Performing Identity and Seeking Justice: A Goffmanian Reading of Activism in *The Hate U Give* and *Moxie*

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Article Detail:	*Abstract*
	This study examined how the teenager protagonists formed their identity in The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas and Moxie by Jennifer Mathieu. This research uses Erving Goffman's theory of self-presentation to look at how the female characters in The Hate U Give and Moxie deal with their personalities and developed their identity. The focus of this study is on how people choose to show themselves in front of others by hiding their identity and being what they are at back stage when they are alone, realising the importance of not just their identity but of whole community. With Erving Goffman's theory of self- presentation as a guide, this study looks at how women deal with their personalities and participate in digital activism through the stories in The Hate U Give and Moxie. It makes a point of showing how identity changes as a activist at a young age for demanding justice, mostly women, became activist to control how they are portrayed, make connections, and fight against unfair systems. This paper also reflects how identity and justice can be interconnected, Both Starr in The Hate U Give and Vivian in Moxie realised the importance of their identity and moreover of their group. In The Hate U Give, Starr not just formed her identity but of all people of colour of her group. Similarly, in Moxie, Vivian got frustrated of experiencing injustice in her school where identity of girls is neglected, Vivian not just realised her own identity but of all the girls in school. This paper gives a wide discussion on activism, performance and social justice in Contemporary Young Adult literature.

Teenager's age is very crucial age. What they are and how they are going to deal in their life is what they expect will affect their future, Teenagers realise that their identity matters in this world and what they role play in their life, think, take decisions in life, and what action they are taking will affect their future, Teenagers realise that they need to work on their identity and moreover on themselves to have a status in society. In *The Hate U Give* and *Moxie*, both the female protagonist realised about their identity which helped them in fighting against injustice. Starr in *The Hate U Give* and Vivian in *Moxie* realised that they both need to take stand as this injustice will not stop if they didn't take any step and build not just their identity but of their whole group who face injustice.

The female students in the *Moxie* book engaged in a determined struggle for equality in the educational

environment. In other words, women encounter numerous challenges in their pursuit of equality. This topic is intricately linked to the ongoing efforts for gender equality, highlighting the necessity to dismantle sexist, homophobic, and transphobic norms that persist within society and culture. Vivian, a young woman in her teenage years, occupies a pivotal role in the narrative. Upon discovering the pervasive issues of sexual harassment and inequality within her educational institution, she feels compelled to take a stand against these injustices. Through the publication of an anonymous zine titled "Moxie," she aspires to motivate her fellow students and foster constructive transformation within the school environment.

To gain a deeper understanding of the narrative, it is beneficial to analyse the novel "*The Hate U Give*" by considering the influences that shaped the author's perspective.

"Individuals now acknowledge Starr as distinct from Maverick, perceiving her as a champion who contributes to the community in her own capacity. In Garden Heights, Maverick is a well-known figure, as his store serves as a cherished establishment that supports the community, and he is recognised for his commitment to assisting others. For instance, Mrs. Rooks inquires of Maverick regarding the possibility of contributing funds for Khalil's funeral, as she anticipated he would be willing to assist. When Starr distanced herself from Garden Heights, her identity was primarily associated with Maverick. As news of Starr's testimony circulates, individuals now perceive her as an advocate for justice. Maverick articulated that advocating for Khalil signifies contributing to the dismantling of the Thug Life cycle for the entire community. Consequently, Garden Heights now perceives Starr as an advocate for the entire community, rather than merely the child of their reliable neighbour".

According to Goffman's dramaturgical perspective, female heroes strategically utilise different platforms to construct and convey empowered identities within restrictive institutions. By meticulously crafting their "front stage" presentations, they effectively influence their audience and challenge societal norms. This is achieved through the intentional application of language, imagery, and digital platforms to confront dominant narratives and assert control (Lambert 43). In The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, Goffman articulates a thesis suggesting that individuals are in a constant state of presenting themselves as a performance to others, thereby influencing how they are perceived. This concept is equally relevant in digital spaces, where individuals may intentionally construct their personas and present carefully curated representations of themselves to specific audiences.

In delineating the public persona and the spaces designated for leisure and preparation, he introduced the concepts of "front stage" and "back stage." Goffman emphasised the concept of "impression management," referring to the intentional or unintentional efforts to control how we present ourselves to others (Grosholz 257).

Similar to artists in a theatrical setting, female protagonists intentionally select the information and expressions they present, carefully managing their public persona in the digital realm. This encompasses profile images, posts, and interactions—all meticulously curated to convey the desired impression. The backstage area serves as a secluded space where individuals can relax, prepare for the performance, and authentically express themselves away from the gaze of the audience. In the context of gendered or various forms of oppression, individuals intentionally manage their online presence to challenge societal expectations and norms. Individuals might articulate their identities in manners that contest biases or defy societal norms through their profiles.

Diverse platforms empower female protagonists to reshape and oversee their narratives, evolving from mere consumers of social media into proactive catalysts for change. They might form collectives, connect individuals with similar ideologies, and critically examine dominant narratives that perpetuate inequality. Through their online endeavours, female heroes have the potential to challenge traditional gender roles and stereotypes, thereby promoting greater equality and representation within society. This may encompass demonstrating their autonomy and individuality, participating in social movements, or utilising their online platforms to raise awareness of issues.

Diverse platforms enable female protagonists to confront the limitations imposed by oppressive systems, allowing them to articulate their agency and

identity in personally meaningful ways. This may involve articulating their identity, recounting their experiences, and engaging with others who share their values through their websites. In social interactions, individuals consistently assume various roles and manage perceptions to convey an image that aligns with their desired narrative. To preserve the integrity of the play, one might employ costumes, props, and even specific language choices. In the absence of an audience, performers often relax their presentation, engaging in backstage activities that allow for a more genuine and authentic expression of themselves.

Activism is expressed in various forms within "*The Hate U Give*," notably through Starr's path to self-awareness and her courageous articulation of dissent against injustice, alongside the broader systemic issues of racism, police violence, and entrenched discrimination. Starr's choice to testify and advocate in memory of her friend Khalil underscores the importance of addressing systemic issues; her actions come in the wake of her friend's tragic death. Starr transitions from a state of reluctance, burdened by emotions of shame and guilt, to discovering her voice and articulating her thoughts, driven by a profound aspiration for transformation and equity. The importance of voicing one's beliefs as a driving force for transformation is highlighted in the narrative, particularly through Starr's choice to testify and take a stand. Through an exploration of systemic racism and police brutality, "*The Hate U Give*" illustrates the profound effects these issues have on Black individuals and their communities. The significance of cultural capital and activism is underscored by Maverick's role as a father, which serves as a means of defiance against systems that marginalise Black children.

As Starr navigates her dual identities at Garden Heights and the privileged school, the narrative explores the profound influence of language on the journey of self-discovery. In her support for Khalil, Starr confronts prevailing societal norms and positions herself as a proponent of social justice and the welfare of her community. Employing contemporary technologies to challenge the dominant narrative and advocate for justice, Starr Carter, the central character of *The Hate U Give,* chronicles and highlights the police killing of her friend Khalil through social media platforms. Through her #BlackLivesMatter postings, Starr meticulously curates her online presence, skilfully navigating the dual objectives of self-defense and advocacy for social transformation. The volume highlights the ways in which marginalised communities can adeptly challenge inequity and seek accountability through the use of digital activism.

"Guided by Vivian, a high school student who utilises a blog to expose the sexism and misogyny present in her school and community, Moxie is an initiative led by women."

The characters in Moxie engage with digital environments to challenge patriarchal systems and assert their autonomy, thereby creating a unified voice in opposition to systemic inequality. The text illustrates the ways in which women have the capacity to challenge traditional power dynamics and promote gender equality through digital platforms (Henry et al. 23).

A significant theme in "Moxie" by Jennifer Mathieu is the pursuit of social change, especially regarding the challenges encountered by young women dealing with sexism and microaggressions in their school environment. Witnessing and documenting occurrences of discrimination at "*Moxie,*" a school, motivates the initially reticent protagonist Vivian to initiate a feminist movement. In the narrative, Vivian and her companions employ various strategies to elevate awareness and advocate for transformation, including the creation of a zine and the coordination of protests.

A wider consciousness regarding gender issues, where Vivian and her peers recognise the omnipresence of discrimination and respond accordingly, reflects her personal evolution. The significance of female unity and assistance is highlighted throughout the narrative as various groups of women collaborate to attain shared objectives. Engaging in direct action strategies, including the production of a zine and the coordination of walk-throughs, empowers Vivian and her peers to confront and question established norms. While the book primarily addresses sexism, it also explores the concept of intersectionality, examining how various forms of oppression, including racism and sexism, interconnect. The

young women's resolve and tenacity are evident as they continue to strive despite facing challenges from school officials and fellow students. In the role of an activist, a novelist might initiate a zine that chronicles and confronts the sexism encountered by Vivian and her peers. This endeavour serves to express their dissatisfaction with the school's policies and conduct, as the girls prepare for a walkout. To support the girls' soccer team, which faces significant financial challenges, the team is organising fundraising events to meet their expenses. The young women challenge injustice by articulating their opposition to sexism and various other forms of discrimination, both within the educational environment and beyond. Highlighting the significance of female unity, proactive engagement, and the struggle for a fairer society, "*Moxie*" vividly illustrates the endeavours of the youth movement. For Starr Carter, the protagonist of "*The Hate U Give*," her journey of self-discovery and her emergence as an activist are intricately intertwined. Her journey illustrates how individuals traverse various landscapes while asserting their voice against systemic injustices, especially the violence perpetrated by law enforcement on Black youth. Starr's experiences underscore the importance of collaborative efforts in the pursuit of social justice and illustrate how socioeconomic disparities influence the development of identity. The Struggle for Expression: The Evolution and Tensions of Personal Identity Starr's community of Garden Heights and her prestigious, predominantly white preparatory institution, Williamson, present distinct obstacles. She dissects her identity through code-switching, a practice in which she modifies her language and behaviour depending on her audience, influenced by her dual nature. Starr draws motivation from her encounters with law enforcement violence and the widespread scrutiny that ensued after her account. She is resolute in her quest to assert her voice and uncover her authentic self, which entails articulating truths to authority and advocating for her convictions. Following the tragic event of witnessing her friend Khalil's murder at the hands of a police officer, Starr undergoes a significant evolution in her sense of self and her understanding of her role in society, motivating her to engage in meaningful action. Starr's journey illustrates the significance of

questioning established norms and standing against injustice. She passionately champions the pursuit of justice for Khalil and the urgent need to reduce instances of police brutality. Engagement with the local community, especially with her cherished ones, empowers Starr to confront the trials of activism and fosters a profound sense of belonging. Starr emerges as an emblem of resilience and resolve as she

advocates for social justice initiatives, inspiring individuals to examine their own prejudices and participate in the pursuit of equality.

This fictional narrative delves into the profound effects of pressing societal issues, with a strong emphasis on the Black Lives Matter movement, which addresses systemic racism and police brutality. The book "*The Hate U Give*" intricately intertwines individual narratives with overarching societal themes to mirror actual occurrences, ignite social transformation, and inspire readers to engage in advocacy for a fairer society by emphasising the significance of justice, activism, collective effort, and personal agency in confronting systemic inequalities. Moxie places significant emphasis on the central character, Vivian Carter, and her path towards self-discovery. Confronted with prejudice and inequality at her high school, Vivian gains a deeper understanding of her identity and her role in society, wholeheartedly embracing her feminist principles.

Contemplating One's Own Existence For an extended period, Vivian experienced discomfort and uncertainty regarding her identity as she grappled with the desire to embody the ideals of a "good girl" while attempting to meet the expectations imposed by others. A pivotal element in her journey of self-discovery is her initial anonymously published Moxie zine. It provides her with an opportunity to articulate her grievances and challenge the inequities she perceives. Through the reactions of her peers to Moxie, Vivian uncovers her voice and purpose, recognising the importance of united efforts in her pursuit of equality. Throughout her life, Vivian has embodied the principles of feminism, actively applying her beliefs to deepen her understanding of the world and advocate for social justice.

Moxie enables Vivian to engage with women who share similar values, thereby enhancing her self-identity through the relationships they cultivate. The

path that Vivian undertakes entails overcoming her initial hesitations and insecurities, ultimately transforming her into an individual who radiates confidence and articulates her thoughts with ease.

Additional characters undergo their own journeys of self-discovery throughout the narrative: As noted on Good-reads, Vivian's closest companion initially finds feminism off-putting but ultimately embraces and supports the movement. Seth, engaged in a romantic relationship with Vivian, ultimately embraces the Moxie Girls movement as he learns to advocate for his convictions. The exploration of personal identity and purpose amidst challenges, the steadfast adherence to one's principles, and the forging of connections with those who share similar beliefs are significant motifs in *Moxie*.

The central character, Vivian, embodies determination as a female student advocating for gender equality and justice within her educational institution in the *Moxie* book. Listening to her mother's experiences inspires her to mobilise other women to advocate for equitable treatment through acts of defiance. Vivian, a woman of resolute spirit and unwavering commitment, establishes a feminist club to act as a forum for WSF. Although Vivian initially withheld the truth regarding her role as the club's founder, she ultimately revealed it in a bid to protect a friend from the impending threat of expulsion linked to the feminist group (View of Moxie, by Jennifer Mathieu | Emerging Library and Information Perspectives).

Feminism embodies the struggle for the rights of women. The struggle faced by women is fundamentally a quest for equality, challenging the gender norms and expectations that have been historically imposed upon them by society and culture. The women depicted in the novel "Moxie" engage in a struggle against gender inequity that permeates their everyday experiences and the broader societal context. This study explores the struggle against gender inequality by analysing Beauvoir's concept of women's existence. The challenges faced by women can be categorised into three distinct areas: the pursuit of intellectual growth, the importance of authenticity, and the journey towards self-actualization ("Gender and Justice" 78).

For women to secure their rightful position in society, the pursuit of intellectual development is crucial, as posited by Beauvoir. She emphasises that women who recognise their own strength can take control of their lives and achieve independence from men through their own efforts. Beauvoir asserts that women ought to be free from limitations in their intellectual growth imposed by biological factors or societal norms. The ability of women to resist objectification by men and emphasise their independence and individuality is essential (Lambert 78).

When women express the notion of being able to "just be herself," they suggest that they may conduct themselves in alignment with their deepest desires. These individuals possess a remarkable confidence in their authentic selves, remaining unfazed by the differing opinions of others. Women who possess a deep understanding of their liberties can shape their own identities and pursue their careers independently, free from external influence or constraint, as posited by Beauvoir.

Utilising Goffman's concepts of performance and self-presentation in the analysis of *Moxie* allows for a deeper exploration of how individuals craft their identities in social contexts and the impact of their behaviours on those around them. In pursuit of their goals and navigating the intricate social landscape of their high school, the characters in the narrative—particularly Maeve, the protagonist, along with her companions—partake in various forms of image management (Horton 89).

The concept of identity has received considerable focus since the 1960s and 1970s, particularly during the pivotal shift in academic enquiry in both American and European contexts. As various fields of enquiry such as cultural studies, race theory, and feminist thought emerged, they sought to disrupt prevailing cultural norms. These explorations aimed to question the notion of a unified, undifferentiated self, often critiquing the self-sustaining Cartesian subject through deconstructive analyses (Hall 1997, p. 4). This Cartesian ontological perspective posits that the subject is an integrated entity, unified through the experience of self-awareness. The focus in this context is on the cultivation, broadening, and development of intellectual capacity. Through self-awareness, the individual comes into being; the

subject is integrated in a comprehensive experience of the self, others, and the world. The Cartesian perspective upholds a self-centered interpretation of the subject, diminishing the roots of existence to the realm of the subject's conscious thought (Grosholz, 1991). The Enlightenment perspective centred on the notion of the human being as a fully integrated and cohesive entity, possessing the faculties of reason, awareness, and agency. This "centre" was understood to be an intrinsic essence that emerged at birth and developed alongside the individual, maintaining a fundamental continuity or identity throughout their life. The fundamental core of the self constituted an individual's identity (Hall 597)

The Hate U Give and *Moxie* address society's issues from distinct perspectives and with varying degrees of emphasis, despite the fact that they are set in a young adult milieu. Through the perspective of a young black girl witnessing the tragic death of her friend Khalil in a violent shooting, "The Hate U Give" delves into the issues of police brutality and systemic discrimination. Vivian Carter's initiative to create a zine challenges the prevailing norms, while "Moxie" delves into themes of female empowerment and the issue of sexism within a high school setting.

While "Moxie" highlights issues of sexism, female empowerment, and challenges to the status quo, "The Hate U Give" focuses on themes of race, identity, and the repercussions of police violence. "The Hate U Give" explores Starr's journey as she navigates her dual identities and seeks to articulate her perspective for transformation, alongside the repercussions of Khalil's tragic shooting. "Moxie" chronicles the journey of Vivian as she creates a zine and orchestrates a campaign to challenge the pervasive sexism at her university.

In "Moxie," Vivian Carter, a junior, discovers her own agency and advocates for women's rights, while in "The Hate U Give," Starr Carter, a young black adolescent, navigates a challenging environment. Addressing profound themes of injustice and brutality, "The Hate U Give" presents a narrative that is both sombre and serious in tone. While it addresses significant issues, "Moxie" adopts a more gentle and entertaining tone.

Moxie and *The Hate U Give* both emphasise the ways in which activism and justice movements emerge prominently on digital media platforms. In *Moxie*, Vivian and her peers organise a protest to challenge the male-dominated power structure of their school, utilising digital platforms such as Instagram and TikHub. Starr employs social media in *The Hate U Give* to document her friend's police shooting and engage in the broader #BlackLivesMatter movement.

Through the platforms of Instagram and TikHub, Vivian and her peers cultivate a following, organise a march, and disseminate their message challenging the patriarchal structures present within their university. The online spaces created by female students transform into hubs for the sharing of knowledge, fostering support, and cultivating solidarity. The women challenge the established power structure by employing digital technologies, thereby undermining traditional methods of protest and creating a novel form of resistance. The internet platform empowers students to connect with a broader audience than traditional methods allow, thereby enhancing their ability to raise awareness of the issues they confront and amplifying their voices (Lambert 78).

The movement advocating for racial justice and documenting instances of police violence through social media serves as a significant source of inspiration for the animosity you express. Starr employs social media as a platform to document the events surrounding Khalil's shooting, share her personal experiences, and engage in the subsequent demonstrations. The online platforms transform into spaces for exposing systemic racism and police brutality, igniting public outrage and compelling Black communities to face the injustices inflicted upon them. The text highlights the potential of social media to empower individuals in their efforts for social change by connecting people across geographical boundaries, thereby fostering collective action (Naji and Abbas 435). In both texts, the digital realm serves not merely as a channel for communication but also as a powerful platform for enacting social change and contesting existing power structures. For advocates, it offers a novel platform enabling them to engage in the struggle for justice, organise initiatives, and amplify their messages in the digital era. In Goffman's dramaturgy, the digital realm blurs the traditional boundary that distinguishes front stage from backstage. Goffman's

theory emphasises the distinction between public and private performances; however, contemporary technologies such as social networking and video conferencing have created contexts in which these boundaries become increasingly fluid. Goffman's concept of dramaturgy, articulated in The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, posits that social interactions resemble theatrical productions where individuals enact different roles before an audience. In the more secluded realm, individuals find the opportunity to unwind and express their true selves, whereas in the public sphere, they engage in a performance, often curating a polished facade for the observation of others.

However, the expansion of digital media has introduced additional challenges to this differentiation. Social media enables individuals to present their "front stage" personas to an unprecedented audience, potentially obscuring the distinctions between public and private expressions. The division between front and backstage areas is further complicated by teleconferencing systems, which allow individuals to obscure their actual environments with virtual backdrops. In The Hate U give, Starr hided her face and identity while representing herself in local news channel to demand justice for Khalil and during rally protest holded bullhorn and have spoke out in front of everyone that she was the one who witnessed Khalil's shoot down by White Cop. In Moxie, When Vivian, launched zines, then Girls started sharing posts online i.e. on Instagram of the pic of Hands marked with star and hearts to show solidarity and When protest was going on a girl shared video online of Principal while he was asking girls to shut down and were representing patriarchy.

The advancement of digital systems and the implementation of achievement management yield significant benefits such as improved efficiency, cost reductions, and expanded market presence. However, these developments may also pose risks, including cybersecurity threats, breaches of data privacy, and resistance to organisational change. Effectively navigating these challenges necessitates meticulous planning, robust risk management strategies, and a dedication to ongoing learning and adaptation.

Analysing the intricacies of intersectionality, *Moxie* and *The Hate U Give* illustrate how the interplay of race, gender, and class shapes the unique experiences and challenges faced by their protagonists. Moxie primarily explores themes of gender and class, while *The Hate U Give* focuses on race and its interplay with gender and class (Bookchanted 89).

Moxie centres on Vivian and her friends, who challenge the patriarchal norms of their small town by leveraging their shared female identity and middle-class status. Their gender influences preconceived notions and anticipations; they also navigate the benefits and limitations associated with their social class. The volume examines the ways in which these interrelated identities influence their activism and capacity for agency. *The Hate U Give* delves into the complexities of Starr's identity, examining how her racial background, gender, and socioeconomic status converge to create a unique and often challenging experience. Starr's experiences at Garden Heights and Williamson Prep illustrate the profound impact of these identities on her perceptions of the world and her sense of self. Particularly in her interactions with law enforcement and within her community, the book examines the ways in which her ethnicity and gender are leveraged against her. The volume further examines the systematic interplay of class and race in shaping access to resources, opportunities, and justice.

The experiences of Starr's family with discrimination and economic hardship highlight the pervasive inequities that African Americans, particularly in urban areas, encounter. *The Hate U Give* explores Starr's complex navigation through the various identities shaped by the intersection of race, gender, and class. Feeling ensnared between her dual environments and her identity, she navigates the expectations of both her community and her academic institution. The book examines how Starr interrogates the systems that oppress her and her community through the use of her voice and agency.

A confluence of factors, such as limited access to technology, disparities in digital literacy, and the prevalence of online violence and discrimination, renders digital justice inequitably accessible to all women. The challenges faced are particularly burdensome for women, thereby hindering their ability to fully participate in the digital realm and

leverage digital tools for justice, economic advancement, and education. In numerous low- and middle-income countries, a significant number of women face challenges such as the absence of devices, unreliable internet access, and affordable data plans. As the intricacy of these skills increases, the disparity in digital literacy capabilities becomes more pronounced; women frequently lag in areas such as coding and digital security. The challenges faced by women in accessing services are compounded by insufficient internet infrastructure, a lack of trust in digital services, and limited interoperability. At times, digital technologies can be wielded as instruments of harm against women; the algorithms of artificial intelligence and the dynamics of social media platforms may amplify detrimental content (Lambert 78).

Digital harassment, mistreatment, and aggression aimed particularly at women may deter them from engaging with online platforms. The absence of digital knowledge and access can hinder women's ability to obtain legal information, pursue justice, and advocate for their rights. Despite the most earnest efforts, e-justice initiatives have struggled to fully address the distinct needs and vulnerabilities of women, particularly those who are already marginalised.

"The Hate U Give" primarily examines issues of racial injustice and police brutality from the perspective of a Black teenager, whereas "Moxie" explores gender inequality within a high school setting through the creation of an anonymous feminist zine (Staff 34). Nevertheless, upon examining the thematic elements of the two novels, it becomes evident that they adopt strikingly distinct methodologies regarding social activism. Perspective and narrative style are two significant distinctions: "The Hate U Give" explores the intricate dynamics of race in modern America through the first-person account of Starr Carter, a Black teenager who witnesses the fatal shooting of her friend by a police officer. Through its third-person perspective, "Moxie" offers a comprehensive exploration of the institution's social dynamics and the growth of the feminist movement that Vivian, the central character, spearheads. It is essential to prioritise social issues; "The Hate U Give" focuses on the effects of police brutality and systemic racism on Black communities.

The themes examined in "Moxie" encompass the dynamics of patriarchal social and educational frameworks, alongside issues of sexism and gender disparity.

While both are categorised as young adult novels, "The Hate U Give" delves into themes that impart a more sombre and confrontational tone, frequently challenging perceptions of reality through a blend of social commentary and realism. "Moxie" adopts a more positive and hopeful perspective by redefining humour and activism as instruments for individual development. Starr and Vivian exemplify resilience and autonomy, propelled by the influence of their peers to advocate for justice. Through the exploration of significant social issues within their narratives, both works encourage readers to contemplate the intricate relationships of gender, ethnicity, and power dynamics present in their own communities. The central characters in both narratives confront significant societal obstacles while experiencing profound personal development and change, characteristics commonly found in narratives of maturation.

CONCLUSION

Moxie and *The Hate U Give* both utilise Erving Goffman's theory of impression management to explore how individuals manoeuvre through social contexts and curate their self-presentation, emphasising the dynamics of power relations and societal norms. By shedding light on how individuals employ both intentional and unintentional methods to shape the perceptions they project, the texts reveal the intricacies of interpersonal dynamics and the influence of identity on conduct (Naji and Abbas 435).

Individuals consistently endeavour to convey a specific persona to those in their vicinity, as articulated in Goffman's theory of impression management. Starr Carter, the central character of *The Hate U Give*, struggles to manage her identity across various social contexts, particularly at her affluent school, Williamson Prep, in stark contrast to her community. Even at the cost of her principles, she starts to adjust to each circumstance. For instance, she conceals certain aspects of her identity at Williamson to blend in with her peers and avoid

scrutiny. The individuals in *Moxie*, particularly Vivian and her companions, partake in the art of impression management. Their appearance, clothing choices, and behaviour collectively serve to convey a specific image to their family, school, and community. The evolution of Vivian's confidence as a leader is intricately linked to her ability to manage her initial impressions.

The notions of "backstage," the private realm where one can ease the performance, and "front stage," the public identity, are essential to Goffman's examination of character interactions. Behind the scenes in *The Hate U Give*, Starr finds the freedom to express her true self, which stands in sharp contrast to the image she projects at Williamson Prep. She might be undergoing emotional distress, yet her academic performance often reflects a facade of composure and poise. In *Moxie*, the actions of the students away from the public eye allow them to embrace their true selves and challenge established norms, while their conduct in front of the camera reflects their adherence to the expectations of teachers and school authorities, which permits them to According to Goffman, societal conventions and anticipations shape individual behaviour by influencing their interactions and self-presentation.

The texts specifically examine how gender and race function as societal constructs that influence individuals' perceptions and interactions with each other. In *The Hate U Give*, Starr's experiences with law enforcement and discrimination illuminate the pervasive stereotypes and injustices faced by Black individuals. She must acquire the skills to manoeuvre through a system that is not consistently designed to accommodate individuals of her ethnic background and economic circumstances. The female protagonists and supporting characters in *Moxie* confront conventional gender roles, especially in relation to leadership and activism. They provide mutual support and encouragement in private, while their onstage conduct defies conventional norms and expectations (Dar 89).

Goffman's theory clarifies how power dynamics influence the management of one's image in contexts where individuals assert their positional or authoritative control over interactions. The central characters in *The Hate U Give* navigate the complexities of societal power dynamics concerning

law enforcement, which frequently employs aggression and coercion to assert control. In their compelling performances, the female characters of *Moxie* confront and question the dominance of the male figures within the school's hierarchy.

Applying Goffman's theory allows for an exploration of how both novels confront the complexities of power dynamics and societal norms, alongside the ways in which social interactions influence personal identities. Their work emphasises the significance of identity in influencing behaviour and the ongoing quest for social equity, illustrating how individuals employ image management as a means of both conformity and resistance.

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