

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of The Study

Sociology literature analysis has an important role in human life because it helps us understand society more deeply through the reflection of values, norms, and social conflicts depicted in literary works (Klarer, 2004). Through literature, we can reflect on various social issues such as race, social class, gender, politics, poverty, and injustice, thus broadening our perspective and building empathy for diverse human experiences (Laurenson & Swingewood, 1972). Literary analysis not only deepens our understanding of values and ethics through the exploration of moral dilemmas and ethical questions faced by characters in literary works but also serves as a powerful tool for critiquing social issues. Through critical examination, literature can inspire social change by encouraging readers to reflect on societal problems and consider actions that lead to a more just and inclusive society (Kasih, Adi, & Saktiningrum, 2019).

In the context of the United States, literature often addresses pervasive social issues such as poverty and racism, which can give rise to phenomena like gang culture (Sánchez-Jankowski, 2018). By exploring these issues in literary works, readers are prompted to think critically about the underlying causes of such problems, including the lack of safety, inadequate employment, and limited access to education. Gangs usually arise due to a variety of specific factors, including economic disparity, social environment and cultural influences. In impoverished

neighborhoods, limited employment opportunities may encourage a person to join a gang for financial benefits and security. The social environment plays an important role; family instability and exposure to violence can drive young people to seek a sense of belonging and identity in gangs. In addition, cultural influences, such as media portrayals that glorify gang life, can entice young people, making gang affiliation seem attractive as a way to gain respect. This can cause them to create gangs and territories for survival and protection, which is why gang culture exists. In the United States there are many gangsters and moreover there are legalized gun and drug purchases which can create a gap between gangs and the police. (Fithratullah, M.,2020). There are so many gangs in various cities in the United States, because there are many gangs in the United States, especially in the 2000s, there must be a history about the gang, such as how the gang existed when it was formed and what happened in the 2000s.

Gang culture in America began in the early 20th century with the formation of Latino gangs in major cities such as Los Angeles (Acevedo-Polakovich, 2019). The main factors that influenced the development of these gangs were immigration, poverty, and discrimination. In the 1980s and 1990s, Latino gangs such as MS-13 and 18th Street began to grow rapidly, especially in the California region. Their influence spread across the country, even to their home countries in Central America, due to massive deportations. Today, gang culture remains a significant social problem in the United States.

Gang culture in the United States has deep roots in history and social context. Sociologically, gang involvement is often related to the search for identity and community in socially stressful environments. Historically, early gangs formed in response to racial discrimination and marginalization, particularly among Latino immigrants and other minority groups. They formed gangs as a way to protect themselves from external threats and create solidarity amidst social uncertainty.

Economically, poverty and lack of access to education and decent work are the main driving factors. In a society experiencing great economic inequality, gangs offer an alternative to earning income through illegal activities. Moreover, in high-crime neighborhoods, joining a gang can be seen as the only way to gain protection from violence. Gangs are generally viewed negatively due to their association with violence, crime and illegal activities. However, some may find gangs offer a sense of belonging, protection or identity, especially in disadvantaged communities. Ultimately, the overall impact of gangs is mostly harmful, as gangs often contribute to social problems such as crime, instability, and fear.

The issue on gang culture is also found in American novels. Angie Thomas's *The Hate U Give* novel follows 16-year-old Starr Cart as she deals with the challenges of living in two very different worlds: her poor, mostly black neighborhood of Garden Heights and her affluent, mostly white private school. When her friend Khalil is killed by a police officer during a traffic stop, Starr grapples with grief and anger. Despite the difficulties, she speaks out against injustice and becomes a key part of the fight for justice for Khalil. Starr's family also faces struggles, with her father's past gang involvement and tensions in their neighborhood. As the

community reacts to the officer not being charged, Starr finds her voice and decides to stand up against injustice, inspired by Khalil's memory.

The story on gang culture in the U.S. in *The Hate U Give* novel invites the interest of sociological analysis. As of 2011, around 1.4 million people were involved in over 33,000 active gangs across the United States, ranging from national street gangs to prison gangs and ethnic crime groups. Originating in major cities like New York City and Chicago, these gangs have expanded to urban areas such as Albuquerque and Washington, D.C. They pose significant dangers through involvement in drug trafficking, including smuggling drugs into the U.S., and establishing connections with international criminal organizations.

The issue forms the foundation for analyzing the portrayal of gang culture in *The Hate U Give*, aiming to unveil its social issue underpinnings and broader implications for contemporary society. Political economy, globalization, and surveillance systems have shaped the working-class space. Few gang studies, for example, take seriously indirect violence in the shaping of inner-city communities and their identities; instead, there are countless studies concentrating on "direct" interpersonal violence supposedly enabled by adolescent peer subcultures, mostly of the black, brown, and always lower class variety (Brotherton, 2014). By engaging with diverse scholarly perspectives, this research endeavors to deepen our understanding of gang culture and its significance within the socio-political landscape of urban America.

1.2. Research Question

After considering the background of writing the topic, this study has a problem as follows:

How is gang culture in The United States reflected in her novel *The Hate U Give* novel?

1.3. Research Objective

The purpose of this study is to analyze how and why Angie Thomas reflects on gang culture in the novel *The Hate U Give*. The research aims to explore how Thomas uses the novel to highlight real-world issues such as racism, poverty, and police violence, and to understand how her depiction of gang culture helps readers understand the struggles faced by marginalized communities in the United States.

1.4. Uses of the Study

1.4.1. Theoretical Use

The study contributes to explore gang issues in America as depicted in the novel *The Hate U Give* and to provide theoretical contributions to gang studies within a social context. Literary analysis using sociological literary theory is expected to be beneficial for future research. This study focuses on how racial dynamics, power structures, and identity formation manifest in gang culture, and how subcultural norms, values, and rituals influence the identity construction of marginalized youth. Thus, the findings of this research are anticipated to offer new insights beneficial to other studies focusing on the relationship between race, identity, and social

inequality, and to enrich the literature on social mechanisms within gang culture in America.

1.4.2. Practical Use

Practically, this thesis can be used as a reference by educators, researchers, and policymakers to gain a deeper understanding of gang issues in America as depicted in the novel *The Hate U Give*. The findings of this research can assist educators in designing curricula that are more sensitive to the racial and social dynamics faced by adolescents. Additionally, policymakers can use the insights from this thesis to formulate more effective policies to address gang issues and improve social welfare in marginalized urban communities.

1.5. Scope of Study

This research focuses specifically on analyzing Angie Thomas's depiction of gang culture in the United States during the 2000s as portrayed in her novel '*The Hate U Give*.' The study examined the socio-economic context and racial dynamics within the novel, *The Hate U Give*. The analysis applied sociological approach and Laursen and Swingewood's theories on sociology of literature.