

THE 2000s GANG CULTURE IN THE UNITED STATES SEEN IN ANGIE THOMAS'S *THE HATE U GIVE* NOVEL

(A Thesis)



By:

Gloria Calista Halley

20111004

**ENGLISH LITERATURE STUDY PROGRAM
FACULTY OF ARTS AND EDUCATION
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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical framework guides the analysis of themes, messages, and representations related to gang culture, providing a deeper understanding of the complexities of gang culture in the 2000s of the United States.

2.1 Previous Study

Writer	Title	Method, Approach and Theories	Findings
Leverso and Matsueda (2019)	<i>Gang Organization and Gang Identity: An Investigation of Enduring Gang Membership</i>	Quantitative, theory of crime, gang organization, gang identity theory.	This study supports understanding of ongoing gang membership by means of a theoretical framework based on gang organization and gang identification.
Bigalondo (2003)	<i>Wolves, Sheep, Vatos Locos: Reflection of Gang Activity in Chicano Literature</i>	Descriptive qualitative,	This study looks at issues of identity, community, discrimination, and cultural representation, considering how these themes show up in the way gangs are written about. Discuss problems like violence, drugs, and power.
Destri et.al. (2014)	Cosmopolitanism as sociological perspective on American life in the era of 1980-1990s through Rae Lawrence's Jacqueline Susann's <i>Shadow of the Dolls</i> .	Qualitative research, documentary method for data collection, Swingewood's sociological theory	The research concludes that in the 1980s-1990s America, cosmopolitanism is depicted in the novel through characters living luxurious and glamorous lives, reflecting high social status and contrasting with the era's economic decline.

Yanti & Ferdinal (2021)	<i>The Potrait Of Racial Discrimination Against Black America People In Angie Thomas' The Hate U Give</i>	Qualitative research, documentary method for data collection, Swingewood's sociological theory	The research reveals that racial discrimination against Black American people is a significant issue depicted in Angie Thomas's <i>The Hate U Give</i> . The novel illustrates how systemic racism affects various aspects of life for Black Americans, including their access to education, employment, and legal protection.
Puteri, Oktaviani, Syafitri (2020)	<i>An analysis of social conflict in Eleanor and Park novel by Rainbow Rowell</i>	Qualitative research, sociological literature theory, social conflict theory	The analysis of "Eleanor and Park" reveals three main types of social conflict: conflicts of social positions, interests, and roles. These conflicts highlight the challenges the characters face due to their different social backgrounds and personal goals.

In the first study, Leverso and Matsueda (2019) focused on observations of gang culture and gang membership. Combining Gang Organization Theory with Gang Identity Theory, the researchers sought to offer a complete theoretical framework to grasp continuous gang allegiance. The study's method involved tracking gang membership over time using longitudinal data, allowing the researchers to spot trends and causal links. According to Gang Organization Theory, the hierarchical and regimented character of gangs produces a stable atmosphere that might draw and keep members. The study revealed several significant factors that contribute to continuous gang involvement. Social ties, such as friendships and family ties, play a critical role in maintaining gang membership. Furthermore, the financial gains that gang activity provided often unreachable through legal means incentivize

members to stay connected. Maintaining membership also depended heavily on the cultural capital connected with gang membership that is, respect and recognition within society.

Bigalondo (2003) offers a qualitative literary analysis of gang culture in Chicano literature, exploring themes of identity, community, prejudice, and cultural representation. Using cultural and social identity theory, power and hierarchical structures theory, and concepts of resistance and survival, the study examines how Chicano authors address violence, drugs, and power dynamics. Bigalondo investigates the impact of cultural background and social interactions on gang members' identities and their internal organization and power conflicts. The study highlights how Chicano literature captures the harsh realities of gang life while also critiquing broader social issues like marginalization and prejudice.

The study from Destri et.al. (2014) discusses the concept of cosmopolitanism as a perspective on American society in the 1980s-1990s through Rae Lawrence's novel Jacqueline Susann's *Shadow of the Dolls*. This article addresses two questions that also serve as the research objectives. The first question is about the lifestyles of the characters. The second question concerns the American society's view of cosmopolitanism during the specified period based on the novel. This research uses a sociological perspective to understand the form of cosmopolitanism from the characters' lifestyles based on Swingewood's theory. This study is classified as

qualitative research. The documentary method is used to collect data, and the inductive method is used to analyze the novel. The study contributes to giving insight on how to analyze using sociological literature theories from Laurensen and Swingewood.

The study from Yanti and Ferdinal (2021) examines the issue of racial discrimination against Black Americans as depicted in Angie Thomas's novel *The Hate U Give*. By employing qualitative research and using the documentary method for data collection, they apply Swingewood's sociological theory to analyze the text. Their findings show that systemic racism deeply influences various aspects of life for Black Americans, including access to education, job opportunities, and justice. The novel vividly portrays these challenges, shedding light on the persistent struggles Black Americans endure due to racial discrimination.

The last from Puteri, Oktaviani, and Syafitri (2020) examine social conflict in Rainbow Rowell's novel *Eleanor and Park*. They use qualitative research, drawing on sociological literature and social conflict theories. The study identifies three key types of social conflict: conflicts related to social positions, interests, and roles. These conflicts demonstrate the challenges the characters encounter due to their distinct social backgrounds and personal goals.

2.2 Sociological Approach

This study will focus on the gang culture issue, thus sociological analysis will be needed. Sociological approach is derived from the sociology of literature. The sociological approach to literary studies is often criticized by literary scholars for overly simplifying texts by focusing solely on their social contexts, while sociologists argue that it gives undue importance to an elite and impractical subject matter (Shapiro, 2023, p. xi). Thus, the sociological approach to literature is an approach that examines and analyzes literary works by considering their social context. This approach looks at how literary works reflect, influence, or engage with the social, cultural, and political dynamics at the time they were created.

Shapiro (2003) also noted that literary works serve as mediums through which representations of the social world are conveyed, varying in their degree of shared understanding among contemporaries based on social factors such as class, gender, nation, ethnic group, and others. These representations are also present in non-literary texts. The sociology of literature regards literature as a social activity that is affected by the circumstances surrounding its creation and propagation, and it is strongly linked with values and a world view.

By highlighting the significance of ideology in literature, Laurensen and Swingewood expound on this further. It is believed that literary works are infused with the ideological viewpoint of their creators and mirror the prevailing ideology of the community in which they are created. Swingewood (1972), noted that

sociology is the scientific, objective study of people in society, including social processes and organizations. The objective of sociology is to provide answers to the issues of how society functions, how it is possible, and why society endures. Sociology tries to provide answers to the issues concerning whether society is feasible, how it functions, and why it endures. In essence, it is the scientific, objective study of man in society, as well as the study of social institutions and social processes (Kasih,2018). A picture though not always a clear one emerges from a thorough analysis of the social institutions religious, economic, political, and familial that collectively make up what is known as social structure (Laurenson & Swingewood, 1972).

Like sociology, literature focuses on the social world of humans, their adjustment to it, and their aspirations to transform it. The novel, being the predominant literary form in industrial societies, strives to authentically depict the social interactions between individuals and their families, political systems, and the State. It also explores the roles individuals play within their families and other institutions, as well as the conflicts and tensions among various social groups and classes. In a purely documentary sense, the novel addresses similar social, economic, and political issues as sociology. However, literature goes beyond mere description and scientific analysis, delving into the depths of social life and illustrating the personal experiences of men and women (Laurenson & Swingewood, 1972).

This study will apply sociological theories from Laurenson & Swingewood. There are three fundamental theories of sociological literature from Laurenson & Siwngewood. Here are three key concepts from the approach:

1) Literature as Social Reflection

Laurenson and Swingewood argue that literature reflects the social conditions of its time. This means that literary works are not created in a vacuum; rather, they are influenced by the historical, economic, and social contexts in which they are produced. This reflection can be seen in themes, characters, and settings that mirror societal norms, issues, and changes. By analyzing literature, one can gain insights into the values, conflicts, and dynamics of the society from which it emerges.

2) Literature and Social Change

Another fundamental idea is that literature can influence social change. Laurenson and Swingewood suggest that literary works have the potential to shape public opinion and challenge existing social structures. Writers often use their work to critique social injustices, propose new ideas, and inspire readers to think critically about their world. This transformative power of literature means it can be both a product of its time and a catalyst for societal evolution.

3) The Role of the Author and Reader

Laurenson and Swingewood also emphasize the roles of the author and the reader in the sociological analysis of literature. The author's background, beliefs, and social position can significantly impact the themes and perspectives presented in their work. Similarly, readers bring their own social contexts to their interpretations

of literature. The interaction between the author's intent and the reader's reception is crucial in understanding how literature functions within society. This interaction can create a dynamic process where meaning is continually negotiated and reinterpreted.

Some studies focusing on and using the sociological approach to literature are given. Those studies analyze how the historical and social conditions at the time of the writing of the literary work influence the themes, narrative, and characters in the work. For example, Harper Lee's novel *"To Kill a Mockingbird"* profoundly reflects the racial and social dynamics in the United States in the 1930s, focusing on racial injustice and class differences in society (Sun & Zou, 2021). In sociology of literature, literature considers existing social structures, such as social class, gender, and power hierarchies. For example, in the works of Charles Dickens, such as *Oliver Twist* or *Great Expectations*, the depiction of social injustice and class differences is very visible through the characters and situations in the story (Aminah, 2018; Wati.*et.al.*, 2023) .

Literary sociology also analyzes characters as representations of social types or groups in society. For example, in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, characters like Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy reflects social norms and relationships between different classes (Heavenly & Kasih, 2021). Moreover, literature is often a means to raise social issues that were controversial or relevant at the time of

writing. For example, John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* depicts the economic hardships and injustices against migrant workers during the Great Depression in the United States (Bahaa. *et.al.*, 2023).

The sociological approach to literature considers how readers and the general public respond to literary works. For example, George Orwell's *1984* discusses political issues and individual freedoms that can lead to reflections on social control in modern society (Fabiane, 2012). Through a sociological approach to literature, it is understood the relationship between literary works and their social reality. This analysis helps understand how literature can be a mirror for human life as well as a tool to ask questions about the norms and values prevailing in society.

2.3 Social Context of Gang Culture in the U.S. in 2000s

2.3.1 Concept about Gang Culture

The paper is about gang culture. Gang is a group of young people, especially young men, who spend time together, often fighting with other groups and behaving badly. A complicated and multifarious phenomenon marked by many social, economic, and cultural aspects is gang culture. Examining the organizational structure, social dynamics, identity development, and larger socio-economic background in which gangs function helps one to grasp gang culture. Gabor (1994) noted that defining gangs can be challenging. In a broad sense, nearly anyone in an informal group could be considered a gang member, although crime is not a central activity for

most of these groups. Many adolescents, for instance, are part of peer groups that often act together and may engage in minor criminal activities. Leverso & Matsueda (2019) noted that gang culture is linked to gang structure, but the structure doesn't greatly affect membership duration. A strong gang identity, which enhances self-worth and belonging, is more influential in retaining members than organizational aspects. While both organization and identity impact membership length, identity is key to fostering long-term commitment.

2.3.2 Gang Culture in the US in 2000s

American society's socioeconomic framework is strongly ingrained with gangs, which are frequently distinguished by their territoriality, hierarchical organization, and criminal activity. Socioeconomic disadvantage is a key factor that contributes to the creation of gangs. Gang growth is facilitated by poverty, a lack of educational possibilities, and restricted access to good employment options. In order to survive financially or as a way to cope with feelings of marginalization and alienation, many people, especially young people may turn to gangs.

In the US, from 1919 to 1926, in Chicago. The gang's hangout is its castle, the center of a feudal domain under constant defense. Gang leaders hold power like old barons, vigilant of invaders and ready to swoop down onto competitors' territory and carry off booty or prisoners or inflict retribution on their foes. Sometimes their supporters turn into roaming, lawless bands, attacking the population throughout a

vast area (Rodgers, 2017). Street gangs have been an enduring part of American society since the late 1800s. Their presence has been recorded for over a century, with sociologists beginning to study them in the 1920s. This long-standing history emphasizes the persistent and entrenched nature of gang culture in the United States.

This research discussed issue on gang culture in the United States. It is based on journals and articles in the 2000s and explains existing theories and explores more about gangsters in America. Gang culture in the United States around the year 2000 was shaped by a variety of influences and had unique characteristics. During this period, gangs were heavily involved in criminal activities, especially in urban environments. Some key aspects of gang culture in the U.S are found out.

During the early 2000s, rap and hip-hop music gained immense popularity and became influential in shaping urban youth culture, including gang dynamics (Lozon & Bensimon, 2015). Study by Subekti (2019) found out that artists like Tupac Shakur in his song lyrics often depicted life in inner-city neighborhoods, addressing themes of struggle, survival, and street violence. His music served as a soundtrack that resonated with young people living in similar environments, potentially glorifying aspects of gang life.

In the U.S., gangs used specific markers to distinguish themselves and show allegiance to their group (Leverso & Matsueda, 2019). This could include wearing certain colors or specific clothing styles, displaying tattoos with gang symbols, or using hand signs as signals of affiliation. These signs helped members identify each other and assert their presence in their neighborhoods. Gangs were heavily involved in various criminal activities to maintain control over territory and generate revenue. Drug trafficking was a significant source of income for many gangs, leading to turf wars and violent confrontations with rival groups. Extortion, theft, and acts of intimidation were also common tactics used by gangs to exert influence and power.

Gangs in the U.S. operated with a hierarchical structure where leaders (often known as "OGs" or Original Gangsters) made decisions and delegated tasks to lower-ranking members (Brothenton & Gude, 2020). Each member had specific responsibilities within the gang, such as handling drug distribution, collecting money, or carrying out violent acts. Gangs actively recruited new members, especially vulnerable youth seeking a sense of belonging and identity. They offered a sense of camaraderie, protection, and perceived status within the community. Recruitment often targeted marginalized individuals who lacked positive opportunities and support systems.

Competition between gangs over territory, drug markets, or respect often led to ongoing conflicts and violence. Disputes escalated quickly and could result in retaliatory attacks, shootings, or even murders. Rivalries were fueled by a desire for dominance and control within the criminal underworld. Gang presence had profound effects on local communities. Residents faced increased levels of fear, as gang-related violence and crime threatened public safety. Businesses suffered from extortion and protection rackets. Additionally, gang activities contributed to the deterioration of neighborhoods, creating environments of instability and insecurity. Gang culture in the US in 2000 represented a complex social phenomenon intertwined with issues of poverty, racial segregation, and systemic challenges facing urban communities (Leverso & Matsueda, 2019). The consequences of gang activities extended beyond criminality, shaping the everyday experiences and perceptions of individuals living in affected areas.

2.4 The Author's Life

Angie Thomas was born and raised in Jackson, Mississippi, on September 20, 1988. At a young age, Thomas experienced several incidents of gun violence. She grew up near the home of Medgar Evers, the civil rights activist who was assassinated, and her mother even heard the gunshots that killed him. When Thomas was six, she witnessed a shootout.

In an interview with The Guardian, Thomas described how her mother took her to the library the day after the shooting to show her that there was more to the world beyond what she had seen. This experience inspired Thomas to start writing. As a teenager, Thomas briefly pursued a career as a rapper and was featured in *Right On!* magazine. She later earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Belhaven University, becoming the first Black teenager to graduate from the creative writing program.

As a child, Thomas witnessed a shootout between drug dealers at a park, an event that left a lasting impression on her. The next day, her mother took her to the library to broaden her perspective and show her that there was more to the world than what she had seen. This experience sparked Thomas's passion for writing. She wrote her first story, a Mickey Mouse fan fiction, that same year. Over a decade later, while attending a mostly white university in Jackson, Thomas began crafting the story of Starr and Khalil. Thomas continues to reside in the same Georgetown neighborhood where she grew up. In 2009, she was deeply affected by the news of Oscar Grant, a 22-year-old Black man, being arrested and shot in the back by police in California.