



RESEARCH PAPER**Racial Discrimination in Young Adult Diasporic Fictions: A Critical Analysis**

¹Naheed Qasim*, and ²Prof. Dr. Najia Asrar Zaidi

1. PhD Scholar, Department of English Language and Literature, University of Balochistan Quetta, Balochistan, Pakistan
2. Professor, Department of English Language and Literature, University of Balochistan Quetta,, Balochistan Pakistan

***Corresponding Author**

naheedqasim41@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study is conducted to explore the racial components in the Afro-American and Middle- East young adult diasporas' writings "The Hate U Give" (2017) by Angie Thomas (Afro-American) and (Iranian-American) "A Very Large Expense of Sea"(2018). The method selected for this study is qualitative and uses Critical Race Theory (CRT) as its primary theoretical framework. Through the examination of these novels, it becomes evident that while racism manifests differently in Afro-American and Middle Eastern contexts, the underlying themes of prejudice, discrimination, and the struggle for identity and acceptance are universal. Afro-American novel often focus on systemic racism, historical oppression, and the legacy of slavery, while Middle Eastern young adult novels address Islamophobia, cultural stereotypes, and the challenges of cultural assimilation in Western societies. Despite these differences, both sets of novels share a common goal of shedding light on the racial experiences of marginalized communities and advocating for social justice and equality.

KEYWORDS

Middle- East, Racism, Young Adult Fictions

Introduction

Numerous studies have been conducted on the subject of Diaspora since the Diaspora's debut issue in May 1991, with the majority of these studies concentrating on Jews who were exiled from their homeland and their attempts to return. Recent research on Diaspora literature have been conducted from the perspectives of multi-nationalism and foreign cultures, which has somewhat complicated the overall topic. In this study, the researcher takes a novel approach to the topic of diaspora by examining the young adult literature from the context of how racism affects children's lives. In regards to the concerns of Coming of Age, YAL emphasizes current social problems that are connected to the protagonist's age and experiences, such as identity crisis, mental illness, psychological effects, moral ambiguity, gender stereotypes, sexism, racism, and LGBT issues, as well as divine encounters, dystopian worlds, hybrid scientific realism, homelessness, hopelessness, cultural conformity and underage marriages.

The subject matter of Diaspora, in researcher opinion, goes far beyond than seeming assimilation, alienation, and maintaining one's social and cultural identity. It involves the assimilation of immigrants' minds and ways of thinking into their new cultures, as well as the effects this has on their minds. The issue of immigration dislocation has been extensively discussed by academics and subject matter specialists in Diaspora writing. The researchers are enthralled by the novel idea and believe it to be very advantageous to

approach their work from a fresh perspective. The present research paper studied the Diaspora texts from new perspective, which will help out the literary students of English Literature to understand the diversity and association of racism and Diaspora in young adult literature.

The term "Diaspora" used to only refer to certain communities forced to leave their home countries, such as Greeks, Armenians, and Jews. However, in recent years, it has come to refer to all people who left their home countries for a variety of reasons and are now residing in other countries. Western countries, Europe and America, which were the colonizers and still oppress people of different ethnicities based on their race and religion, particularly those from the South. Additionally, western imperial powers have preconceived notions about members of other communities, and these stereotypes serve as the standard by which they view all members of that community. For example, the term "Muslim" conjures up images of people who are violent, extremist, and perpetually looking for an excuse to wage war and commit atrocities. Because the western powers are unable to tolerate the diversity of societies, religions, and cultures, Middle-East Muslims in western societies are marginalized and never accepted because they do not fit in, owing to their religion as well as the Afro-American due to their color. In such circumstances the marginalized communities in western countries have no option but to accept and internalize the social norms and code of life to be able to fit in. The term Diaspora encompasses various subjects such as social structure, gender and individuality of people.

Literature Review

Young Adult literature

Although the genre of young adult literature appears to have gained some popularity recently, it is still extremely young and is still expanding. In the past century, there have been many changes made to it; some of the most significant ones have to do with the theme, format, and content. Young readers must be aware of these changes and able to recognise the present literary development process in YA fiction.

American professor Christopher Everett Crowe specialises in Young Adult literature. What is YA Literature, among other well-known essays and books, has been authored by him. (1998), *The Problem with YA Literature* (2001), and *The Last Taboo: Spirituality in Young Adult Literature* (2005), his first book. Have you ever pondered exactly what may be labelled YA literature? he posed in his piece *Problem with YA Literature*. (2001, P. 146). Young Adult literature is fiction created for readers between the ages of 12 and 18. The 1950s saw a rise in popularity for young adult fiction, and since 2000, due to globalisation, reading has continuously increased. American literature started to steer clear with spiritually based ritualistic tales in the middle of the 19th century, as well as evolved protagonists beset by self- and Other-captivity narratives. The tougher daily struggles that the Teen Protagonist faces have pushed teenagers to mature more quickly than they do as they age. The term Tweenager, which refers to the phenomena of children becoming adults through the process of denaturalization, first appeared in a 1987 study titled *Marketing and Media Decisions*. YAL fights against this process of maturing before puberty, therefore therapeutic pedagogy surrounds YAL to show kids images of other teens who experience comparable things so they can benefit from their experiences. Swiderek stated, "Their pain and unhappiness do not come from books, it comes from life" (35).

Dimensions of Racism

This section provides an overview of the research that indicates how the concept of racial bias has changed over time and how it manifests today. The researcher makes an attempt to draw a connection between the two ideas by highlighting racism's characteristics in the fields of law, administration, economics, politics, and sociocultural terrains.

Modern forms of racism, such as "Traditional racism," "Biological racism," or "Open racism," promote the ranking of different racial groups and the subjugation of those particular groups to others. Declaring the superiority of one "race" over another is no longer relevant nowadays. Since science has proven that there is no such thing as "race," it is frequently possible to practise "race-less racism," which is built on the premise that cultural differences are multifaceted.

The researcher looked into how racists often think and how they behaved differently following the terrorist incidents on September 11, 2001. Benedict noted a change in American policy that offered "asylum" to "fear" long before the attacks (1942, p.125). Immigrants destroyed the "melting pot" school of thought (p.125). It also turned out to be a key element of racism. Jim Crow laws and the Quota Act of 1921 and 1924 both revealed American plans to outlaw "immigration" (Benedict 1942, p.125). Due to this circumstance, immigration became "more than a spectacle of one decade...to a subsequent decade" in racist host countries. (Benedict 1942, p.127). In America, racial prejudice became a powerful emotional behaviour that required a thorough comprehension of the economic, social, and historical backdrop and was "psychologically complicated" (Benedict 1942, p.168). Benedict put out man's endeavour to "classify" himself based on region, skin tone, and eye colour some 50 years ago (1942, p.19). Conflicting classifications in the realms of science and sociology can be traced back to biological principles and human history. Additionally, my research disproves racism's biological foundations. It is too influenced by racist cultural and religious interpretations.

In terms of Whites and Blacks, racism in the world of the late 20th century went well beyond what was thought to be possible. Over time, the idea became a "catch-all" in the social sciences (Stocking, 1966). Boas (1966), a pioneer in rejecting the "theory of evolution" as the basis of race, also examined racism as the outcome of "culture and tradition" (1966). Recent travel restrictions on immigrants in America are consistent with earlier assertions that they are less than Americans. It highlights the irony of the situation in America, a country whose slogan has long been "the land of immigrants." In the modern world, the term "immigrant" refers to Asians, notably Muslims. Understanding the racist attitudes that capitalism hides behind is crucial.

Racism, Diaspora and Young Adult Literature

From the past to the present, we have seen an increase in racism, nationalism, and prejudice in Europe, which mostly irritates refugees, immigrants, settlers, Muslims, Roma, and Jews. The current financial and economic crisis as well as the geopolitical unpredictability of some nations in North Africa and the Middle East appear to have contributed to the aggravation of this spectacle.

Currently, racism has taken on a new form and does not follow the traditional "racism" pyramid. Experienced racism is commonly "race-less racism," which is based on the idea that cultural transformations are complex. The target and sound effects of current racism are the same as those of classic racism, despite being more subtle and restrained.

Young Adult literature has also changed significantly over the past century; some of the most significant changes have been in the areas of substance, manner, and topic. In the contemporary young adult fictions most of the writers are dealing with the themes of prejudice and racism and their effects on young immigrants, such as Flake (2005 *WhoAmIWithoutHim?* narrated about the life of young immigrants and the everyday racism they were facing in the host society.

Material and Methods

Research Design

The selection of research design depends upon researcher requirement of study. The method selected for this study is qualitative because it is established on literary debate.

Theoretical Framework

This study, which focuses on the topic of internalized racism as it is delimited to a comparative study of Afro-American and Middle East Young Adult Diasporic Literature, uses Critical Race Theory (CRT) as its primary theoretical framework. In the middle of the 1970s, the growth of Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a recognized area of critical inquiry was greatly aided by critics like Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman, and Richard Delgado. When the civil rights movement started in the 1950s and 1960s, it first gathered momentum. The first of the CRT precepts acknowledges the existence of race in our culture, despite it being a social construct and not a biological fact. The objective of this research was to uncover the racial components that the young diasporic novels exposed and to investigate how the narrative represented racism in Afro-American and Middle- East diasporic writings. The above two mentioned novels has served as the source for the study's data.

Delgado and Stefancic categorize the fsix basic tenets of critical race theory. The current study is based on the one 'Central Principles of CRT, which is the Everyday Racism.

Everyday Racism

Racism is deeply rooted, constructed and deep-seated as normal mechanism in society. (Delgado,2009). Many White Americans still believe that the term "racism" exclusively refers to overt acts of prejudice, such as verbal or physical assaults on colour community, the behavior of white nationalist organizations, the purposeful and evident elimination of people of color from certain restaurants, housing, and common organizations open to the general public, and similar acts. However, the types of racism that affect people of color on a daily basis and are the norm rather than the exception are often the most emotionally taxing and anxiety-inducing.

For instance, when African Americans and Middle Eastern Muslim immigrants enter their establishments, white store clerks or security employees frequently observe or even follow them. And members of minority groups frequently experience a lack of common decency from their white neighbors – they are ignored, they observe white people grimacing or rolling their eyes, they overhear sarcastic remarks made at their expense – in the most everyday circumstances: while in line at the pharmacy or grocery store, while paying for gas at the gas station, while asking for information at the bank, and so on.

Results and Discussion

Everyday Racism in "A Very Large Expanse of Sea"

Tahereh Mafi's 2018 semi-autobiographical young adult novel *A Very Large Expanse of Sea* is set in America one year after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. Shirin, a Muslim teenager from Iran who was born in America, encounters prejudice and bigotry both at school and in the outside world. Shirin tries to keep emotional distance from her friends to protect herself from harsh racist comments, but the tentative romance she develops with popular white boy Ocean Desmond James is too strong to ignore.

The extremism of racism she faced in her life when two classmates knocked her to the ground shortly after the 9/11 terrorist attacks and tore off her headscarf. Shirin is frequently the target of insults expressing intolerance and hatred. Notably, the young guys got away with not being punished after putting a child on the ground and attempting to suffocate her with her own scarves. In order to save themselves the police labeled their act as "dumb" instead of accepting it a hate crime from which it is evident that they were more sympathetic with the criminals rather than with Shirin, the genuine victim. Child Protective Services reveals a surprising detail which is indicating that Shirin's Muslim parents were perceived as more menacing than the assailants who had recently assaulted her. Additionally, she was held accountable for her own ordeal and given a contact number to use if she ever felt endangered. A new chapter for Shirin begins with this tragedy. Even though it didn't immediately incite her all-consuming rage, it did harden her façade and make her feel like she had to be on guard, which would have a long-lasting effect on her.

The cops never arrested anyone that day. The police lights had scared the guys enough to back off, so when the officers got out of the car I was sitting on the sidewalk, shaking, trying to untangle my scarf from around my neck. The cops sighed, told these two assholes to stop being stupid, and sent them home.

She makes the decision that it is safer for her to hide behind thick emotional walls since she can more readily fend off nasty remarks from others and her own ignorance with a hard exterior and a sharp tongue. Ocean, a Caucasian junior and standout on the basketball team, persuades Shirin that they shouldn't suppress their feelings for each other. He reassures her that any hateful or racist remarks won't affect him if they decide to go public with their relationship.

The day after Ocean's mother approaches Shirin to tell her that Ocean needs to get a basketball scholarship for college and that Shirin needs to end their relationship so that he can focus on basketball again, the basketball coach chastises Shirin in his office, telling her she is ruining Ocean's chances of having a great season. Shirin ends her relationship with Ocean because she feels helpless. When Shirin and the breakdancing gang participate in a school-wide talent competition, Shirin dazzles instructors and students with her skills, but she considers their newfound sincerity to be disingenuous.

Shirin was always used to face harsh comments owing to headscarf, she explained to Ocean why she chooses to carry a headscarf rather than having to, as he presumes, because she is compelled to. It is part of her cultural and religious life then why so much racial discrimination related culture. Since so much of Shirin's life is outside her control, having the freedom to decide who gets to see her, when they can, and how they do it provides her the autonomy she needs. In an earlier part of the novel, she compared her headscarf to armour; in this section, she elaborates on its function in her life and explains that it provides her strength and safety. She refutes the idea that wearing a headscarf limits her ability to express herself through other fashion choices, such as tight jeans or unconventional footwear, by actively shaping how she is perceived. Although she has occasionally thought that taking it off would make her life simpler, she finally, rejects succumbing to societal pressure from racist and prejudiced individuals. She prioritizes her

own autonomy, self-reliance, and individuality over the hasty judgments of closed-minded individuals, recognizing that such reactions reflect more about the people making them than about herself.

'It makes me feel, I don't know. Like I'm in control. I get to choose who gets to see me. How they see me... Obviously I don't think anyone should wear it if they don't want to. But I like it. I like that you have to ask for my permission to see my hair.'

Everyday Racism in "The Hate U Give"

The novel "The Hate U Give" is found to portray the racism that is practiced on a daily basis by organizations and individuals, specifically the police and corporations. Thomas' "The Hate U Give" based on the reality of racism in America, where African Americans and other Black people continue to face discrimination on the basis of race, either from individuals or institutions. She depicts racism in America realistically based on actual events that have occurred here. Hailey's father exhibits personal bigotry in the narrative when he was calling the Black community in their neighborhoods with the name of "The Ghetto,"

In this work, Thomas illustrates the discrimination that black people must endure due to their race. The author addresses throughout the book, the disparities between white and black people's lives – their environments, their conditions, and how society treat them

"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.

In the above quoted lines, Maverick explains to Starr how black people face discrimination since they are not afforded the same employment options as white people. They are the last option for American businesses, and they do not want to hire them. The majority of the black characters in the narrative are middle-class to lower-class individuals, which is evidenced by the fact that they are unable to secure suitable employment that would better their financial situation.

Moreover, an instance of individual racism in the narrative occurs through Hailey's father, who indirectly demeans Black people by referring to their neighborhood as "The Ghetto." For instance, he prohibits Hailey from attending when Starr gave an invitation to Hailey and Maya to her home in Garden Heights; because he is reluctant to have his daughter stay overnight in what he perceives as a disadvantaged area. The term "ghetto" is used to denote a section of a city, particularly a slum where minorities reside. It was initially used in Venice to represent a section of the town where Jews were used to be segregated and confined. Hailey's father refers to Garden Height as "The Ghetto," which indirectly degrades both Starr's family and other Black people. He implies that the other black characters and Starr in the tale are underprivileged slum dwellers, and he won't let her daughter spend any time there.

The systemic racism practiced by the police and businesses is also mentioned in the book "The Hate U Give." As Starr said to Khalil; *"My parents haven't raised me to fear the police, just to be smart around them. They told me it's not smart to move while a cop has his back to you"*. When the policeman returns to his patrol car, he gives Khalil the command to stop moving, but Khalil disregards it. Khalil is about to examine Starr's situation when the policeman abruptly shoots him thrice on the back. Khalil was unarmed and nothing suspicious was discovered on his car, the police's response was wholly irrational. The police officer does not have a good enough reason to shoot Khalil to death

for the quick action he takes to check on Starr. This tragedy, according to Angie Thomas, is based on a real incident that occurred in 2009 in Oakland, California, when a 22-year-old unarmed African-American man was hopelessly shot by a police officer.

Discussion

The two teenage immigrants who were mentally hurt by racists are vividly portrayed in these two young adult novels. These literary characters' deep psychological wounds, which they inflict on their contaminated, white-infiltrated selves, show the negative consequences of internalising racist ideals, abandoning their young adult immigrant roots and naively adopting white standards of beauty, and having their own roots undervalued and finally destroyed. Internalized racism can leave victims psychologically crippled and cause fatal wounds. They not only had the potential to make one turn against oneself, as exemplified by the aforementioned literary characters, but also to split and provoke conflicts within one's community.

The idea of race interacts with other elements that contribute to the formation of a person's multifaceted identity, including sex, religion, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status. When those who are marginalised, like Khalil, Starr, and Shirin, fall into more than one category, they are necessarily subject to many forms of oppression. These teenage people's feelings of self-loathing, as well as their displacement, dehistoricization, and verbal violation, are undoubtedly caused by more than just their race and gender; poverty, as well as, in the case of obesity, Precious, and illiteracy, make matters worse. All of these things taken together have made them feel more self-hatred or contributed to it.

However, through CRT and its key ideas, particularly Everyday Racism, these commonplace, covert scars have been emphasised and investigated, making it clear that fundamental flaws rather than individual flaws are to blame for the harm. It has become more challenging to make the case that racist societies around the world have reached the post-racial phase thanks to CRT, which has helped bring racism and its numerous manifestations to light in these young adult and children's works. Despite these differences, both sets of novels share a common goal of shedding light on the experiences of marginalized communities and advocating for social justice and equality.

Conclusions

It has been found through the analysis of young adult fictions that "The Hate U Give" and "A Very Large Expanse of Sea" depicts racism committed by both individuals and institutions, specifically the police and businesses. An accurate depiction of racism that is based on a true issue in America serves as a reflection of it. Individuals that practice racism degrade and treat African-Americans and Middle-East immigrants differently, treating them as less than human. The white folks frequently make fun of African-Americans and Middle-East refugees and use degrading language when speaking to them. The police frequently use excessive force and become more abusive when dealing with Black people and Muslim emigrants, making them the subject of unjustified brutality and force against them. The majority of employers do not want to recruit African-Americans and Middle-East immigrants because of their color and religious attire hijab, so they encounter prejudice and face racist behavior when studying in educational institutes, living in community and seeking for jobs in the market.

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