right to do so. Chanting “a hair brush is not a gun” means that Khalil did not have a gun neither with him nor in his car, and the cop who shot him did it only because he entertained racist thoughts and assumptions about black people.

1.2 Stereotypes and Prejudice

Stereotypes and prejudice are the main characteristics of racial discrimination, and they are both present in the novel. Angie Thomas portrays both the discrimination that black people get from their environment, and the characters themselves face during the development of the story. Khalil and Starr are the ones who suffer the most from it, since Khalil is the victim in the story, and Starr the only witness of it.

1.2.1 Starr Carter

At the beginning of the novel, Starr feels like she lives in two different worlds, which makes her in a state of permanent struggle to find her identity. She cannot act in the same way that she does in Garden Heights, when she is at her school Williamson. This attitude is due to the prejudice that white people have about black people living in the ghetto:

I just have to be normal Starr at normal Williamson and have a normal day. That means flipping the switch in my brain so I'm Williamson Starr. Williamson Starr doesn't use slang, if a rapper would say it, she doesn't say it, even if her white friends do. Slang makes them cool. Slang makes her 'hood.' Williamson Starr holds her tongue when people piss her off, so nobody will think she's the 'angry black girl.' Williamson Starr is approachable. No stank eye, side eyes, none of that. Williamson Starr doesn't give anyone a reason to call her ghetto. (70)

Starr changes the way she behaves at Williamson, because she knows about the stereotypes of female African women that represent them as aggressive, angry, and loud. Even if she doesn't like doing it, she feels it is necessary in order to get along with her white friends at Williamson.

Starr likes her neighborhood Garden Heights even if it is labeled "ghetto" by white people, but feels disadvantaged compared to her white friends at Williamson. She likes them, but she never invites them home, because she is afraid of the negative stereotypes, and prejudice white people have about the ghetto. She did it in seventh grade, but it did not go well, that is why she has decided that she would never invite them again:

I made the mistake of inviting them to a sleepover in seventh grade. Momma was gonna let us do our nails, stay up all night, and eat as much as pizza as we wanted. It was gonna be awesome as those weekends at Hailey's. The ones we

still have sometimes. I invited Kenya, too, so I could finally hang out with all three of them at once. Hailey didn't come. Her dad didn't want her to spend the night in the ghetto. (39)

White people still have a mostly negative image of the ghetto, and Starr is forced to cope with it. The point that has to be highlighted here is that not all black people are violent, but due to some criminal activities, such as gangbangings taking place in the neighborhood, the entire community is stereotyped as violent by the white majority. Starr is well aware of those stereotypes that circulate about black people and communities.

1.2.2 Khalil

Khalil is the ultimate victim of stereotype and prejudice that are directed towards black people in the novel. His arbitrary arrest by the police officer is not based on any valid reason, other than the fact that he is black. The policeman arrested them because they seemed suspicious to him, whereas they were just two kids in the car, who didn't represent any threat to him. The stereotype of the African American man as criminal, and drug dealer is deeply rooted in collective unconscious. Misrepresentation is the reason why Khalil has been killed: "Right. This all happened because *he*- I can't say his name- assumed that we were up to no good. Because we're black and because of where we live. We were just two kids, minding our business, you know? His assumption killed Khalil. It could've killed me"(285).

The way media portrayed Khalil also invoked the drug dealer stereotype. He is labeled as a drug dealer, whereas it has not been revealed whether he really is or not. The fact that he comes from the ghetto is enough to label him as a drug dealer. Because of racial discrimination against black people. People tend to think that black men living in the ghetto like Khalil are all involved in drug dealing and crime. Many characters in the novel have adopted this thinking, for instance Starr's friend Hailey called Khalil a thug, and a drug dealer, when they were

talking about the protest to get justice for him: “‘Yeah’ Hailey says, all giddy and shit. ‘Perfect timing too. I so did not study for that English exam. This is, like, the first time Remy actually came up with a good idea to get out of class. I mean, it’s kinda messed up that we’re protesting a *drug dealer’s* death, but...’(181).

Hailey’s statement shows that she is not really interested in protesting for Khalil, she just wants to get out of class. Khalil, there is no doubt in her mind, is for sure a drug dealer. This reveals how stereotypes are profoundly rooted in white people’s minds.

Stereotype and prejudice towards Khalil are also shown in the novel during the investigation. Detective Gomez kept asking questions only about him, trying to prove that he was a criminal, Therefore he deserved what happened to him “‘Yeah.’ She smiles, and says in that same sugary, and sympathetic tone, ‘Now, do you know if Khalil sold narcotics ?’(49).This shows that the police are not really interested in getting justice for Khalil, because of the thug black man stereotype that is given to him. Hence, Khalil is a double victim. He is victim of a hate crime, and he is also victim of the whole judicial system that has never recognized his death as a crime and a horrendous injustice.

2. Effects of Racial Discrimination on Black People in *The Hate U Give*

Racial discrimination is a central theme in *The Hate U Give*. Thomas depicts the reality of black community, and how discrimination affects all aspects of black people’s life. The practice of racial discrimination in the novel shows that there are two major effects as a result, which are the death of black people, and the instability of the society

2.1 Death of BlackPeople

The death of black people is a direct result of persistent racial discrimination. What happens to Khalil in the novel has happened before to many other young black people without a valid reason for most of them. Khalil got shot three times, while he does not represent any

threat to the police officer's life. As it is showed in the novel, the main reason why Khalil is murdered is only because of negative assumptions, and racist thoughts white people have towards black people.

Thomas, through Khalil's story, reminds the reader about all other black lives that systematic discrimination has destroyed. In the end of the novel, Thomas puts their names, emphasizing that they must not be forgotten:

It's also about Oscar

Aiyana.

Trayvon.

Rekia

...

Philando.

It's even about the little boy in 1955 who nobody recognized at first- Emmett.

(437)

This part indicates that death of black people happens frequently due to oppression and brutality, and happens as the direct consequence of racial discrimination.

2.2 Unstability of The society

In the novel, racial discrimination and the events surrounding it result into an unstable environment, especially when the grand jury's decision is revealed. Huge riots explode in the city as a reaction, especially in black people surroundings like Garden Heights. Demonstrations may run peacefully. Yet many of them have disturbances, and caused damage : "A gas station near the free-way gets looted, and the owner, this Indian man, staggers around bloody, saying he didn't have anything to do with Khalil's death. A line of cops guard the Walmart on the east side. My neighborhood is a war zone" (138).

The racial discrimination that caused the tragic death of Khalil, and the protests afterwards, helped to create an unsafe environment, filled with fear and concern among the black community. Because of the unsafe environment surrounding them, people start to fear for their children and their future. It is especially obvious in the novel when Lisa, Maverick's wife, argues with her husband whether to leave Garden Heights or not "I want my kids to enjoy life ! I get it, Maverick, you want to help your people out. I do too...You need to figure out what's more important, your family or Garden Heights. I've already made my choice"(180). This reflect the dangerous environment they are living in due to the racial discrimination black community gets from white people.

2. Aspects of Cultural Hegemony in *The Hate U Give*

The Hate U Give novel can be analyzed under different scopes, and one of the interesting concepts of Postcolonial Studies that applies to it is Cultural Hegemony. Whenever hegemony is put into practice, it always results in suffering and hatred since it is all about dominance and control. After reading the novel, the aspect of white dominance over black people is very palpable, it is shown in the way Khalil's case is handled. Angie Thomas depicts a reality within American society that doesn't fit with the values and democracy it proclaims. The author has rather chosen to shed light on the real situation of black people, who face constant bigotry and injustice. This domination manifests itself under different aspects which are present in the book.

2.1 The Ghetto

The events depicted in the novel take place in Garden Heights, a place which is labeled as *ghetto*. The term ghetto is used to refer to black urban housing in the United States. It is characterized by deteriorated habitats, a poor sanitary state, a high rate of infant mortality, and an irremediable massive unemployment and delinquency. It is an environment that favors the

appearance of gangs, drug dealing, and all kinds of criminal behavior. Starr describes it as a battlefield due to the instability that reigns in the neighborhood and the fights between the gangs. She states “Garden Heights has been a battlefield for the past two months over some stupid territory wars” (20). The novel presents the reality of disadvantaged environments where black people live, being separated and isolated from the rest of society. Black people find themselves in a limbo, being simultaneously insulated and dependant of the government, since they don’t get equal treatment in terms of job opportunities compared to white people. Besides, business in the ghetto is largely owned by whites who live outside it. Similarly, important jobs in the public sector (social workers, judges, teachers ...) are held by white outsiders, whereas black people serve as minor functionaries. A limited few are allowed into top administrative and political positions. This issue is explained in the novel by Starr’s father, Maverick, in a conversation about why Khalil was a drug dealer:

‘Why was he a drug dealer? why are so many people in our neighborhood drug dealers?’ ‘They need money’ I say. ‘And they don’t have a lot of other ways to get it.’

‘Right. Lack of opportunities’ Daddy says. ‘Corporate America don’t bring jobs to our communities, and they damn sure ain’t quick to hire us. Then, shit, even if you do have a high school diploma, so many of the schools in our neighborhood don’t prepare us well enough. (169)

Most black people living in the ghetto are forced to sell drugs in order to survive, because of their social and economic condition. They need money and the government doesn’t offer them any jobs. Most of black people in the novel are from middle to lower class, and most of them lack education. This reality of the ghetto shows one of the aspects of cultural hegemony to which black people are subordinated; this policy of isolating minorities called “Ghetto control

politics” is a tool used by the elite as a means of domination. Indeed the same method was used with the Jews to keep them under control during the WW II. The same strategy is used with black people in order to keep them in a permanent state of subordination. This policy is built into fundamental structures of the American society such as housing, education, voting, healthcare, and justice. This system gives privileges solely to white people whereas black communities and other minorities are neglected.

2.2 Police Brutality

In normal circumstances, police forces is a state apparatus whose primary mission is to serve and protect the citizens, but it is also an apparatus that can be used as a tool of dominance, oppression, and intimidation against these same citizens. In the United States, thousands of police brutality victims, such as Khalil in the novel, are reported each year, making it the primary cause of young men’s deaths. Racial minorities, especially the African community, are the most touched due to the negative assumptions that both police and the white majority have towards them. In most cases, these abuses are committed against black people without valid motives. Anyone who speaks to an African American about police learns that most of them have either experienced personally or heard from family and friends stories about police abuse. The novel shows that it is an institutionalized discrimination that still exists in the United States.

In the novel, the police do not represent safety but quite the opposite, they are seen as a threat due to their conduct with black people. We can see it through Starr’s statement when talking about police “My uncle’s cop. I’m always scared of my uncle. But I’m tired of them assuming. Especially when it comes to black people” (289). This statement illustrates the fact that black people are used to police violence, and bad treatment from the cops. They are always suspicious towards them and consider them as criminals. The conversation Starr has with her father about what to do if she gets arrested by a police officer also shows that black people are

accustomed to police brutality: “Starr-Starr, you do whatever they tell you to do, he said. Keep your hands visible. Don’t make any sudden moves. Only speak when they speak to you. I knew it must’ve been serious. Daddy has the biggest mouth of anybody I know, and if he said to be quiet, I needed to be quiet. I hope somebody had the talk with Khalil” (24).

The conversation between the father and his daughter displays that police brutality is happening frequently to black people to the point where they know what to do and what not to do, when confronted to the police. Police brutality is exposed in the novel at the very beginning of the story with the hostile attitude of the Officer Brian while arresting Khalil and Starr. When Khalil doesn’t do what the officer tells him to do, the situation quickly escalates to reach tragic consequences. Actually, Officer Brian doesn’t find anything dangerous in the car; he kills Khalil because of his “common sense” that instructs him to eventually kill him. Besides, he is not only violent with Khalil, but also with Starr, pointing his gun to her after shooting Khalil “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” (15-16).

Starr’s father Maverick experiences police harassment from two officers in the novel due to the tenacious stereotypes associated to African American men. As mentioned before, a black man living in the ghetto is seen as a criminal or a drug dealer, and treated as a dangerous person even when nothing in his behavior proves it right. He was arguing with Mr. Lewis about Khalil’s case when two officers stopped, checked him, then accused him of harassing Mr. Lewis, just because he has the appearance of a black man from the ghetto: ““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. I wonder if it is because Mr. Lewis isn’t wearing an NWA (Niggas With Attitude) rap bandT-shirt. Or because there aren’t tattoos all on his arms” (190-191).

Violence against black people in The United States is very frequent. In fact it goes back to the time of the Jim Crow laws. In today’s American society, it has been replaced by police

brutality, and constant discrimination. This police brutality reflects a white supremacy over black people; the way police treat black people in the novel, and the way Khalil's case is handled, shows clearly a hegemony that is practiced over the black community. Moreover, leaving police actions unpunished shows that the state is rather lenient with such woeful situations, which is contrary to the values of justice, and equality that it claims to uphold.

2.3 Judicial System

The judicial system is one of the major elements that shows the white dominance over black people in the novel. It is clearly racially biased since it didn't treat Khalil's murder case fairly. When Maverick and Carlos are trying to persuade Starr to meet the investigators, Maverick states that black people are treated differently and justice is not always granted to them: "Why does it always have to be about race with you?" Uncle Carlos asks. "Other races are not killing us nearly as much as we're killing ourselves. Ne-gro please. If I kill Tyrone, I'm going to prison. If a cop kills me, he's getting put on leave. Maybe" (42).

Injustice when it comes to such cases indicates that white people are still considered "the superior race", since the majority of cops involved in police malpractice rarely go to prison. During the investigation, the detectives while talking to Starr don't even mention the officer's name that shot Khalil, but keep asking questions only about Khalil. At this point Starr knows already that there will be no justice for him. She says "Fifteen minutes later, I leave the police station with my mom. Both of us know the same thing: this is gonna be some bullshit" (49). This quote foreshadows the outcome of the investigation. The end result of the inquiry is "naturally" in favor of the policeman. The white community adopted the thought that black people didn't truly belong to the American society and cannot be trusted. Indeed, it is exactly what happens afterwards, when the decision of the grand jury was revealed. Despite the evidence, and Starr's testimony, who was a direct eyewitness, the grand jury decided to not arrest officer Brian: "The police chief appeared on screen and said what I was afraid he'd say:

‘We have taken into consideration the evidence as well as the statement given by the witness, and as of now, we see no reason to arrest the officer’” (140).

The legal system has double standards when it comes to black people; murder is a criminal act that must be punished by the law no matter who its author is, while in this case, Officer Brian is not even arrested. On one hand there is a white cop who has the right to kill someone to protect himself, on the other hand there is a black man, who is directly labeled as a drug dealer, therefore has no right to be assumed as a normal person. The novel transmits a political message, that state apparatus staffs have a certain position of dominance on others, allowing them to break the law without getting any punishment.

2.4 The Media

The Media have an undeniable influence and power on collective thought, since they are responsible for the dissemination of the information. Its power is reflected in their ability to condition or mold the way of thinking in society. They can set the agenda of political, economic, and social issues, but they can also destroy the reputation of a person, an organization, or a group of people. Althusser specifically named the media as an Ideological State Apparatus, since it functions to disseminate ideology to the masses, meaning that the content broadcasted always serves the elite’s interests and values.

In the novel, the different media do not present Khalil’s case in an objective way, but they have rather worked to distort the reality and omit several actual facts. The report on the case gives clearly a negative image about black people, depicting Starr’s neighborhood as a dangerous place full of criminals and drug dealers “I tense as footage of my neighborhood, my home, is shown. It’s like they picked the worst parts, the drug addicts roaming the streets, the

broken-down Cedar Grove project, gangbangers flashing signs, bodies on the sidewalks with white sheets over them” (143).

Starr, for obvious reasons does not agree with the way the media have portrayed her neighborhood. She resents the fact that they focus only on the negative aspects while completely obliterating all the other aspects that are also part of her quarters, such as the loving families around, and how people look after each other in the neighborhood. The image of black people that is presented is clearly discriminatory and contributes to the marginalization of black people. It also contributes in feeding racist thoughts that are already well ingrained in collective unconscious. Depicting Garden Heights as an infamous ghetto of drug dealers will push the public opinion to perceive Khalil’s death as something normal and legitimate. In addition to the bad assumptions and stereotypes people have about black people, they will not even try to know who Khalil was.

The parts of Khalil’s life shared in the media affect the way the different characters perceive his death; the media and people who did not know Khalil portray his life in a lousy way, focusing only on his involvement in drug dealing to imply that he was just a criminal. Besides, his name was not even mentioned on the news when the case is revealed, “There is a short story about an officer involved in shooting that is investigated. They don’t even say Khalil’s name” (25). This shows that Khalil was an anonymous entity, one among so many others. His name is not that important to be cited—another way of dehumanizing him. This leads many people to conclude that not only his death was justified, but it was also well deserved.

The general public gets tremendously influenced by the television program which examines the case. When Starr watches a program which had Officer Brian’s father as a guest, she notices that what is shown on television is like blaming Khalil for being shot. The interview portrays Officer Brian as a good person, and a good cop who was just trying to save his life,

whereas Khalil is depicted as a drug dealer whose life doesn't really matter. In addition, the version officer Brian's father gives on television is totally erroneous. The interviewer asks about that night:

'Apparently, Brian pulled the kid over because he had a broken taillight, and was speeding.' Khalil was not speeding.

'He said that the kid and his friend immediately started cursing him out.' We never cursed.

'And they kept glancing at each other, like they were up to something. Brian says that's when he got scared, cause they could've taken him down if they teamed up.'

I couldn't have taken anyone down. I was too afraid. He makes us sound like we are super humans. We're kids. (243)

Another evidence of the lack of impartiality in the treatment of this "fate divers" is the fact that the media have told the story only from the white cop's perspective whereas the other party's voice is completely shut down. In one of the news reports, Officer Brian's father plays the role of the victim, and tells people that his son wanted just to save his own life, which is a very distorted version of the reality. Starr is infuriated that the father of the white cop has the power to influence the public and the jury, by fabricating a story where his son is the victim. She is enraged that people are most likely to believe this fabricated version just because it is told by a white man.

The way the media cover the case shows another aspect of white dominance over black people in *The Hate U Give*. The Focus is only on Officer Brian and his father's version, and no consideration is conferred to Starr's testimony. This is another demonstration that the whites

are customarily privileged, whereas black people are consigned to a position of inferiority. Media is a powerful tool used by the white elite in the United States to disseminate its own point of views. They manufacture the images of black people in a way that advances the political agenda of the ruling classes.

CONCLUSION

The Hate U Give (2017) written by Angie Thomas, captures the attention of readers about a very controversial, and important issue. She tackles the issue of systematic racial discrimination, and police brutality, exposing the real nature of American society and system. Although it is a young adult novel genre, this study has shown that it reflects important issues from Postcolonial studies such as Dubois double consciousness, and Bhabha's concept of hybridity. Indeed, the novel depicts the situation of African American people in a post-slavery America, who find themselves trapped in between their own culture and the dominant white culture surrounding them. In the novel, Starr is a representation of this hybridization. She constantly compares between her neighborhood and Williamson, as well as the cultures of black and white people. Because of the apparent cultural differences, she finds difficulties coping and adapting with the two universes she crosses daily.

The analysis of the novel has demonstrated that racial discrimination is deeply rooted in the history of the American society. Although stereotypes and prejudice that persist towards black people are obviously biased they remain awfully alive, and this despite all the political reforms concerning black people's rights. In the novel, the most shocking but ironically the most truthful part is the verdict given by the grand jury; despite all the evidence produced on behalf of Khalil, and the testimony of a direct eyewitness, the officer is acquitted. This is the most suitable example that shows how government institutions oppress a particular community based on a racist basis. As explained by Semmes, racial discrimination is used as a hegemonic tool by the white supremacy to keep black people under permanent subordination, affecting their social and economic status.

On the other hand, applying the theory of Cultural Hegemony of Antonio Gramsci permitted in this work to reveal the way black communities are still dominated, marginalized, and put aside through a system that is designed specifically to keep them under a permanent state of subordination. The various aspects of this hegemony are clearly established in the novel. They operate through the various institutions of the state such as, the judicial system, media, and law enforcement. Gramsci's discussion of cultural hegemony permitted to demonstrate that hegemony on black people is maintained through ideology rather than direct violence. The manipulation of public opinion is executed by disseminating ideas, and values that profit only to the white elite. Khalil's story is a perfect illustration of how this complex machinery works. Moreover, the economic aspect of hegemony is presented in the novel through the social condition of black people, who are trapped in ghettos without real job opportunities. This demonstrates the falseness and the deceiving nature of *common sense* concept which stands for equality in the capitalist system.

The analysis also demonstrates that Althusser's concept of Ideological State Apparatus is still relevant, and applicable not only to the analysis of the novel but also to a lot of events that take place daily. An ideology of systemic racism is developed to defend white positions and possessions on one hand, and to keep black people in a state of subordination on the other hand. In *The Hate U Give*, this ideology operates through the media, which acts as a state apparatus that disseminates false representations of black people, in order to maintain white cultural dominance over African Americans. The false information presented to the masses tend to legitimize violence against black people, and pushes people to accept it as something normal.

All in all, *The Hate U Give* is not just a story about a young black man victim of police brutality, but also an exploration of racial discrimination, and institutionalized racism within the American society. It gives an insight to the real situation of black communities in the

United States, and shows that African Americans have never stopped living in a state of violence, and permanent dominance.

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