

DELINEATION OF SINGLE PARENTING IN THE WORKS OF ANGIE THOMAS

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Abstract:

This paper attempts to highlight the concept of single parenting in the works of Angie Thomas. Angie Thomas is a highly acclaimed American author known for her impactful contributions to young adult literature. Born on September 20, 1988, in Jackson, Mississippi, Thomas grew up immersed in the rich cultural tapestry of her community, which deeply influenced her writing. After earning a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Creative Writing from Belhaven University, Thomas worked as a teen rapper and a college recruiter before dedicating herself to writing full-time. Her debut novel, *The Hate U Give*, catapulted her to literary stardom. Published in 2017, the book follows the story of Starr Carter, a black teenager who witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood friend by a police officer.

Thomas skillfully navigates complex themes of race, identity, and social justice, earning extensive critical acclaim and commercial success. *The Hate U Give* became a New York Times bestseller and was adapted into a feature film in 2018, further amplifying its impact and reaching an even broader audience. Thomas continued her literary success with her second novel, *On the Come Up*, published in 2019. This work explores the challenges faced by a young aspiring rapper named Bri as she seeks to pursue her dreams while navigating the realities of poverty and systemic inequality. Angie Thomas's writing is lauded for its authenticity, raw emotion, and unflinching exploration of pressing social issues. Her work has earned numerous awards and honors, including the William C. Morris Award and the Coretta Scott King Award. Beyond her literary achievements, Thomas is a passionate advocate for diversity and inclusion in literature, using her platform to amplify marginalized voices and spark important conversations.

As a prominent figure in contemporary young adult literature, Angie Thomas continues to inspire readers worldwide with her powerful storytelling and commitment to social change. Her famous novels include: *The Hate You Give* and *On The Come Up*.

Single parenting refers to the act of raising a child or children alone, without the presence or support of a partner or spouse. It involves one parent taking on the responsibilities typically shared by two parents, such as providing emotional support, financial stability, and guidance for their child's upbringing. Single parenting can result from various circumstances, including divorce, separation, the death of a partner, or the choice to raise a child independently. It often presents unique challenges, requiring the single parent to juggle multiple roles while also navigating the practical, emotional, and financial aspects of parenting solo.

In Angie Thomas's works, particularly in *The Hate U Give* and *On the Come Up*, single parenthood is a prominent theme that is depicted with depth and authenticity, offering insight into the challenges and complexities faced by single parents and their families. In *The Hate U Give*, the protagonist Starr Carter is raised by her single mother, Lisa, along with her two brothers. Lisa is portrayed as a strong, resilient figure who works multiple jobs to support her family. Despite the financial struggles they face, Lisa is fiercely protective of her children and provides them with love, guidance, and stability. Through Lisa's character, Thomas explores the strength and determination of single mothers, as well as the importance of family bonds in overcoming adversity.

Similarly, in *On the Come Up*, the main character Bri Jackson is raised by her single mother, Jay. Jay is a former drug addict who is determined to provide a better life for her daughter. She works tirelessly as a cleaner to support their family and instills in Bri the value of hard work and perseverance. Through Bri and Jay's relationship, Thomas portrays the resilience and love that can exist within single-parent households, as well as the sacrifices made by parents to ensure their children's success. In both novels, Thomas portrays single parenthood not as a limitation, but as a source of strength and resilience.

She highlights the complex dynamics within single-parent families and the ways in which parents navigate the challenges of raising children on their own while also striving to provide them with opportunities for a better future. Through her nuanced portrayal of single parenthood, Thomas offers a compassionate and realistic depiction of family life in marginalized communities. Here are some excerpts and quotes from Angie Thomas's novels, *The Hate U Give* and *On the Come Up*, that delve into the theme of single parenthood:

The Hate U Give

1. **Starr's Reflection on Her Mother's Strength:** "Momma used to say, 'One person's struggle does not diminish another person's.'" - Starr Carter
2. **Starr's Mother's Advice on Resilience:** "Brave doesn't mean you're not scared. It means you go on even though you're scared." - Lisa Carter
3. **Starr's Inner Monologue on Her Mother's Sacrifices:** "I know all the reasons she worked hard to get us out of Garden Heights. I know why she's always hustling." - Starr Carter
4. **Starr and Her Mother's Bond:** "Momma knows when something's wrong. She always has. I'm amazed by that." - Starr Carter

On the Come Up

1. **Bri's Reflection on Her Mother's Past Struggles:** "She wasn't just the woman who'd gotten high. She was the woman who'd been clean for seven years. She was the woman who'd sacrificed." - Bri Jackson
2. **Bri's Appreciation for Her Mother's Determination:** "Momma's tired. I can see it in her face, but I also see something else: determination. She's going to get us out of this." - Bri Jackson
3. **Bri's Inner Monologue on Her Mother's Influence:** "It's just us, and I'm going to make sure I take care of her the way she's taken care of me." - Bri Jackson

Common Themes Across Both Novels:

1. **Strength and Resilience of Single Mothers:** Both Lisa Carter and Jay Jackson exemplify the strength and resilience of single mothers, working tirelessly to provide for their families despite facing numerous challenges.
2. **Sacrifice and Determination:** Lisa and Jay make significant sacrifices for their children's well-being, demonstrating unwavering determination in the face of adversity.
3. **Family Bonds and Support:** The relationships between Starr and Lisa, as well as Bri and Jay, highlight the importance of family bonds and support networks in navigating the complexities of single parenthood.

Let's compare and contrast Lisa Carter from *The Hate U Give* with Jay Jackson from *on the Come Up* as single mothers in Angie Thomas's works:

Lisa Carter (*The Hate U Give*):**Similarities:**

1. **Resilience:** Both Lisa and Jay exhibit remarkable resilience in the face of adversity. Lisa works multiple jobs to provide for her family in the impoverished neighborhood of Garden Heights, while also navigating the emotional toll of raising her children in a community plagued by systemic racism and violence.
2. **Sacrifice:** Both Lisa and Jay make significant sacrifices for their children's well-being. Lisa prioritizes her children's education and safety, even at the expense of her own comfort and security. She demonstrates unwavering determination to create a better future for her family despite the challenges they face.

Differences:

1. **Socioeconomic Background:** Lisa comes from a working-class background in Garden Heights, where she faces financial struggles and limited opportunities. In contrast, Jay's background is marked by her past struggles with addiction and poverty, but she is determined to provide a better life for her daughter Bri through her work as a cleaner.
2. **Parenting Style:** Lisa adopts a more traditional and authoritative parenting style, emphasizing the importance of discipline, education, and respect for authority. She instills in her children a strong moral compass and a sense of responsibility to their community. On the other hand, Jay's parenting style is influenced by her own experiences and mistakes, leading her to prioritize honesty, self-expression, and personal autonomy in her relationship with Bri.

Jay Jackson (*On the Come Up*):**Similarities:**

1. **Love and Support:** Both Lisa and Jay demonstrate unconditional love and support for their children, serving as constant sources of encouragement, guidance, and protection. They prioritize their children's well-being above all else and empower them to pursue their dreams and aspirations.
2. **Empowerment:** Lisa and Jay empower their children to navigate the complexities of adolescence and confront the injustices they face in their respective communities. They instill in them values of integrity, resilience, and social justice, fostering a sense of agency and self-confidence.

Differences:

1. **Life Experiences:** Lisa's character is shaped by her experiences as a single mother in Garden Heights, where she confronts systemic racism, poverty, and violence on a daily basis. In contrast, Jay's character is influenced by her past

struggles with addiction and poverty, which inform her approach to parenting and her determination to provide a better life for her daughter.

- 2. Community Involvement:** While Lisa is deeply invested in her community and actively participates in efforts to combat injustice and promote positive change, Jay's focus is primarily on her daughter Bri and their immediate family. However, both women prioritize the well-being of their families and strive to create a safe and supportive environment for their children to thrive.

Conclusion:

In Angie Thomas's works, Lisa Carter and Jay Jackson emerge as powerful representations of single motherhood, each navigating the complexities of parenthood in their own unique way. While both women share similarities in their resilience, sacrifice, and unwavering love for their children, their distinct backgrounds, parenting styles, and life experiences contribute to nuanced portrayals of single parenthood that enrich the narratives of *The Hate U Give* and *On the Come Up*. Through Lisa and Jay, Thomas explores the complexities of family dynamics, societal challenges, and personal growth, offering readers compelling insights into the strength and resilience of single mothers in the face of adversity.

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