

**RACISM EXPERIENCED BY THE MAIN CHARACTER IN
*A SONG BELOW WATER***

THESIS

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**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK
IBRAHIM
MALANG
2024**

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A *SONG BELOW WATER***

THESIS

Presented to
Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of *Sarjana Sastra* (S.S.)

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STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

*I state that the thesis entitled “**Racism Experienced by The Main Character in A Song Below Water**” is my original work. I do not include any material previously written or published by another person, except those cited as references and written in the bibliography. Hereby, if there is any objection or claim, I am the only person who is responsible for that.*

Malang, August 19th 2024



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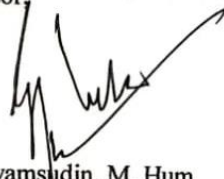
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MOTTO

“If you can not endure the weary of learning, you must endure the poignant of stupidity” –Imam Syafi’i

DEDICATION

I proudly dedicated this thesis to:

My beloved mother, Jamilatun, for her loving support and sincere prayers at all times.

My beloved father, Abdul Munir, for all the tireless struggles for my future, as well as the support of sincere prayers at all times

My older sister and younger brother, thank you for being a confidant and reminder of the spirit during the process of working on this thesis

My advisor, Dr. Syamsudin, M. Hum. who always takes the time to guide my thesis process

For all my friends, companions, relatives who always support me, you all mean a lot to me.

Last but not least, I want to thank myself for not giving up all the time.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Alhamdulillahirabbil'aalamiin

First of all, the researcher expresses gratitude for the presence of Allah S.W.T. who has given His mercy and grace, so that I can complete this thesis entitled “Racism Experienced by The Main Character in *A Song Below Water*”. Secondly, my shalawat and salam always be given to our Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. who has guide us from the darkness to the lightness, from stupidity to cleverness, namely Islam religion.

This research is dedicated to the English Department, Faculty of Humanities as one of the requirements to obtain a Bachelor of Literature degree. This thesis could not have been completed without the help of support, advice, criticism and suggestions from several parties. During the process of completing the thesis, the researcher would like to express many thanks to:

1. Dr. Syamsudin, M. Hum as my advisor, for patience and all the time to provide guidance, advice and input in every process of completing the thesis. Support to always be enthusiastic and patient.
2. My beloved parents and whole family, for the best support, love, prayers, affection and sacrifice for me. Encouraging me not to be afraid of challenges along my academic journey.
3. All lecturers in English Literature Department, especially the Faculty of Humanities, Islamic University Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, who have sincerely shared their knowledge, experience, and learning guidance during the lecture period until the end of this thesis process is well arranged.

4. My dearest friends on campus, Annastasya Berliana and Talitha Ayu, who have always been comrades fighting together. Thank you for growing together, sharing stories and splices, learning from each other and sharing experiences, enthusiasm for achieving our goals without putting each other down. Big love for you two.
5. For Hana Tasya, thanks a lot for sharing the ups and downs and helping the author from the chaos of compiling a thesis just to take a ride and escape reality by strolling Malang-Batu countless times. Trying many culinary delights and exploring even the narrow streets in Malang. That's was fun to remember.
6. Finally, thank you to all those who I can not mention here. Those who witnessed the researcher completing this thesis, thank you for sharing many things.

Malang, August 19th 2024

Fitrah Hanifiyah

ABSTRACT

Hanifiyah, Fitrah (2024) Racism Experienced by The Main Character in *A Song Below Water*. Undergraduate Thesis. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Advisor Dr. Syamsudin, M. Hum.

Keywords: Racism, Critical Race Theory, Sociological Approach.

Ideologies that consider one group's race inferior to another can manifest in various forms, one of which is prejudice, which refers to racism. In *A Song Below Water*, Tavia experiences racism as a Black woman living in a predominantly white community in Portland. It affects how society treats Tavia, and she has to feel social injustice. This study is literary criticism by applying the Sociological Approach by Alan Swingewood and Laurenson. The author researched using the main theory of Critical Race Theory by Richard Delgado. This research uses the object of literary work in the form of a novel entitled *A Song Below Water* by American female writer Bethany C. Morrow. This study aims to identify the forms of racism based on the principles of Critical Race Theory experienced by Tavia as the main character in the novel and how the main character tries to fight against racism. The researcher focuses on data in the form of sentences, conversations, and statements relevant to Critical Race Theory principles. The conflict in the novel is backgrounded by the Black racial minority and the siren identity of the main character. The results of this study reveal two findings. First, the main character in the novel experiences four kinds of racism principles based on Richard Delgado's Critical Race Theory: everyday racism, social construction, intersectionality, and voice of color. Second, the main character plays an active role in the activism movement to fight for the voting rights of minorities who experience racism.

ABSTRAK

Hanifiyah, Fitrah (2024) Rasisme yang Dialami oleh Tokoh Utama dalam *A Song Below Water*. Skripsi. Program Studi Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Humaniora, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Dosen Pembimbing Dr. Syamsudin, M. Hum.

Kata kunci: Rasisme, Teori Ras Kritis, Pendekatan Sosiologis.

Ideologi yang menganggap ras suatu kelompok lebih inferior daripada kelompok lainnya dapat terwujud dalam berbagai bentuk, salah satunya prasangka buruk yang mengacu pada rasisme. Aksi rasisme dirasakan oleh tokoh utama dalam novel *A Song Below Water* bernama Tavia, perempuan kulit hitam yang tinggal di Portland dengan mayoritas masyarakat kulit putih. Hal ini mempengaruhi bagaimana masyarakat memperlakukan Tavia dan harus merasakan ketidakadilan sosial. Kajian ini dikategorikan sebagai kritik sastra dengan menerapkan pendekatan sosiologis oleh Alan Swingewood dan Laurenson. Penulis meneliti menggunakan teori utama Teori Ras Kritis oleh Richard Delgado. Penelitian ini menggunakan objek karya sastra berupa novel berjudul *A Song Below Water* karya penulis perempuan Amerika, Bethany C. Morrow. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi bentuk-bentuk rasisme berdasarkan prinsip Teori Ras Kritis yang dialami Tavia sebagai tokoh utama dalam novel serta bagaimana tokoh utama berusaha berjuang melawan rasisme. Peneliti berfokus pada data berupa kalimat, percakapan, dan pernyataan yang relevan dengan prinsip Teori Ras Kritis. Konflik yang terjadi dalam novel dilatar belakangi oleh ras kulit hitam minoritas dan identitas siren pada tokoh utama. Hasil penelitian ini mengungkapkan dua temuan. Pertama, tokoh utama dalam novel mengalami empat macam prinsip rasisme berdasarkan Teori Ras Kritis Richard Delgado, yaitu: rasisme keseharian, konstruksi sosial, interseksionalitas, dan suara warna. Kedua, tokoh utama berperan aktif dalam gerakan aktivisme demi memperjuangkan hak suara minoritas yang mengalami rasisme.

مستخلص البحث

لعنصرية عند الشخصية (حنيفية، فطره) A Song Below Water. 2024 البحث العلمي. قسم اللغة الإنجليزية وأدائها، كلية
الرئيسية في العلوم الإنسانية، جامعة مولانا مالك ابراهيم الإسلامية الحكومية مالانج. المشرف الدكتور شمس الدين الماجستير

الكلمة الأساسية: العنصرية، نظرية العرق النقدية، المنهج السوسيولوجي

، إلى نومظم ييسل نظلا وه اهدحاً ،تختلم لأكشأ في رهظتو ىرخلاً تا عومجلا نم انأش لفاً ام ءعومجم ءيجولويديلاً ربتعت
بجيو باتك في ءيسينرلا ءيصخشلا ءيرصنعلا لامعاً رعشت. ءيرصنعلا A Song Below Water مساب Tavia ءادوس ءأرما في هو
ءيرظنلا في شيعن Portland مع ممتجلا لامعت ءيفيك في ءر ءؤير لالحا اذھ. ضيبلا نم ءيلعاً مع ممتجم مع Tavia م لطلاب رعشبر نأ
مدختسيه جهنملا قبيطتل ل لاخ نم يبدلاً دقنلا نمض ءحبلا اذھ مادختسا. في عامتجلا Swingewood و Laurensون . ءيسينرلا
نم بتاكلا بتاكلا في دقنلا قابسل ءيرظن في ءحبلا اذھل Richard Delgado . ناونعب ءياور ل كشد في ءع ءيبدا ل مع ءدام ءحبلا اذھ
ءيصخشلا في Song Below Water في دقنلا قرعلا ءيرظن في ءابم في ءء انب ءيرصنعلا لأكشأ ديدحت وه ءحبلا فادهاً. في كيرملاً
ل مدي في ءانايلا اهربتعت تلا Tavia في ءحابلا زكرت. ءيرصنعلا ءبراحم ءيسينرلا ءيصخشلا ل واحة فيكو ءياورلا في ءيسينرلا
ءموزملا ءرافصلا ءادوسلا ءيوهلاب عوفدم ءياورلا في ءدحت في تلا ءلكشملا. في دقنلا قابسل ءيرظن في ءع ءلعتم ءانايو ءا ءداحمو
ءيرصنعلا. في هو ، مجاوت ، لاوأ. نيتجيتت نء ءحبلا جئاتن دجو. ءيلس اهنأ في ءع ممتجلا اهيل رظني في تلا ءيسينرلا ءيصخشلا
ءانيلاو ، ءيمويلا في دقنلا قرعلا ءيرظن في ءع ءيرصنعلا في ءابم نم عاوناً ءعبراً ءياورلا في ءيسينرلا ءيصخشلا Richard Delgado
ءليلقلا ءاوصلأ. داهج طاشنلا ءكرح في ءط ش ار و ءيسينرلا ءيصخشلا رودت ، اينأء. ءنولملا ءاوصلأ ، ءيعطقتاو ، في عامتجلا
ءيرصنعلا نم في ناعت في تلا

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This section discusses the background of the study, discusses the research question, research objective, and the scope and limitations. This section also contains the significance of the study and the definition of key terms.

A. Background of the Study

Humans, as social creatures, are the pinnacle of diversity. Each individual has a different way of achieving the core life goals that they consider ideal based on their standards. The existence of cultural diversity in various places, is evidence that humans reflect a complex society (Stryker, 1980). As individuals or groups, humans are not born with a predisposed to a particular culture, trait, or language; they only have the capacity to acquire and create culture (Harris, 1999). As pioneers in creating and shaping culture, humans have the potential to bridge gaps, build cross-cultural understanding, and celebrate the beauty of difference. The variety of physical appearance, like skin color, has no relation between ability and behavior in the community (Fredrickson & Camarillo, 2015).

Human diversity is not just about physical differences, such as skin color or face shape. Furthermore, appreciating such diversity is very important in building a comprehensive environment. Rosenberg (1979) argues that there is more to the self-concept. The ability of a society to value diversity and view each individual as a unique entity tends to create more inclusive and fair environment.

At the same time, the behavior of judging someone based on physical appearance can trigger stereotypes and prejudice and then refer to the emergence of a social conflict. McCall and Simmons (1966) define role identity as "the character and role" that a person designs for himself as an occupant of a particular social position. Humans can perceive and evaluate themselves, plan to realize future states, become self-conscious, or achieve awareness concerning their existence.

In exploring the roots of social conflict, it is crucial to understand that differences are not the source of the problem but rather the wrong perceptions and attitudes towards diversity. Self-concept is filtered through perceptions of how we think others see us (Shrauger and Schoeneman, 1979). The main problem lies in how individuals perceive and respond to differences rather than in the differences themselves. Similarly, the many forms of diversity in this world often lead to a tendency to treat others based on these reasons because the object of prejudice may be to restructure a social group and discriminate against a racial group (Horton, 1990).

Cases of social discrimination are still in the news as covered in Western media, USA TODAY, an online media reported that on July 2, 2023, related to racial discrimination cases about the failure of President Joe Biden and Congress to fulfill promises of accountability amid a backlash from conservatives who oppose policies of diversity, equality, and inclusion. The black community raised the centuries-old debate over reparations for slavery as a path to racial equality. According to a recent USA TODAY/Suffolk University poll, about 38% of

respondents said racism is a problem but not one of the biggest problems facing the nation. Only about 14% of Americans say that racism is not a problem. This comes amidst the nation's racial crossroads highlighted by the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to ban affirmative action in college admissions.

Based on above examples of social phenomena may rarely come to public attention, literature emerges to convey ideas, emotions, or other distinctive aspects of human experience (Rexroth, 2023). Wellek and Warren (2018) state literature is produced by the author's infinite imagination, contains a collection of actual events in life. Literary works go beyond the boundaries of the author's imagination but involve the real influence of the author's environment, which is poured into the form of his work. Then, tracking back to history, Africans and their descendants have lower levels of intelligence than Europeans and their descendants and are ultimately positioned below Asian and Asian populations and their lineages (Rushton, 1995).

In the context of race, African Americans are often victims of unfair treatment in the community, leading to acts of racism. Racism is an ideology of racial domination (Wilson, 1999). Racism can occur at all levels of society, both individuals and groups. Generally, cases of racism are more common in an institution or social institutions such as workplace environments, educational institutions, social media platforms, and even places of worship.

In connection with a literary work by American female writer Bethany C. Morrow, she published a book entitled *A Song Below Water* in 2020. One of her

masterpieces describes the feud that occurred in the black and white communities in the United States. *A Song Below Water* is a fantasy young adult novel published amid the Black Lives Matter movement. The story is set in Portland, Oregon. *A Song Below Water* deals with the themes of racism, social justice, identity, and politics. It is fascinating to analyze due to its portrayal of the existence of a marginalized ethnic community amidst a dominant ethnic majority and inside has a social structure in a society where the white group (superordinate group) is considered the ruler among the black group (subordinate group).

The novel *A Song Below Water* is about two African-American teen girls, Tavia and Effie. Tavia, the main character in the novel, is a 16-year-old black teenage student who is at odds with the world to continue hiding her identity in school and society. The characters in the story use Greek mythological beings, those are *elocos*, *gorgons*, *gargoyles* and *sirens*. Sirens are depicted as mythological beings who possess a powerful and dangerous voice that can compel others to listen. sirens are feared and heavily marginalized, especially because of the societal belief that their powers are dangerous. This fear is exacerbated by racism, as Tavia, is both a Black girl and a siren, facing dual layers of discrimination.

Sirens are seen as a threat to the social order. In the context of the story, their abilities reflect broader themes of silencing, as sirens must hide their true identities to avoid persecution. Tavia's struggle as a siren represents the broader experiences of marginalized groups who are forced to suppress their voices in a society that fears their power. Tavia's identity had to be concealed to protect herself

from societal discrimination and possible violence. Alternatively, she occasionally needed to use American Sign Language (ASL) to communicate to hide her siren voice.

The novel opens with a news report that a recently murdered Black girl, Rhoda Taylor, is rumored to be a siren. Since sirens in the past have always been black women, Tavia not only quietly has to cope with her sense of loss and betrayal at the world's sudden reaction to Taylor's death, but she is also faced with some inappropriate questions from her classmates. The tension in the story increases when Tavia is stopped by a pair of police officers even though she did nothing wrong while driving the car. Tavia explodes in anger and accidentally lets out her voice.

Tavia finds Portland even scarier. It is because of the social structure applied there, where the police who come from the white race hold significant power in the social structure rather than the racial position of the black community. These structures perpetuate systemic racial inequality, marginalizing the black community and often resulting in discriminatory actions against them.

At length, the common thread of the novel *A Song Below Water* is about the main character trying to be relieved of racism as she hides her identity in society. Focus on main character's struggle against racism challenges. This research uses Critical Race Theory by Richard Delgado to explore how race, power, and inequality intersect in the social structures of the novel *A Song Below Water* and employs a Sociological Approach to examine how social structure positioned

Tavia and how social institutions (police, media) reinforce this inequality.

Broadly speaking, Richard Delgado introduced a new theory to observe racism in social life known as Critical Race Theory. This theory discusses the relationship between race, racism, identity, and power. Critical Race Theory has six tenets: everyday racism, material determinism, social construction, differential racialization, intersectionality, and voice of color. Several divisions of focus follow Critical Race Theory. The first is that racism is ordinary in society and the everyday experience of most people of color in this country. Second, caste differences in white society always get more favorable treatment than Black people and their descendants. Third, social construction states that race is a construction of interesting thoughts to be created in the social sphere by ignoring genetic endowment.

Steele (1997) suggests that when negative stereotypes about a group are made prominent, academic functioning among group members is impaired, and the effects of these stereotypes. Wilson (1978) argues that race plays a role in determining the life of a group. Many studies have documented the disadvantaged position of blacks and other racial and ethnic minorities. The reasons for this disadvantage, particularly the significance of race, have been intensely debated. Whites are known for being intelligent, well-educated, having decent jobs, and always being in a superior position. Therefore, some people are interested in conducting research on how to convey social phenomena related to racial problems that occur in minority communities through literary representations.

Subsequently, the researcher presents some previous studies in literary works that would give such contributions to this study. The first study is Al Adawiyah (2020), presents an analysis of racism reflected in the novel *Color Blind* using Critical Race Theory by Delgado and Stefancic (2001: 101) about the system of racism in the form of economic, political, social and cultural action and believes that it institutionalizes and perpetuates the unequal distribution of privileges, resources, and power between white people and people of color.

The second researcher is Fazriyah (2021), who focuses on the main character named Leyna, who is a mixed descendant of blacks and whites who get racist actions. The research used Critical Race Theory by Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic (2001) and the concept of Resistance Strategy by Shorter-Gooden. The main character experiences six types of racism: Everyday Racism, Material Determinism, Social Construction, Differential Racialization, Intersectionality, and Voice of Color and three types of resistance strategies: Internal Source, External Source, and Specific Resistance to fight racism.

The third researcher is Julan (2021). Her research describes the depiction of racial discrimination shown in the characters of Solomon and Patsey in the *12 Years A Slave* film script using Allport's theory of intentional and explicit discrimination focuses on types of racial discrimination, those are verbal antagonism, segregation avoidance, physical attacks and extermination. This study concludes the depiction of racial discrimination as it occurs due to the existence of white supremacist ideology as the basis of thought and belief of most-white characters in the film.

The fourth researcher is Nur, M (2021). His study discusses Taiwanese American ethnic discrimination in the novel *Interior Chinatown* using a sociological approach with discrimination analysis based on Thomas F. Pettigrew's perspective. Direct discrimination was found in the form of citizenship status discrimination, racial discrimination, physical violence discrimination, skin color discrimination, regional discrimination, age discrimination, and gender discrimination, and indirect discrimination in the form of prohibitions on property ownership for Taiwanese immigrants, regulations on property ownership restrictions in the United States, government regulations regarding restrictions on types of work and neighborhoods, legal restrictions for Taiwanese immigrants, and strict regulations on marriage with immigrants.

The fifth researcher is Wulandari, R. (2018). This study analyzes Benjamin Zephaniah's worldview of racism through his poetry using Critical Race Theory by Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic and the Genetic Structuralism approach by Lucien Goldmann. Five racist aspects were found based on Richard's theory, namely, everyday racism, Intersectionality, material determinism, voice of color, and social construction. This research shows that the connection between racism in Benjamin Zephaniah's poems and racism in British society is criminal justice in the form of racist attacks that often affect black people.

The sixth researcher is Putra, E. D. (2019). In this research, he revealed the social conditions described in the novel *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett. The researcher found several social conditions reflected in the story by Stockett. The first is to see literary works as social documents that reflect the actual situation of

society. The natural social conditions described in the novel are racism against American society in the 1960s, which includes prejudice, discrimination, and segregation. Researchers also found the struggle of black people against racism, such as writing books and carrying out various kinds of community rights movements through the characters.

The seventh researcher is Ulya (2020). Her research examines racial attitudes and prejudice in American society in the 20th century as a reflection of the tale of the *Dangerous Mind*. The researcher analyzes literary works using a sociological approach to examine and reflect on Delgado and Jean Stefancic's Critical Race Theory, which consists of six basic tenets to quantify racism.

The eighth study is Rohmawati (2018). The research found a conflict between extended family members related to stereotypes of different racial groups. Several conflicts related to social phenomena consist of sociological, economic, cultural, and political aspects. One of them is the conflict between Rachel and Eleanor's family, who think that girls from Mainland China, especially Rachel Chu, are not suitable for their family. It is classified as a social conflict that occurs because of the rejection of the values and norms that apply in society. Using a sociological approach by Swingewood and Laurenson to resolve the conflicts.

The ninth researcher is Lubis (2023). This research describes the issue of racism in a film entitled *Lupine*. The story of the main character, a black man who lives in France, a country with high racism. This research revealed several issues

of racism that were found to consist of stereotypes based on race, social discrimination, and racial violence.

The last researcher is Rahmatillah (2020), this research resulted in discoveries about the level of racism that occurred against African Americans in a film called *Selma*. Based on Jones and Day's theory, there are three levels of racism, namely institutionalized racism, personally mediated racism, and internalized racism. More than that, characters who experience racism ultimately make the victim feel insecure, worthless, and lacking self-confidence.

The researcher revealed that there are some similarities in this study. The difference with previous studies is that the object of literary works in the form of a novel *A Song Below Water* by Bethany C. Morrow, published in 2020, never been researched. Therefore, this research is expected to be able to bridge previous studies by conducting more in-depth research on the novel *A Song Below Water*, focusing on the actions of the main character's struggle against racism based on Delgado's Critical Race Theory shown in the data in literary work.

B. Research Question

Based on the background of the study, the researcher intended to answer the question of:

1. What forms of racism are experienced by the main character in the novel *A Song Below Water*?
2. How does the main character struggle against racism in the novel *A Song Below Water*?

C. Scope and Limitation

This research is limited to looking for forms of racism experienced by the main character in the novel and the main character's struggle against racism using Critical Race Theory and a Sociological Approach. Therefore, this research will not examine the entire content of the novel.

D. Significance of Study

Theoretically, this research is expected to provide information to analyze literary criticism using Critical Race Theory and a sociological approach in analyzing the forms of racism experienced by the main character in the novel *A Song Below Water* by Bethany C. Morrow.

Practically, this research is expected to be an additional reference for other researchers, especially those who use the same theory and approach. Meanwhile, for literature lovers, this research is expected to be helpful in providing an understanding of the forms of racism that might still occur in the current era, as depicted in the novel *A Song Below Water*.

E. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstandings, the researcher presents some definitions of key terms as follows:

- 1. Critical Race Theory:** Radical legal movement that seeks to transform the relationship between race, racism, and power (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 144).
- 2. Race:** Notion of a distinct biological type of human being, usually based on skin color or other physical characteristics (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p.

153).

3. **Racism:** Any program or practice of discrimination, segregation, persecution, or mistreatment based on membership in a race or ethnic group (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 154).
4. **Voice:** The ability of a group, such as African Americans or women, to articulate experiences in ways unique to it (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 156)

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This section provides an explanation of sociological approach and Critical Race Theory includes six tenets, those are: Everyday Racism, Material Determinism, Social Construction, Differential Racialization, Intersectionality, and Voice of Color. This section also provides an explanation about the concept of racism, and the struggle against racism.

A. Sociological Approach

The sociological approach begins with the assumption of a reciprocal relationship between self and society (Stryker, 1980). It is a branch of study that combines sociology with literary analysis to understand the relationship between literary works and social phenomena in society. Society exerts influence on itself through the medium of language and its collectively understood significance, thus facilitating social interaction and allowing introspection to be an object of reflection.

A sociological perspective on understanding the self and its constituent elements (identity) requires understanding the social framework in which the self acts within a social context that includes the existence of other selves (Stryker, 1980). The patterns of behavior exhibited in individual and intergroup interactions can be scrutinized to understand the complex relationship between self and society. Social structures are formed from individual behaviors as they repeat over time. However, individual behavior also occurs within the context of the social structure in which they exist.

This approach involves studying how literary works reflect, influence, and engage in social dynamics. Swingewood and Laurenson (1972) developed a theory in which literary sociology sees literary works as three different things reflecting society.

First, the idea that literature functions as a reflection of the prevailing conditions of society is a widely recognized perspective. As explained by Swingewood in his seminal work "*The Sociology of Literature*," he argues that literature has a documentary quality. Using the mirror metaphor, Swingewood drew parallels between literary works and historical reflections, covering aspects such as the social framework, family dynamics, emerging trends, and social stratification (Swingewood, 1972).

Secondly, this approach investigates the process of creating a work, especially the author's social circumstances that also influence the work. It can be said the author has a more naturally important task to move his or her characters in deliberately constructed circumstances to achieve their personal 'destiny' to explore values and meanings in the social world (Swingewood, 1972).

Third, this approach reveals that literary works manifest history and social and cultural conditions. Based on its view, the socio-cultural context of society is inseparable from the birth of literary works. Literary works can be used as a source to understand the history and social and cultural conditions in the past. This concept focuses on society's acceptance of a literary work (Swingewood, 1972).

In line with Swingewood and Laurenson, this research will use a sociological approach that puts forward the idea that the sociology of society exists

where it reflects the social phenomena they observe. In other words, the author's works and the fabric of society are closely intertwined as the author's inspiration comes from society's life.

B. Critical Race Theory

The Critical Race Theory (CRT) movement is the relationship between race, racism, and power. It considers many of the same issues addressed in conventional civil rights and ethnic studies discourse. However, it situates them in a broader perspective that includes economics, history, background, group, and personal interests, as well as emotions and the unconscious (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Critical Race Theory examines the foundations of the liberal order, including equality, legal reasoning, enlightenment rationalism, and principles of constitutional legal neutrality.

As marginalized people, we should strive to increase our power, cohesiveness, and representation in all significant areas of society. Significant areas of society. We should do this, though, because we are entitled to these things and because fundamental fairness requires this allocation of power. (Delgado, 2009, p 110)

Critical Race Theory emerged in the mid-1970s when a collective of lawyers, activists, and legal scholars realized simultaneously that the significant advancements achieved during the civil rights era of the 1960s had come to a halt and were even regressing in numerous aspects. Early writers, such as Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman, and Richard Delgado, put their minds to the task and held its first workshop in the summer of 1989 (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

Critical Race Theory is based on insights derived from two previous movements: critical legal examination and radical feminism. In addition, it draws

inspiration from selected European philosophers and theorists, including Antonio Gramsci and Jacques Derrida. Critical Race Theory demonstrates a sympathetic understanding of notions of nationalism and collective empowerment (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

Historically, Critical Race Theory began to formulate a discourse focusing on issues of race and racism in law in the same way educational scholars began to formulate critiques of race and racism in education. During the early to mid-1980s, Critical Race Theory criticized law, society, and race. However, Critical Race Theory has now evolved into an expansive and credible internal and interdisciplinary movement.

Critical Race Theory highlights internal struggles such as hate speech, crime, affirmative action, critical lawyering, poverty, and class. Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic developed a theory to analyze the problem of racism called the principles of Critical Race Theory. There are six tenets of Critical Race Theory: Everyday Racism, Material Determinism, Social Construction, Differential Racialization, Intersectionality, and Voice of Color.

1. Everyday Racism

Everyday racism shows manifestations of racial bias that reflect the social normalization of racism, often overlooked by dominant groups who perceive it as normal; the notion of everyday racism underscores that such discrimination is not just an isolated phenomenon but embedded in social interactions, institutions, and societal frameworks. It could be apparent

forms of racism, for example, physical or verbal attacks against people of color or the deliberate and overt exclusion of racial minorities from particular housing, restaurants, and social organizations open to the public.

Everyday racism is often unconscious, embedded in social structures, and everyday interactions. The idea of colorblindness, or the refusal to acknowledge racial differences, can contribute to everyday racism by ignoring the experiences and challenges faced by people of color. This can lead to the perpetuation of stereotypes and the disregard of racial differences as individuals are singled out or treated differently based on their race by authorities in various public spaces.

2. Material Determinism

Material determinism asserts that economic situation plays a role in shaping social, political and cultural constructs. It demonstrates the relationship between racism and the economic system, where racial hierarchies are often maintained to favour the economically dominant class. The concept finds application in economic theory, historical materialism, and discussions around the impact of economic structures on various aspects of society.

Material determinism refers to the majority group's tolerance of the advancement of racial justice only when it suits its interests (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). This term refers to the fact that racism is common due to often combined with the interests of white individuals or groups want.

3. Social Construction

Social construction is the consequence of the categorization of races by society. This notion articulates that race is not an intrinsic or immutable biological trait but is constructed and influenced by sociocultural, economic, and political dynamics. It underscores that racial classifications are malleable, evolving over different temporal and spatial contexts, and are employed to rationalize disparities and social stratifications (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

Consequently, Delgado contend that race lacks objectivity and biological significance but is rather a social construct shaped by sentiment and power dynamics. People with common origins share certain physical traits, such as skin color, body shape, and sometimes a propensity for certain diseases. Furthermore, it is explicitly elucidated that race is defined by social cognition and societal construction.

4. Differential Racialization

Differential racialization refers to dominant societies racializing different minority groups at different times, possibly due to shifting needs (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Differential racialization recognizes that not all racial or ethnic groups are treated the same way within a society. Like minorities in America, black people and other minority groups get different treatment from society and even the government. Differential racialization is crucial for recognizing and challenging systemic inequalities based on race. It encourages a nuanced examination of how racial categories are

constructed and how these constructions impact the lived experiences of individuals and communities.

5. Intersectionality

Intersectionality examines race, sex, class, national origin, and sexual orientation. Delgado & Stefancic (2017) stated intersectionality is the belief that individuals and classes often have shared or overlapping interests or traits. In the context of Critical Race Theory, intersectionality plays a vital role in understanding the experiences of individuals who belong to racial and sexual minority groups. The application of Intersectionality is employed to scrutinize the excessive presence of young African-American females who transition from the child welfare system to the juvenile justice system.

6. Voice of Color

Voice of color is related to the emphasis on amplifying the perspectives, experiences, and voices of individuals from racial and ethnic minority groups. It holds their different histories and experiences with oppression, black, American Indian, Asian, and Latino writers and thinkers may be able to communicate to their white counter parts matters that the whites are unlikely to know (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). This concept is often associated with social change and activism, involving empowering white and black individuals and groups. Moreover, this concept seeks to address the problem of racial injustice in the black community as a community that is often marginalized so that white groups still value their

differences.

Critical race theorists use stories and narratives as a means to build cohesion within minority groups and break down the mindsets created by stories from dominant groups. In addition to responding to outside criticism, critical race theorists have engaged in intensive self-criticism, often out of public view.

C. Struggle Against Racism

Racism mostly occurs through covert behaviors that people often do not realize their actions are considered racist. Racial minorities, especially African-Americans, continue to fight systemic racism through various means, including legal advocacy, storytelling, and social movements. The principle of voice of color is key in this endeavor as stories from marginalized groups are important to expose the realities of racism experienced on a daily basis and act as a form of resistance, challenging dominant narratives that often ignore or trivialize racial oppression. Delgado and Stefancic also emphasize that resistance to racism has been historical and ongoing, from the civil rights movement to contemporary struggles for affirmative action and racial equality in education, employment and housing.

1. Utilizing Experiential Knowledge of Racism

Experiential engagement involving multiple individual narratives and the dissemination of collective experiences, has emerged as an impactful method not only for challenging instances of racism but also for raising public awareness on matters relating to race and systemic injustice.

Individuals engaged in this practice assert that African Americans not only experience unique experiences of racism, but also have different ways of communicating and understanding that inform their understanding of those experiences, as highlighted by Delgado (2000).

2. Campaigning

There are active campaigns against issues such as affirmative action, employment and education rations, and immigration. The ongoing resistance to affirmative action and other forms of assistance aimed at redressing the harms of discrimination largely stems from the belief that as white people, they are entitled to priority and preference over black people (Delgado, 2000).

3. Reporting and Protesting Racism

Reporting racism is often used as a technique by governing bodies in an effort to combat racism (Gellman, 1991). Reporting and protest are closely related methods of resistance, both of which have retrospective and proactive attributes. Both seek to foster broader social transformation, while simultaneously preserving the self-respect and dignity of those victimized by racism. While reporting generally involves disillusionment, protest is considered indispensable in public and collective resistance against racism.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

This section discusses the research design, data sources, data collection, and data analysis, explaining to readers how researcher conduct this research.

A. Research Design

This research is literary criticism, used as the primary lens for the analyzing literary texts. Literary criticism is a branch of literary studies that considers creating literary works to pamper readers through the sharpness of taste, aesthetic sensitivity, and understanding of knowledge (Muzakki, 2020). Literary criticism helps unearth the underlying meanings of texts and character portrayals that signify particular social circumstances.

This research investigate the struggle against racial issues and power relations depicted in the novel *A Song Below Water* by Bethany C. Morrow. The researcher employs literary criticism and Critical Race Theory as the primary basis for an in-depth analysis of how racism is portrayed within the literary work. It also explores the cultural context, social dynamics and sociocultural factors that shaped the narrative and experiences of the main character.

B. Data Source

The researcher use data source from a novel entitled *A Song Below Water*, by Bethany C. Morrow. The printed novel was published on March 24 2020, by Tor Publishing Group with a total 250 pages and is divided into 20 chapters, each based on characters' points of view in the novel.

C. Data Collection

This research divides the data collection into two parts. First, the researcher carefully read and comprehend the novel. Second, the researcher identifies, classifies, and marks the data in the form of sentences, conversations, and statements. Therefore, the researcher read the entire novel pages to ensure that the data in the novel matches Richard Delgado's Critical Race Theory and analyses the findings in the discussion section.

D. Data Analysis

First of all, the researcher determined the data that is closest to the research objectives. Then, the researcher conducted an analysis involving sorting and categorizing the data. The next step is categorized the data into groups based on their relationship to the theory applied. In the analysis stage, the researcher examines each data using Critical Race Theory. As a result, this sociological approach supports Critical Race Theory in analyzing how characters in the novel experienced racism and reflected social conditions in society.

CHAPTER IV

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This section contains data analysis relevant to the problem of the study taken from the novel *A Song Below Water*. In this chapter the researcher analyzed data based on Delgado's Critical Race Theory which has six tenets those are: Everyday Racism, Material Determinism, Social Construction, Differential Racialization, Intersectionality, and Voice of Color.

A. Racism Experienced by the Main Character in *A Song Below Water*

A Song Below Water is set in Portland, a city in the United States with a long history of racism that still exists today. Negative stereotypes of racial identity, culture, political issues and policies are factors related to the history of racism in America. In the late 1970s, Critical Race Theory emerged, focusing on analyzing the role of race and racism and highlighting individual or group problems. The novel *A Song Below Water*, written by an American female writer, deals with racism, social justice, identity, and politics. Hence, Critical Race Theory is suitable for examining forms of racism in the novel *A Song Below Water*.

The case of racism represented in the novel occurs because the white race group (superordinate) treats the black race group (subordinate) unfairly. The superordinate group is the group that has power, while the subordinate group is the group that is controlled. The characters in novel *A Song Below Water* uses the mythological characters *Eloko* and *Siren*. Both has power, but the power of beautiful and alluring voice the *siren* has is more feared because the power of siren voice can

plunge people into danger, such as cursing humans into becoming stone statues.

This section contains forms of racism the main character experienced, Tavia, in the novel *A Song Below Water* based on six tenets of Critical Race Theory: Everyday Racism, Material Determinism, Social Construction, Differential Racialization, Intersectionality, and Voice of Color.

1. Everyday Racism

“Sirens, they say, and anyone listening knows it’s a dirty word. Danger, they report, and they’re talking about the danger she posed, never the danger we face”. (page 7)

The news of Rhoda Taylor's death on her YouTube channel, who was killed by her boyfriend, a black woman and suspected a *siren*, made Tavia even more worried that threats might also come her way. Tavia realizes she is in a minority position with society's assumption that blacks and their descendants are in a low position, bad, and considered to pose a danger. Despite all this, Tavia had to keep her identity hidden from the public, who had already categorized her black community as unfit to live in Portland with its majority white population.

The news of siren's death, which is widely spread on the YouTube channel, made Tavia immediately feel hit by something heavy, about the bad stigma of society against the identity of *sirens* like her. Instantly Tavia felt her whole body weak but realized that Tavia was in the crowd of a pool where her sister, Effie, was swimming. Portlanders suspect *sirens* are always from black groups, then identify them with something dangerous, so individuals who suspect *sirens* are often

overlooked in the social status of the community.

In the context of racism, Tavia's case is similar to the history of black people who have always been labelled negatively by society, even without causing any previous wrongdoing or chaos. Moreover, everyday racism refers to the subtle but persistent racial prejudice against black people. Society focuses too much on their perceived threat when in reality, *sirens* perceived as bad are nothing but victims of the violence of society's thinking.

This form of racist incident, which might be considered trivial in the daily lives of Portlanders who view sirens in a bad light, has a cumulative effect on the victim; Tavia feels unsafe in an environment that seems to force her to hide her true identity (siren) in an environment that perceives her as a threat, resulting in a feeling of alienation for Tavia.

Other examples of everyday racism that are almost considered normal by victims from minority groups are also narrated in the novel *A Song Below Water*:

"It's the Siren Trials all over again." It's Porsha, the smallest one in the ensemble, and the resident charmer. Even though to me it seems super cliché when she turns out to be our mind-blowing soloist, the judges are always thrown.

"How do you mean?" I ask. "How is it like the Sirens Trials?"

"Just how, in the 1960s, sirens were being outed and informed on, and when they were killed their murderers were never brought to justice"

(page 18)

Tavia has choir first period on Monday morning at school, and the gospel

choir is also the only place at school where she can at least vent her emotions and find support because nine of the twelve members of the choir community are also black, one of whom is Porsha. Based on the excerpts of the conversation above, the mention of the sirens' murderers never having to deal with the courts as criminals should reflect a form of systemic injustice that marginalized people often experience.

After hearing Porsha's words about the justice system overlooking crimes, Tavia felt deeply concerned about her fate and the fate of Black people who could easily become targets of society's injustices in the future. Society has already labeled the sirens as fears to be avoided regarding their identity. Porsha's explanation to Tavia shows that the legal system of offences when the victim is from the majority group is often ignored and is not a new thing in society but a pattern repeated in the history of racial violence in the 1960s.

Individuals of Black descent and mythical sirens are not only shunned physically but also socially and mentally. It is a form of casual racism where racial bias is covert and persistent. Everyday racism also encompasses the personal experiences of those who are victimized. These interpretations, even if not openly articulated by the perpetrator, can significantly affect the psychological well-being and overall health of the victim.

*“No matter how many people call me "hero" right now, it'll go bad,
like it always goes bad when you're a siren”. (page 227)*

One key insight from this quote reflects a distrust of public praise because

those who are victims of marginalization daily are always wary of the intentions behind good flattery. Any good deed will always go bad when done by a *siren*, evidenced by the phrase, “*it’ll go bad, like it always goes bad when you’re a siren*”. In the concept of everyday racism, minority groups are often faced with temporary situations, such as the notion of heroes who are unlikely to be recognized in the long term by society. No matter how much success they have, as long as the *siren* identity exist, negative stereotypes will still follow them because everyday racism ensures that they do not really feel safe or valued.

It provides an understanding that individual recognition and appreciation can not always fight forms of racism in the social structure of society-embedded negative mindsets that influence perceptions of groups that are considered minorities, such as the case experienced by *siren* and black races like Tavia. In the end, this concept shows that Everyday Racism has an impact on individual experiences of fighting prejudice that is difficult to change because they are biologically born as black descent.

2. Social Construction

The concept of social refers to the aspect of reality shaped by social agreements. These categories lack objectivity, inherentness, or fixity, as they do not align with biological or genetic reality. It encompasses the norms, values, categories and social identities in everyday life (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

“We all know what power sirens can wield with their voices. If you think about it, their words are actual weapon right?” She extended her hand toward a girl who I guess had something to do with how the discussion

got there". (page 52)

Ms. Fisher, Tavia's teacher, suddenly talks about sirens in the middle of class discussion, making Tavia feel like jumping out of her chair at that moment because she is shocked by the sensitivity of the siren's identity, which is also one of the reasons she hates school sometimes. Siren in mythology are known for the power of their melodious voices to attract other creatures, and the sentence above indicates the negative social construction of the dominant society. The excitement to erase the siren character, which is always considered dangerous, can be echoed anywhere.

The phrase "*their words are actual weapon right?*" also recognizes sirens' power to change certain situations in a social dynamic if echoed continuously. Their words can be a weapon of power to fight racism in the context of the conflict between the *siren* and the superior group in their environment. The power of siren's voice is represented as one of the most influential forces in the struggle for justice. Tavia is burdened by the bad stereotypes that have been cultivated among Portlanders about the view of siren identity.

The perception of siren identity reflects a racially marginalized community trying to accept the social reality of the majority society towards the lousy view of its group and underlining the solidarity of the group facing challenges of social construction built by society.

Tavia's heart skipped a beat. In the midst of the class discussion about sirens, she felt a deep sense of discomfort, which reminded her of very painful past traumas. Every word spoken brought back memories of their trauma.

“There was a group of people who were very hurt by the actions of a few well-meaning sirens. We’ve talked about the damage they did during the civil right movement in the ‘60s and how it almost derailed progress means for the entire nation” (page 52)

Continues with Ms. Fisher discussing in front of the class the topic of people being hurt by well-meaning actions directed at none other than the siren group. One of Tavia's classmates confirmed Ms. Fisher's remarks about the harm done to sirens. Overhearing the conversation, Tavia wanted to get up from her seat and expose that sirens do not always manipulate people. It is just that the dominant society is motivated by past incidents of murders committed by sirens. This case includes racially biased conversations erasing black people. Siren's good actions are not always in line with the results received by the dominant society.

Grand narratives of social progress often color social constructions of perceived injustices of minority groups. Every action Siren takes influences how it is accepted within the social fabric of Portland society, which continues to claim bad actions are good if Siren and her group originate them. Groups with power in Portland have the ability to shape dominant narratives, rely on media and social discourse and reinforce negative stigmas to shape public opinion and be understood by the community. Power dynamics influence dominant groups' actions against marginalized groups and demonstrate the complexity of social interpretation.

Not only that, the main character in this novel continues to experience hardship and has to fight against it, as shown in data below:

“It was suffocating, being surrounded by people and hiding from

them at the same time. I wanted it to end, but just that. Just my voice, and my sirenness, and my loneliness, and my fear". (page 91)

The anxious situation is repeated, recalls how Tavia felt when she was 11 when she did not have Effie as her adopted sister and before she had anyone as her protective network. It was suffocating to continue hiding from society's perception of her siren identity. The social construction then created fear and a feeling trapped, limiting her to others around her. Although having the power of a *siren* is not the only thing she can use to express her voice and identity as a liberation tool, it is the opposite.

For black people, the feeling of "*suffocating*" when in a crowd describes a reality that is often treated inhospitably, so inevitably, these minorities must adapt to the expectations of social constructions based on race and identity. However, it does not guarantee that the dominant group accepts their presence wholeheartedly. The phrase "*loneliness, and my fear*" is the emotional fallout of a minority whose life feels isolated by society, whose identity is always watched and misinterpreted with negative stereotypes created and reinforced by social practices while reinforcing oppressive racial norms.

It can be seen that aspects of reality are formed from social interactions and agreements and are not inherently or naturally constructed. The impact of racism affects the victim emotionally, such as feelings of suffocation, overwhelming loneliness, fear, and feelings to end the injustice.

3. Intersectionality

Intersectionality refers to the way different forms of social discrimination such as race, gender, class, and sexual orientation overlap and shape the experiences of individuals and groups at the intersection of these identities (Delgado & Stefancic 2017)

“I don't Google myself anymore, but sometimes when I hear the snapping sound of a phone camera nearby, I wonder if it's trained on me. If someone's selfie is just a ruse to capture me in the background. It's probably just paranoia (I hope it just a paranoia)”. (page 56)

The camera's snap reminded Tavia of an incident a few years ago when she was surrounded by unauthorized cameras that photographed and reported on her in an article about the bad character of a siren. From a societal perspective, Tavia is traumatized by the racism of the white majority in Portland. And the phrase *“I wonder if it's trained on me”* emphasizes doubt about whether someone took a photo of Tavia as if she looks different or stands out to others because someone secretly knows Tavia's identity is siren.

Not everyone shares unique experiences like Tavia's anxiety in public spaces. Feeling watched by the majority white community and carrying the identity of sirens certainly created an emotional and psychological experience for Tavia. *“It's probably just paranoia (I hope it's just a paranoia)”* this sentence shows that the victim considers excessive feelings of suspicion about something others notice about her influenced by previous experiences and social situations that can shape the way individuals respond to the current situation.

Therefore, Tavia is concerned that people who take selfies are nothing but manipulating to take pictures of themselves, although this perception arises due to previous similar experiences. Black people tend to cope with greater scrutiny from individuals and the constitution. The discomfort of being highlighted in public reflects individuals' real-life experiences of being targeted by society against Black people.

Similarly, the concept of Intersectionality indicates how a social identity creates a complex and traumatic experience, as found in the data below:

“You don't have to be a siren to be shaken after a run-in with the cops, but it sure must make it worse. Black and female and siren is just layers upon layers of trauma”. (page 82)

The statement above indicates racist acts in the form of race, gender, and social identity discrimination and lead to Tavia's trauma, because since childhood, she has had bad experiences related to identity and societal stereotypes that black women in Portland are close to the alleged identity of ostracized siren. Environmental factors also reinforced Tavia's traumatizing experience when a white policeman suddenly pulled over the car she was driving for no reason, to be exact he is Priam's father, her ex-boyfriend from character *Eloko* (a higher beings than *siren* in Portland).

“Black and female and siren is just layers upon layers of trauma” begins with the phrase black and female, showing two different identities that overlap to exacerbate Tavia's life experience, black and female. Not to mention the identity of siren Then emphasized with the phrase *“layers upon layers of trauma”* reflects that

the trauma faced does not come from just one identity factor. It is not confusing if Tavia has to face the situation of being stopped for no apparent reason by white police because the fact is that Portland is predominantly white, and the existence of a power structure centred on them creates an unfair system.

Moreover, when it comes to real history of longstanding racism in America, black people are disproportionately more likely to be detained than white people in the same criminal context. This disparity in authority represents a racial bias in the country's criminal justice system. The racial profiling of black people has always been highlighted more deeply. It has always resulted in a disparity in attitudes and treatment that is far less fair than the white community.

Persistent and systemic inequalities not only shape individual Black people's experiences of concepts of power and protection in social contexts that often seem marked by hostility towards their existence.

“If the world is on the hunt and everything's coming down this power might be all the protection I have. After everything I've been through, that realization fills me with equal parts boldness and apprehension. I feel myself bouncing between fear and ferocity, my heart and my call fighting for space in my throat”. (page 104)

Tavia felt frightened after watching Camilla Fox's channel and the top comments that netizens typed. No one believed Camilla's explanation of the murder of Rhoda, who was suspected of being a siren, but rather scathing comments. The sentence above demonstrates how Tavia has faced various traumas related to her racial and gender identity, complexities that continuously connect to identity factors

within the structure of society. The reality is that black people living as minorities often feel threatened by institutions, including a biased justice system. The power that minorities have is often relied upon as their only hope for refuge in an unjust society.

Overlapping identities affect the way individuals express themselves when facing complex situations due to the challenges of multiple identities as black and a woman. Analysis of intersectionality shows how individuals feel trapped in the injustice that continues to hunt them. For the marginalized groups, the only reliable strength comes from within themselves, built from the many experiences that have occurred. It represents the identity of a group interacting courageously against the challenges faced in several forms of interrelated pressure.

“For me, it's been a deception. I can admit that to myself, buoyed by this tide of people. I am not a monster because I live in a world that gives me impossible choices, but I've met my grandmother in the blue place”. (page 154)

Tavia realized that the social conditions in Portland influenced every bad situation she faced. The identity of sirens has always been considered dangerous and the social stigma that makes them vulnerable to negative judgments from society. The sentence *“I am not a monster because I live in a world that gives me impossible choices”* represents how black people feel the dilemma of having to deal with absolute choices while changing the social structure and bad views of society also looks impossible and is a very difficult choice. The equality and justice that is always promised to black people is just an illusion.

The reality is that they always feel betrayed by the social reality that always ends up disappointing them. It is only the solidarity of fellow races that they rely on as a force against bad experiences when society never sides with this complexity of injustice. Tavia's awareness of the traumas she has faced due to overlapping identities is part of a system that often complicates their existence. Thus, Tavia recognizes the reasons behind society's racism against black people who are systemically marginalized.

Another example of Intersectionality that happened to Tavia in the novel is shown in the data below:

“If it is our destiny as Black women to stand before crowds, before press and police and people enamored of our grief-if we are to give eulogy after eulogy and defend the dead” and now she raises her voice and her eyes go from the tide of us to the wall closing in if all we have are our voices, then why are we so feared”. (page 155)

Being born a black woman exposes Tavia and her community to the challenges of discrimination, including the public, the media, and the police. They are afraid of the power of the siren call, which is believed to destroy the world and threaten other creatures because of the power of the siren. Amidst the turbulent protest crowd, Tavia stood to defend with her community until the police finally pulled Tavia away. She felt something tear in her abdomen just as Tavia screamed to stop the police from pulling Camilla's body down the stairs as if she was wearing protective clothing like them.

Highlighting Tavia's overlapping identities influences the unique

experiences of black women who are often overlooked and must overcome the burden of trauma again, as written in the phrase “*give eulogy after eulogy and defend the dead*”. Giving eulogies is an attempt to honour those who have died as a result of violence, whether caused by the community or an unjust law enforcement system.

In the context of Tavia's neighbourhood, she and her community amplified voices of solidarity to counter the recurring challenges of systemic injustice against Black people in Portland. The hope is that through the delivery of eulogies, she and her community unite to represent the voices of those who have died, not to be remembered as victims but to evoke social change for the problematic conditions that we do not want to experience in the long term.

Furthermore, the phrase “*the wall closing in*” reflects that black people feel crushed by social conditions that are full of blows due to systemic racism. Ironically, society fears the voice of Black groups as a source of strength in their fight for justice and considers it a form of threat. The sentence also hints at the limited space for freedom, especially felt by black women in the face of a system that is not in favour of Tavia and her group.

4. Voice of Color

Voice of Color concept is often associated with social change and activism and seeks to address the injustices of black people who are marginalized by white people (Kennedy's, 1898)

“I have a small but complex web of people who want me to be safe, and they might not have the power or privilege to convince anyone else to feel the same, but they're still here. Fighting futility with me”. (page 92)

The concept of Voice of Color highlights the strengthening of perspectives in trying to overcome the problem of racial injustice of black groups. The sentence above reveals the experiences and struggles of minority group whose existence is often ignored. Fellow minorities often form internal networks to work against the racial structure of racism even though there are few and possible risks of challenges from the majority group.

Tavia recognizes the complex reality of minorities like herself not having much power to face the injustice of racism, especially without the help of power of many people and without privileges. However, her enthusiasm for resistance in defense of her group has never been extinguished despite having to face massive protests and racism that never ends.

Although the individual voice is a right to be voiced, the futility of it sometimes still surrounds Tavia’s mind as a survivor of racism. As if she would be forced into silence by circumstances because of the fear and apprehension of revealing her true identity in public, as described below:

"Isn't that awful? A part of me always worried what might happen to siren if they're too afraid to speak. I don't want you to be afraid. It's crippling". (page 174)

Mama Theo and Tavia’s conversations in her room highlighted Tavia’s concerns about overcoming fears about her own experiences as a minority. They do

not have much space to voice their experiences. The conversation continues with Tavia's confusion about why she has to part with Effie, her biracial sister who lives in the same house with mattresses next to each other. Tavia needed help understanding Effie's true identity. Mama Theo had said that somebody was after Effie, but he was afraid of the sirens.

Tavia did a Google search of what people might fear from sirens besides the deceptive power of voice based on history and myths. Then she typed in all of Effie's characteristics, and everything that came up had to do with snakes, *gargoyle* protectors, and guards made of chiseled stone which helped them in the chaos of the protests but were afraid of the *siren*. Raising the voices of people of color is a significant step towards combating injustice. The fear of raising siren's rights reflects how racism truly paralyzes minority voices that are never respected and forced into silence. Tavia, however, was determined to speak up for her rights and fight for racial equality in her neighborhood.

Tavia tries to provide support by providing a space for minority groups like her to speak freely about their identity in public without worrying about the consequences of the threats they might face afterward. Many of them feel intimidated by the past trauma of witnessing black people being enslaved, punished, and even attacked for daring to raise their voices, creating fear in other individuals of color. Empowering the voices of minorities will encourage the courage to speak up and hope for significant change for minority groups.

B. The Main Character Struggle Against Racism

The main character experienced various forms of racism caused by Tavia's black racial biology. The forms of racism she experienced indirectly prove how Tavia actually tried to be free from unfair treatment and utilized the solidarity of her group to voice equal rights and justice.

1. Campaigning

“This must be what it really feels like to be a siren, to have a captive audience. To be heard. So instead of giving any introduction, instead of making them wait another moment, I open my mouth to speak”. (page 221)

In the last chaos that took place at the school prom in the middle of the crowd, Effie involuntarily transformed into her natural form, a gorgon that was exactly like a snake. As if losing her mind, Effie turned someone to stone through the power of her eyes. That is when Tavia ventures to reveal the siren's identity in order to protect Effie from the crowd and the reporters filming the chaos. The game is over, Tavia and Effie visit Triton Park again after a long time since the last chaos. One by one, Tavia's *awaken* power returned the children to their original forms. Their parents are happy to be reunited with their loved ones. They call Tavia a hero, and they no longer fear the *siren*.

Before revealing her true identity in public by saying, “To be a siren,” Tavia went through many difficult situations closely related to negative stereotypes of society. Tavia's direct revelation of her siren identity reflects her acceptance of

her identity, which is reinforced by her readiness to represent minority groups and share their long-held experiences of racism. Realizing that hiding from her identity would not always remove the stigma, Tavia empowered group support as a key source of strength to challenge the narratives that harmed them.

In line with this statement, the experience of marginalized individuals is useful for challenging stereotypes and creating a new view that sirens are not always associated with bad things. In the context of struggle, speaking up shows a refusal to always accept circumstances that do not match the reality of sirens in the social justice system of society. *“Instead of making them wait another moment, I open my mouth to speak”* indicates an urgent decision to no longer delay the opportunity to create change, especially in the struggle against social injustice. This message must be acted upon quickly, considering that the issues surrounding racism have been going on for a very long time.

By immediately taking control of her group's voice, Tavia is trying to assert that minority voices deserve to be heard and respected. In the context of activism, this sentence also reflects Tavia's sense of care for her audience. She strongly engages the audience to participate with each other in fighting for justice after long experiences of racism that have been passed before.

“I'm not just going for hometown hero. I'm going for siren activist. I'm joining the fight to free Camilla Fox, and I'm petitioning to get Lexi taken off the air, and I want to teach the world that we have a right to use our voices. No taking the name “siren” and erasing the ones who actually exist”. (page 227)

Highlighting the fate of racial minorities who are often oppressed provokes Tavia's sense of solidarity to become one of the *siren* activists fighting for the fate of her group in the face of injustice. Black and *siren*, there is nothing better for Tavia than the courage for her right to vote. Tavia goes through a series of conflicts that lead to a good ending, the power of her voice is slowly influencing the views of others that *siren* is not dangerous. *Siren* is the hero of chaos in Portland.

Camilla Fox is a siren who faces social challenges related to her identity. Her story reflects the struggle against stigma and discrimination that later inspired Tavia to become active in activist movements and campaigns and fight for the rights of minority groups. Through Camilla's resilience, courage, and struggle, Tavia found a starting point to play an active role in the community. Tavia feels responsible for transforming social movements for the better through campaign activism.

By saying "*and I want to teach the world that we have a right to use our voices,*" confirms that Tavia is determined to start a movement against racism by actively participating in social discussions and helping to channel minority narratives that are often ignored in the social construction of the dominant society. Tavia recognizes the importance of minority voices participating in the fight for shared rights of justice and equality. As a group that experiences social discrimination, the phrase the right to use one's voice means a form of resistance where they refuse to remain silent when receiving injustice.

Emphasizing the right to aggregate group voices, this sentence also invites solidarity between individuals to collectively voice aspirations that are often denigrated, especially to participate with each other in creating social change and challenging dominant narratives of breaking down inequality. The affirmation of the designation “siren” and the resistance to erasing its identity also illustrate an attempt to increase the agency of individuals within that particular community. It gives them the authority to articulate their lived experiences and ambitions. In terms of racial discrimination, such empowerment is particularly useful for amplifying the voices of marginalized groups and advocating for their rights.

After going through a difficult period of persistent racism, Tavia was finally able to realize her desire to help the community rise above social injustice. Starting from utilizing social media, Tavia created a YouTube channel as a place to channel experiences and share stories about racial issues that the siren community faced, building a sense of attachment from Tavia's personal experience as a siren who was often ostracized by society and upholding high solidarity between individuals in the group.

“for the past year, she's gathered quite a following speaking out on the alleged marginalization and systemic oppression she says siren have faced. Soon, she wont just be powerful voice in advocacy and activism”

Through Tavia's YouTube platform, she has managed to draw public attention to the issues that sirens face. The statement about systemic oppression is not only about the individual. In other words, Tavia fights not to defend herself but as a figure who initially inspires others to speak up. Tavia then builds solidarity

within the group to become a unified network that will have a greater impact on positive change action, showing how important it is for individual voices to push for minority narratives that are often overlooked.

Based on the quote above, Tavia has evolved in her identity. It opens with a story of hiding her siren identity because of the bad stereotypes of Portland society that allowed her to be socially marginalized. As events unfold, Tavia grows with a strong mindset and is determined to become a powerful voice within the siren community. As an active teen advocate, this journey shows how complex racial issues affecting minority groups can be fought by uniting the power of collective voices that are never heard.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This chapter is the final part, discusses the conclusion and suggestion based on the result of data analysis and discussion in the previous chapter.

A. Conclusion

The modern fantasy novel *A Song Below Water* by American female writer Bethany C. Morrow tells the story of two black women who are different mythological characters. However, both experienced racism from the white majority group in their environment. This study aims to look for forms of racism experienced by the main character in the novel using Critical Race Theory by Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic and to see how the main character struggle against racism.

The result of this study shows that the main character named Tavia experiences four out of six concept of racism based on Richard Delgado's tenets of Critical Race Theory. First, Everyday Racism in the form of continuous demeaning treatment and prejudicial attitudes towards the black race and social restrictions to the siren character. Second, Social Construction looks terrible for the black race based on the agreement of the majority group in the neighborhood. Third, Intersectionality in the form of black female protagonists based on their gender and race face challenges of racism from various sources, and their movements tend to be watched and suspected. Fourth, Voice of Color that black groups try to change by strengthening their perspectives, solidarity, and voting rights to achieve more inclusive racial equality.

Also, this research shows that the main character struggles against racism by speaking out in public to build community and engage in active advocacy. Tavia's courage to take action, share her story, and build solidarity is key in her struggle to achieve justice and equality. Tavia actively campaigned and created a platform to voice the experiences of minorities who had always been ignored as victims of racism. Ultimately, her struggle gained recognition from the surrounding community.

B. Suggestion

This study uses a literary work in the form of a novel entitled *A Song Below Water*. The researcher focuses on the six tenets of Richard Delgado's Critical Race Theory. In addition to offering deep insights into literary works, the researcher hopes that readers can understand the emotional reality of the impact of victims of racism as narrated in the novel. It allows readers to see the phenomenon from various perspectives, especially regarding the complexity of the identity of racial minority groups. Readers are also expected to have social sensitivity and be committed to positive societal changes. Furthermore, many aspects of the novel *A Song Below Water* can be researched using other theories, such as oppression, discrimination, sexism, and etc. In addition to anticipating the similarity of research, the researcher hopes that contributions that examine other aspects of the novel can expand the discussion of the shortcomings of this research.

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CURRICULUM VITAE



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