

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Reason for Choosing The Topic

The United States of America is a superpower country that embraces liberalism and a democratic system. Individual interests and freedoms are highly respected, and society is free to present and express their opinions. However, in this superpower country with 327.2 million people, society cannot avoid social inequality. One of the social disparities that occur in the United States is discrimination. Discrimination is one of the social problems that cannot be avoided because of the many differences and the common sense of tolerance towards fellow people. The discrimination that occurs will impact the victim, such as physical, social, and the most frequently encountered impacts on victims are psychological.

On The Come Up, a novel written by an American author Angie Thomas portrays the southern part of the United States of America, where the African American minorities live. This novel presents social problems that focus on the discrimination experienced by characters and how they deal with it. Thomas describes many injustices and discrimination that are done by some people.

One of Thomas' characters is a 16-year-old girl named Bri, an African American who dreams of becoming a rap singer. Bri is a teenager who is stubborn, emotional, and also a person who dares to express her opinion. Bri and her family live in the Garden High Neighborhood, Mississippi. People call this area the Ghetto, where only minorities live in this area. Bri with her friends Malik and Sonny attend Midtown School of the Arts, which is in Midtown Neighborhood, where African Americans go to school there and people from various ethnicities such as Latino and Caucasians.

The majority of discrimination received by the characters happened in school. Bri, along with her friends Sonny, Malik, and Curtis, has to deal with the school's authorities' unfair treatments. Besides them, Bri's mother, Jay, also became a victim of discrimination she received from society. They had to cope and deal with it daily. They had to face a society that gave a different treatment because they are distinct. Amid a society with a low tolerance, they experience various kinds of discrimination, and they must be able to survive in any way. As a result of the characters' discrimination, they must feel a psychological impact that disrupts their daily lives.

This research's significance is that the story elevates daily life in the Garden Height, where social inequality occurs in a country that embraces a liberal ideology and democratic system. There are still many people in the United States experiencing discrimination and dealing with the impact of the unequal treatment they face. Experiencing discrimination is an unpleasant thing. Therefore, the writer considers the discrimination and psychological impacts they receive are essential to be studied.

1.2 The Objective and Scope of the Study

The object of the analysis is a novel entitled *On The Come Up*, written by Angie Thomas. The story in this novel occurred around 2007-2019 in the southern part of the United States of America. In this study, the writer takes data of discrimination experienced by five characters and the psychological impacts of the discrimination that can be seen from three characters. The purpose of this research is to analyze the psychological impacts of discrimination on the characters. Although this novel can be discussed from another perspective, the writer decides to only focus on the psychological impacts of discrimination on the characters and discrimination types.

1.2 Formulation of the Problem

Based on the study's objective and scope, two research questions help the writer analyze *On The Come Up*. The two research questions are:

1. How are discriminations, as seen in the novel *On The Come Up*?
2. How are the psychological impacts of discrimination on the characters in the novel *On The Come Up*?

1.4 Review of Related Literature

In this section, the writer discusses the previous study done on the novel and the theories that the writer uses to analyze this novel.

1.4.1 Previous Study

This research discusses the psychological impacts of discrimination on the characters seen in the novel *On The Come Up*. To avoid similarities with other studies, the writer decides to look for other research about discrimination in this novel. After the writer searches, there are no studies *On The Come Up* by Angie Thomas yet.

This novel has been reviewed by several novel critics, Browne Mahogany L. from The Washington Post. She stated that "This coming-of-age story depicts structurally racist moments, such as black children being followed while grocery shopping, presented in a way to invoke action from allies and provide a nod of recognition from teens of color. Micro-aggressions are also examined, as Bri begins to question the savior complexes of well-meaning schoolteachers. The text challenges its readers to think deeply about white privilege, police brutality, and the circumstances designed to break the spirits of young people of color".

Lawrence Patrice from The Guardian stated Thomas uses the same setting as her first novel in *On The Come Up*, the events that occur in *The Hate U Give* resonate in this novel. Prejudice, racism, and double standards are characteristics that exist in every individual's life. Thomas describes her character well, such as Trey, a quiet young man with talent in academics who can only get a job at a pizza restaurant, and 10-year-old Jojo can't wait to become a gang member. *On The Come Up* is not reluctant to fight against Bri's community itself - homophobia, useless gang conflicts, and living up to thuggish Glock-toting stereotypes. This makes the novel *On The Come Up* sound like a good, tight-knit story, but the novel is funny and enjoyable. Bri often acts without thinking about the dangerous consequences, but she is someone who is very loyal and has an incredible repertoire of sentences, complaining that her "cornrows are so tight I can feel my thoughts". Her friendship with Sonny and Malik is well illustrated, with their mother - when they go out to eat 'their butts will sit there laughing and talking until the restaurant closes'. It is a celebration of African-American culture's achievements in music, TV, and film, full of references that feel like gifts to readers who don't see their lives represented in this way.

1.4.2 Theoretical Framework

In doing the research, the writer needs theories to analyze the literary work. Theory is a tool to help the writer to analyze and understand the topic that the writer applied as a base of the research. Based on the title, this research focuses on psychological impacts of discrimination on the characters; therefore, this research is a psychological study on literature by applying discrimination concept to analyze *On The Come Up*.

Literary works cannot be separated from life that describes the human personality. Emir (2016) describes literature and psychologies are the two types of science that study the human soul. Literature describes human behavior, while psychology studies human behavior

and its causes. He also stated that literature is the result of the mind, therefore psychology of literature includes everything readers want to know about literature, as long as humans become themes in a literary work, psychological components will be present in the literary work.

Wellek and Warren (as cited in Emir 2016) categorize psychological analysis in a literary works composed of analyzing the author's personality which how a particular literary work is made, the types of literary psychology present in literature and the characteristics of their behavior, and the effect of literature on its reader. Emir (2016) mentions that Abrams explains psychological analysis in literary work based on four components, namely study the effect of social conditions on emotion, thoughts and behaviors of the characters in the story or novel, the analysis of the characters' personalities, the process of a literary work formation and the psychology of creativity. The writer decides to analyze this novel by studying the characteristics and psychology of characters that are influenced by existing social conditions.

Many factors can affect human psychology one of which is discrimination. Discrimination can be understood as the conduct that discriminating, dividing, or marginalizing a person or group inside the society by pores and skin color, class, race, financial system or religion.

CCMA (2002) stated that Discrimination is to point out favor, prejudice or bias for or against an individual on any whimsical grounds, as an example on the idea of race, gender, sex, pregnancy, legal status, family responsibility, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age incapacity, religion, HIV status, conscience, belief, political opinion, culture, language associated birth by an leader. Discrimination becomes a social problem that triggers a lack of tolerance and becomes a gap in society. Nickel who states in his article in the Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy : "Discrimination is morally wrong because its

premise that one group is less worthy than another is insulting to its victims, because it harms its victims by reducing their self-esteem and opportunities, and because it is unfair.”

Kite et al (2016) describe that there are several forms of discrimination such as:

1. Blatant discrimination

Blatant discrimination is a treatment that can be identified, visible, intentional, and can be documented according to Benokraitis & Feagin (as cited in Kite et al 2016). For example The mission of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (as cited in Kite et al 2016) describe James Byrd an African American who murdered by being chained to the back of the bus and dragged along the road in Texas, Lee (as cited in Kite et all 2016) also describe another example is the discrimination that is felt when using public accommodation such as shopping. Victims will be followed and treated as if they were thieves.

2. Subtle Discrimination

Benokraitis & Feagin (as cited in Kite et al 2016) stated that subtle discrimination is unfair and dangerous behavior that is less visible and unconscious because it is done subtly and looks normal. For example, Claude Steel (as cited in Mary E. 2016) explains a story from his friend who notices Jerome was a black boy who was ignored because he had prominent artistic talent in third grade. But the teacher did not pay attention, and the child was handed down one class to the next. Jerome seemed to be portrayed as the image of black children in America. Maybe that is more acceptable than Jerome who had artistic talent.

3. Covert Discrimination

Benokraitis & Feagin (as cited in Mary E. 2016) explain that covert discrimination is unfair and dangerous treatment carried out with the aim of ensuring failure such as in recruitment or in work situations. Benokraitis & Feagin (as cited in Mary E. 2016) also

presents examples, in employee recruitment like limit some people from certain social groups in a job, or make members of certain social groups to fail.

From the theory above it can be understood that there are 3 types of discrimination that occur to victims. As a result of this discrimination can affect the physical and mental of a person and this will be very influential in the life of that person.

Morgan (2019) stated that “Discrimination is linked with negative mental health outcomes (e.g., anxiety, depression, negative self-esteem, distress, hopelessness, loneliness, psychological distress, social and emotional difficulties, stress, suicide, etc.)” It can be understood that Morgan explains the psychological impact of discrimination. He gives examples of the psychological impact such as. dizziness, or a rapid heartbeat. Emotional anxiety is usually characterized by feelings of tension, anxious thoughts, and physical changes such as increased blood pressure

1. Anxiety

American Physiological Association describe that people with anxiety disorders usually have disturbing thoughts. They will avoid certain situations because they are worried. They may experience physical disorders such as trembling.

1. Depression

American Psychiatric Association explains that depression is a serious and common illness that negatively affects a person's feelings, thoughts, and actions. The cause of depression is feeling sad or losing interest. Depression can cause a variety of emotional and physical problems that can reduce one's activities.

2. Negative Self-Esteem

According to Centre Clinical Interventions low or negative self-esteem is when someone has a negative opinion of them or evaluates themselves negatively, and places a general negative value on oneself as a person.

3. Distress

American Psychological Association describes that distress is a negative response from stress that often involves negative effects and physiological reactivity which is a type of stress that results from feeling overwhelmed by loss, demands and threats. This effect is detrimental to a person by producing physical and psychological maladaptation that have serious health effects on a person.

4. Emotional Difficulties

Psychologist Anywhere Anytime explains there are common emotional problem that can be found in everyday life for example, anger, anxiety, depression, frustration, grief, guilt, lack of confidence, self-esteem, and stress. One of the emotional problems that mention above is anger. American Psychological Association Dictionary of Psychological describes that anger is an emotions that are felt and characterized by tension and hostility that stem from the frustration of real or imagined injuries by others, or perceived injustice.

5. Stress

Casarella, Jennifer from WebMD explains stress is when a person reaches a peak where he or she feels overwhelmed and cannot cope with a condition as a result of pressure that cannot be controlled. Common symptoms of a person experiencing stress are depression, sleep problems, tension, anxiety, work errors, lack of concentration, and apathy. If stress is not managed properly, this can affect someone's psychic and psychological. Therefore, someone who is experiencing stress is important to be able to manage that.

a. Lack of Concentration

One of the stress symptoms that mention above is lack of concentration. According to Lloyd C. William (2018) Concentration difficulty is a decrease in a person's ability to focus his or her mind on something. Difficulty concentrating is related with impulsivity, worry or distracting thoughts, over activity, inattention and difficulty staying awake.

6. Suicide

American Dictionary Psychology explains depression and other mental illnesses can cause suicide. Suicide is an action to end the life of the individual itself.

From the explanation above discrimination has many negative impacts, especially in the psychological side of the victims. Therefore, in this research the writer decides to analyze the type of discrimination and its impact to the characters in *On The Come Up* novel by Angie Thomas. All types of discrimination are experienced by the characters; meanwhile the psychological impacts are anxiety, emotional difficulties, stress, and lack of concentration. Since anxiety and lack of concentration are also as stress symptoms therefore, for the analysis they will be put under subchapter of stress.

1.5. Method of the Research

This research focuses on type of discrimination and psychological impact to the character in the novel *On The Come Up* by Angie Thomas. Discrimination that occurs in this novel is unfair treatment by the perpetrator to the victim which causes the victim to experience psychological impact. In conducting this research the writer must find answers to research problems, by understanding the meaning of the text and answering research problems. The writer decided to use interpretation and close reading techniques.

Jacobus (2001) explains that interpretation is investigating the meaning of text by drawing understanding, background and observations while understanding literary works. Readers will have a special response when they read the text. Literary works and writers can get high marks in the interpretation of literary works. In conducting the interpretation technique the writer starts with the close reading method.

For this research, the writer begins by using the method close reading technique to understand the novel. According to Jacobus (2001) close reading examines details; interpretation aims to establish the overall meaning of a work. A work of literature may be interpreted in a number of ways, but some interpretations are more convincing than other. Jacobus (2001) also stated that close reading using the form of writing, silent discussion or observation, which must be based on questions on the text. In close reading a person is required to take the text seriously enough to study it in search of details that may not be observed, checking the text for special words and terms that refer to the dictionary to ascertain the meaning when necessary.

In conducting research, the writer collects data by reading the novel carefully, deeply, and repeatedly. Then the writer takes the data as evidence and relates it to the theory that the writer uses. In conducting the analysis, the writer analyzes the experience of discrimination and the psychological impact experienced by the characters in *On The Come Up*. Jacobus (2001) also said meaning in a work can be found explicitly and implicitly. In conducted this research, the writer also discovered the meaning of implied and express data and use it as a support in conducted the analysis.

Jacobus (2001) explains that close reading usually involves taking specific notes that may be important in interpretation, such as underlining and making lists of specific importance that can help interpret the story. In close reading, the writer underlines and lists important and specific data of discrimination and psychological impact to assist in the analysis. Jacobus (2001) also describes that when doing close reading, the things that must be considered are the settings, characters, themes, plot, style, actions, and other important elements. The writer uses settings, characters, themes, plot, styles, actions, and other important elements to assist in conducting analysis; this can make the analysis clearer and easy to understand.

Brummet (2018) said close reading is the mindful, disciplined reading of an object with a view to a deeper understanding of its meaning. It means the writer needs to read to be focused and re-read the novel for several times to understand the novel. After the writers understand the novel, the writer need to find the data based on the theory that the writer used. The writer decides to read the novel *On Come Up* novel repeatedly to understand the novel and adjust it to the theory that used, so this will facilitate the writer in completing the study.

The writer used discrimination theory focuses on blatant, subtle and covert discrimination and psychological impact on the characters. The data are referring in chapter II

and III. The writer will conduct this research with discipline and meticulousness so that the data obtained becomes valid.