

**THE INTERSECTIONAL OPPRESSION ON THE MAIN
BLACK FEMALE CHARACTER IN NATASYA BROWN'S
*ASSEMBLY***

THESIS

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**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK
IBRAHIM MALANG
2025**

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THESIS

Presented to
Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang
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2025

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I state that the thesis entitled "*The Intersectional Oppression on The Main Black Female Character in Natasha Brown's Assembly*" is my original work. I do not include any materials 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, 14th November 2025

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MOTTO

“Long story short, I survive”

-Taylor Swift

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to the source of my infinite love, my father, Mukri, and my mother Suharti. My second mother and elder sister, Rosya'adah. My beloved family, who have always been my strength and sanctuary.
To all my friends who have never stop supporting and motivating me,
and to myself, for proving that I am capable.

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Salawat and salam were continuously poured out on Prophet Muhammad SAW, and peace and blessings be upon him, along with his family, friends, and followers, until the end of time. The thesis entitled *The Intersectional Oppression on The Main Black Female Character in Natasha Brown's Assembly* was made to meet one of the requirements for achieving a degree of *Sarjana Sastra* (S.S.) in the Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.

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The researcher realized that many shortcomings still need to be corrected and improved in preparing this thesis. For that, the researcher hopes that there will be input for this thesis and further research appropriate to the issue or object of this thesis. The researcher hopes this thesis may benefit the researcher, family, and the wider community.

Malang, 14th November 2025
The Researcher

Tiya Isma Mayucha

ABSTRACT

Mayucha, Tiya Isma (2025). *The Intersectional Oppression on The Main Black Female Character in Natasha Brown's Assembly*. Undergraduate Thesis. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Advisor: Dr. Hj. Istiadah, M.A.

Keywords: Intersectional Oppression, Intersectionality, Alienation

This study discusses the intersectional oppression experienced by the main black female character in the novel *Assembly* using the theory of intersectionality proposed by Kimberlé Crenshaw. This study is driven by the main character's layered identity as a woman, black, and upper-middle class, which creates a complex experience of oppression and makes her feel alienated. The aim of this study is to emphasize the importance of understanding minority groups not only from a single identity, but from overlapping and mutually influential identities. Using literary criticism methods, quotations from the novel are analyzed to determine how these identities produce systemic oppression and how this oppression affects the life of the main black female character. The results of the study show that the main black female character experiences intersectional oppression in accordance with three categories of intersectionality, namely structural intersectionality, political intersectionality, and representational intersectionality. The effects of this intersectional oppression are manifested in a process of “*alienation*”. This alienation emerges through five dimensions: social isolation, powerlessness, self-estrangement, meaninglessness, and normlessness. Therefore, this study recommends that literary studies use psychological theory to explore the internal and emotional effects of an individual's inner experiences in conditions of overlapping and intersecting identities.

مستخلص البحث

مايوجي، تي عصمة ٢٠٢٥ الاضطهاد المتعدد الأبعاد ضد بطلات الرواية السوداوات في رواية ناتاشا براون "Assembly". أطروحة لبرنامج قسم الأدب الإنجليزية، كلية العلوم الإنسانية، جامعة مولانا مالك إبراهيم الإسلامية الحكومية، مالانج. المشرفة: د. إستياداه، ماجستير.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الاضطهاد المتقاطع، التقاطعية، الاغتراب

تناقش هذه الدراسة الاضطهاد المتعدد الأبعاد الذي تعاني منه البطلة السوداء في رواية *Assembly* باستخدام نظرية التقاطعية التي اقترحتها كيمبرلي كرينشو. تستند هذه الدراسة إلى الهوية المتعددة الأبعاد للبطلة باعتبارها امرأة سوداء تنتمي إلى الطبقة المتوسطة العليا، مما يخلق تجربة معقدة من الاضطهاد ويجعلها تشعر بالغربة. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التأكيد على أهمية فهم الأقليات ليس فقط من منظور هوية واحدة، بل من منظور هويات متداخلة ومتأثرة ببعضها البعض. باستخدام أساليب النقد الأدبي، يتم تحليل اقتباسات من الرواية لتحديد كيف تنتج هذه الهويات اضطهاداً منهجياً وكيف يؤثر هذا الاضطهاد على حياة الشخصية النسائية السوداء الرئيسية. تظهر نتائج الدراسة أن الشخصية النسائية السوداء الرئيسية تعاني من اضطهاد متعدد الجوانب وفقاً لثلاث فئات من التقاطع، وهي التقاطع الهيكلي والتقاطع السياسي والتقاطع التمثيلي. تتجلى آثار هذا الاضطهاد المتعدد الجوانب في عملية "الاغتراب". يظهر هذا الاغتراب من خلال خمسة أبعاد: العزلة الاجتماعية، والعجز، والغربة الذاتية، واللا معنى، وعدم الانتظام. لذلك، توصي هذه الدراسة بأن تستخدم الدراسات الأدبية النظرية النفسية لاستكشاف الآثار الداخلية والعاطفية لتجارب الفرد الداخلية في ظروف تتداخل فيها الهويات وتتقاطع.

ABSTRAK

Mayucha, Tiya Isma (2025). Penindasan Interseksional Terhadap Tokoh Utama Perempuan Kulit Hitam dalam Novel *Assembly* Karya Natasha Brown. Skripsi Program Studi Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Humaniora, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Dosen Pembimbing: Dr. Hj. Istiadah, M.A.

Kata kunci: *Penindasan Interseksionalitas, Intersectionality, Keterasingan*

Penelitian ini membahas penindasan interseksional yang dialami oleh karakter utama perempuan kulit hitam dalam novel *Assembly* menggunakan teori interseksionalitas yang diusulkan oleh Kimberlé Crenshaw. Penelitian ini didorong oleh identitas berlapis karakter utama sebagai perempuan, kulit hitam, dan memiliki status sosial tertentu, yang menciptakan pengalaman penindasan yang kompleks dan membuatnya merasa terasing. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menekankan pentingnya memahami kelompok minoritas tidak hanya dari satu identitas, tetapi dari identitas-identitas yang tumpang tindih dan saling mempengaruhi. Dengan menggunakan metode kritik sastra, kutipan-kutipan dari novel dianalisis untuk menentukan bagaimana identitas-identitas tersebut menghasilkan penindasan sistemik dan bagaimana penindasan tersebut mempengaruhi kehidupan karakter utama perempuan kulit hitam. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa karakter perempuan kulit hitam utama mengalami penindasan interseksional sesuai dengan tiga kategori interseksionalitas, yaitu interseksionalitas struktural, interseksionalitas politik, dan interseksionalitas representasional. Dampak penindasan interseksional ini manifestasi dalam proses "*keterasingan*". Keterasingan tersebut muncul melalui lima dimensi: isolasi sosial, ketidakberdayaan, keterasingan diri, ketidakbermaknaan, dan ketidakberaturan. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini merekomendasikan agar studi sastra menggunakan teori psikologis guna mengeksplorasi efek internal dan emosional pengalaman batin individu dalam kondisi identitas yang tumpang tindih dan saling berpotong.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this first chapter, the researcher presents the background of the study, previous studies, problem of study, significance of the study consisting of the scope of limitations and definitions of key term.

A. Background of the Study

Women of color have different social, economic and political positions than white women. Therefore, when policies or movements for women often ignore these differences (Crenshaw, 1991). For instance, black women often have a higher chance of being exposed to certain diseases compared to white women. The study on people of color indicates that individuals with more than one minority identity are often subjected to multiple layers of oppression. In the research, it was stated that sexual orientation was the main reason they experienced harassment (around 75-76%). However, the data indicates that people of color were ten times more likely to experience harassment related to race than white respondents (Williams et al., 2023).

Therefore, the oppression emerges as the continuous unfair treatment of certain groups of individuals based on race, gender, religion, and social status (Sultana, 2024). This oppression manifest in various forms, such as political, economic, socio-cultural. Specifically, the oppression of women can also be observed through literature (Huwae et al., 2022). In addition, oppression is not only present in the

professional sphere, health, or generational history, but also in social structures and citizenship. Oppression occurs when individuals or groups prevent others from living as fully human beings (Young, 2014). This can happen by degrading their dignity, denying them education or opportunities, or restricting their access through rules, customs and norms that are considered normal. Such conditions create a system of power that makes it difficult for certain groups to move freely and keeps them in a position of weakness. Moreover, both in literature and in the real world, women often face systemic barriers in accessing public services such as health, education, and legal protection (Rizqiyana, 2024). For black female, this inequality is exacerbated by intersectional oppression, where discrimination based on race, social class and gender overlap and create a unique experience. Consequently, this situation makes the struggle even harder for them than if they were only experiencing one form of discrimination. Therefore, oppression cannot be understood in isolation, but must be understood as the result of the intersection of various layered identities of individuals. This concept is known as intersectional oppression.

Intersectional oppression is a concept that originated from critical theory and feminism (Sultana, 2024). Kimberlé Crenshaw explains that human identity are shaped by the interplay of race, indigeneity, gender, class, sexuality, geography, age, disability, migration status, and religion (Hankivsky, 2014). As such, oppression cannot be viewed from a single identity, but must be understood as the result of an intersection of various discriminatory factors occurring simultaneously. The study of intersectionality is getting more attention in the humanities and literary

research, especially in the context of feminist literary analysis and gender studies (Lestari et al., 2023). For instance, a study of Adriene Kennedy's work Jabboury et al. (2016) shows that the experiences of African-American women not only describe racial or gender-based oppression, but also how this oppression gives rise to alienation in their lives. This research highlights the connection between intersectionality and alienation, providing an overview of how the form of alienation experienced by black woman is caused by interrelated racial, gender and hybridity oppression. This shows that intersectionality can be used to uncover oppression, while the theory of alienation helps explain the consequences or effects of such oppression.

A similar situation is seen in Natasha Brown's novel *Assembly*. The main black female character, is a relevant example to discuss this issue. This is because the main black female character who is successful in her career at a large financial company in the British Empire. Although she succeeded in rising to the upper social class, her life is still filled with pressure and unfair treatment related to her race, gender, and class identity (Pittel, 2021). Through the main character, this novel shows that the oppression she experiences is not singular, but layered and mutually reinforcing. Thus, this study examines how injustice is experienced by the main black female character, using intersectionality theory to understand layered individual identities and the formation of complex oppression. As emphasised Lewis (2019) black female often face discrimination from their communities based on the intersection of class, race and gender. This idea is expanded upon by Hankivsky (2014) emphasizes that human experiences are shaped by the

interconnectedness of race, gender, class, sexuality, age, disability, migration status and religion.

In the same way, Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term '*intersectionality*' to describe how multiple identities such as race, class, and gender intertwine and result in different experiences of discrimination and privilege (Crenshaw, 1991) . The reason for choosing the novel *Assembly* and using Crenshaw's intersectionality theory is highly relevant to see how layered identities shape unique experiences for the main black female character. However, to further understand the effects of intersectional oppression on the main character, this study uses Melvin Seeman's theory of alienation. Seeman (1991) outlines alienation into five dimensions: social isolation, powerlessness, self-estrangement, meaninglessness, and normlessness. These dimensions help explain the consequences or effects of intersectional oppression.

In this sense, using Kimberlé Crenshaw's (1991) theory of intersectionality and Melvin Seeman's theory of alienation as supporting frameworks, the analysis of the novel *Assembly* becomes more comprehensive. Intersectionality explains the forms of oppression, while alienation explains how intersectional oppression affects the life of the black female main character.

Previous research related to Kimberlé Crenshaw's intersectionality theory has been conducted in various context of literature. These studies generally focus on how multiple, overlapping identities such as race, gender, and class social create complex experience of oppression in literary characters. The first group of previous

studies focuses on African or diasporic literature. For example, was researched by Diallo (2020) shows an exploration of how intersectionality relates to systemic oppression in the narrative of the novel *Song Long Letter* and shows resistance against women's marginalization in African society. Similarly, by Naginevičiūtė (2024) analyzes the narratives of women who have black whites in the novel *Girl, Woman, Other* by Bernadine Evaristo using Kimberlé Crenshaw's intersectional. It shows the representation of intersectionality how race, class and gender identities influence the discrimination experienced by women in the Britain.

The second group of studies applies intersectionality to Western popular texts. Utami (2021) analyzes intersectionality using Kimberlé Crenshaw's concept of characters in the novel *Harry Potter and The Deathly Hallows* and examines intersectionality between humans and non-humans in the wizarding world. The findings show that intersectionality theory can be used in various forms of marginalization and oppression in different contexts. Similar research was also conducted by Lestari et al. (2023) use the concept of intersectionality by Kimberlé Crenshaw to describes the intersectionality that exists in the novel *Rara Mendut* as a resistance to the power at that time. The results see how the privileges possessed by women of the Islamic Mataram Kingdom. The fourth research conducted by Ho et al. (2023) using Kimberlé Crenshaw's intersectionality to explore oppression caused by the overlapping identities of gender and race in the female characters in *Jane Eyre*. The result is the struggle of women in the face of oppression and patriarchy in Victorian society, while Kencan (2024) analyzing how the beauty myth of some characters in *The Vanishing Half* can affect them with intersectional

systems (racism, sexism, classism). The result is that the beauty myth becomes a tool of oppression that reinforces injustice in terms of race, class and gender.

The third group of previous studies emphasize minority representation and identity formation. Nasir & Zahra (2024) using Crenshaw's concept of intersectionality as an understanding of race, social class, and gender that influence the formation of the main character's identity in the novel *Home is not a Country*. Sheheryar (2024) analyzed related to the representation of minorities in the novel *Beloved* by Toni Morrison. The result is that intersectionality analysis should be applied as another text analysis from a feminist perspective. Finally, Myšková (2024) became the only research with the same object, which is analyzing the context and translating selected parts of the novel *Assembly* by Natasha Brown, using the theory of literary translation. Furthermore, it discusses the translation problems that have been encountered.

From the previous studies mentioned above, it can be seen that most research applies Kimberlé Crenshaw's intersectionality to highlight oppression and identity formation in various novels across different cultural context. However, there is still a lack of studies that directly examine the effect of intersectional oppression experience on the black main female character in *Assembly*. Moreover, existing research has not yet explored how intersectional oppression result in psychological and existential effects, which can be understood through Seeman's theory of alienation. Therefore, this research fills the gap by analyzing *Assembly* through the lens intersectionality to understand the overlapping oppressions faced by the main

black female character, while also employing Seeman's concept of alienation to explain the deeper consequence or effect by these intersectional oppressions.

B. Problems of the Study

Based on the background of the study that has been explain, the researcher put forward two problems formulations as follows:

1. What are the forms of intersectional oppression experienced by the main black female character in Nataha Brown's *Assembly*?
2. What are the effects of intersectional oppression based on three categories of intersectionality (structural, political, and representational) on the main black female character in Natasha Brown's novel *Assembly*?

C. Significance of the Study

This study has theoretical significance by contributing to literary studies through a deeper understanding of the intersectional oppression experienced by the main black female character in the novel *Assembly*. Thus, this study adds to the literature on the application of Kimberlé Crenshaw's intersectionality theory and Seeman's theory of alienation in literary studies.

Practically, this research provides insight into how contemporary English literature depicts the reality of minority women's lives, adding to the interdisciplinary discussion of race, gender, and identity in modern society. This analysis not only focuses on racial, gender, and social class identities, but also analyses how intersectional oppression results in alienation.

D. Scope and Limitation

This study focuses on the main black female character in Natasha Brown's novel *Assembly*. This analysis uses Kimberlé Crenshaw's intersectionality theory to examine how layered identities such as race, gender and class create complex experiences of oppression. Moreover, Seeman's theory is used as a supporting theory to analyze the impact of this oppression, so that this study not only highlights the forms of oppression, but also the effects it causes. Thus, the scope of this study is limited to intersectional oppression and the effects caused by the intersection of identities in the form of alienation in the novel *Assembly*.

The limitation of this study lies in its focus, which only highlights one main black female character, so that the experiences of other characters are not discussed in depth. Moreover, *Assembly* is a relatively new novel, and the number of previous studies and literature reviews that directly discuss this novel is still limited. Therefore, this study uses supporting sources from studies that examine the concepts of intersectionality and alienation in other literary works as a theoretical basis.

E. Definition of Key Term

Researcher provide key term to make it easier for readers to understand the research and avoid misunderstanding the meaning of the keywords written.

1. *Intersectionality* examines the ways in which gender and race impact one another rather than relating to them as distinct and unconnected concepts (Crenshaw, 1991).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this chapter, the researcher explains the feminist approach as a broad umbrella and how race, class, and gender operate in the theory of intersectionality proposed by Kimberlé Crenshaw, using Melvin Seeman's theory of alienation as a supporting theory to analyze the forms of alienation that arise as a effect of the experience of oppression. These three things are explained as follows:

A. Feminist Literary Criticism

In literature, feminism is a widely used approach, particularly in analyzing how gender influences narrative and representation. Feminist literary criticism, therefore, refers to the analysis of literary works based on a feminist perspective, which is rooted in feminist theory. This approach has had a very significant impact on literary criticism over the past thirty-five years, as it challenges traditional interpretations and foregrounds women's voice (Plain & Sellers, 2007). Moreover, feminist criticism in literature arose with the emergence of the women's movement in the United States and Europe during the civil rights campaign in the 1960s (N. A. Dhivya, 2016). From then on, feminism's principles have helped understand language, structure, and the existence of literature.

In applying this approach, critics often focus on portrayal of characters especially women and examines how gendered power dynamic are embedded purpose. It used to understand how there are differences in rights and authority between men and women, to analyze how women experience oppression in male

dominated society, and to understand the effects this has on them (Ho et al., 2023). Furthermore, feminist theory aims to be a transformative tool that can influence societal attitudes and behaviors toward women, advocating for equity and justice through literature. In addition, feminist literary criticism is an umbrella term for approaches that examine how women are represented in literary works (Malik, 2025). Firstly, it examines how “*women*” are represented by male authors through their perspectives, and secondly, how “*women*” are represented by female authors from their perspectives. Therefore, the focus is divided into two aspects: who women are represented by and how the author's perspective shapes the narrative about women in a literary work.

In literary works, women often become the object of study, particularly in relation to how they are represented and positioned within patriarchal narratives (Alandira et al., 2024). Their involvement in literary analysis is frequently depicted through themes of violence and discrimination. Among the various forms of oppression that occurs is racism, superiority, which is carried out by a majority group against a minority social group. Consequently, feminist literary criticism emerges as a vital framework to interrogate these dynamics. It encompasses diverse strands, including liberal feminism, cultural feminism, and black feminism each of which engages in distinct yet interconnected struggles against systemic oppression. By acknowledging these variations, this research adopts feminist criticism as its analytical tool, aiming to uncover how literature reflects, reinforces, or resists the structure of gendered and racialized power structures.

To deepen this analysis, the study now turns to Kimberlé Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality, which offers a critical lens for understanding how overlapping systems of oppression, such as race, gender, and social class, interact to shape the lived experiences of individuals. Intersectionality addresses one of the main problems in modern feminism, namely how feminist theory often ignores issues of race, and conversely, anti-racist theory often ignores issues of gender. The concept of intersectionality is political and transformative because it focuses on social justice, equality, and self-awareness (Lahiri-Dutt, 2025). This concept explains that human identities are interconnected and constantly changing. A person cannot be understood solely through one aspect of their identity such as gender or race without considering other aspects, because the balance of power between these aspects can change over time and in different contexts.

Thus, intersectionality reinforces feminist literary theory by broadening its scope of analysis to examine how interrelated systems of power shape the diverse experiences of women. This makes feminist criticism more comprehensive and socially grounded in its pursuit of justice and equality.

B. Kimberlé Crenshaw's Theory of Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a concept that explains how different systems of oppression interact with each other in life (Calnitsky & Martinez, 2023). Factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation interact with one another, shaping unique experiences, including those related to health and social. This concept developed as an attempt to understand how race and gender relations

contribute to the formation social and political experiences. Furthermore, as stated by the Thesaurus Dictionary, intersectionality theory refers to a complex frameworks in which the effects of various forms of oppression such as (racism, sexism, and classism) overlap or intersect that occurs especially in marginalized individuals or groups (Utami, 2021). This aligns with Kimberlé Crenshaw's intersectionality theory, which emphasizes analyzing how various forms of oppression or injustice are interconnected and related (Haynes et al.,2020). Crenshaw's (1991) concept provides a critical lens for analyzing how overlapping structures of oppression shape not only individual experiences but also institutional dynamics. Specifically, intersectionality examines how heterogeneous groups, such women encounter different forms of inequality in the workplace and society, depending on their society, depending on their ethnicity, sexual orientation, class, and social location (Atewologun, 2018).

Moreover, Kimberlé Crenshaw's coined the term "*intersectionality*" to describe how black women's experiences and identities are marginalized by the dominant treatment of race and gender as a separate category in terms of anti-discrimination law, feminism, and the anti-racist movement, which, as a whole, focuses on the most powerful or privileged members of the group, such as white women and assumes that they represent the group as it is entirety (Christoffersen, 2021). By using intersectionality as a conceptual framework, scholars can better understand the lived realities of women of color, especially women with black women, whose identities are shaped by multiple, intersecting axes of oppression. Intersectionality critiques such things as differences in class, ethnicity, race, gender, age, ability and

sexuality and actively challenges the inequalities embedded within these structures (Nur, 2022). Furthermore, the concept emphasizes the unique ways in which race and gender interact as black women are identically oppressed. They face marginalization not only because they are women, but also because they are black experiencing a dual burden that differs from the experiences of white women or black men.

The term "*intersectionality*" coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, refers to the ways in which many identities, including socioeconomic race, class, and gender, overlap to produce distinct experiences of privilege, discrimination, and oppression. Thus, Crenshaw said that this intersectionality approach focuses on the intersection of race and gender, highlighting the importance of considering various aspects of identity when understanding how the social world is shaped (Crenshaw, 1991). "*Because you are a minority, you receive special standards and special treatment in the eyes of some people*" is what intersectionality means (Crenshaw, 1991). In 1989, Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw introduced the concept of "*intersectionality*" to describe the ways in which class, race, gender and other individual traits "*intersect*" and overlap. Consequently, "*intersectionality*" has gained popularity during the last five years, prompting reactions from those who are wary of novel concepts that put social justice first.

In relation to Kimberlé Crenshaw's intersectionality in Natasha Brown's *Assembly*, compelling literary illustration of intersectional oppression. The main black female character a black British woman diagnosed with cancer navigates a

world shape by overlapping systems of racism, sexism, and classism. Her identity is marked not only by her race and gender, but also her social class and national belonging, as she exists within a predominantly white British society. This intersecting structure of oppression affects her psychological condition, personal life and sense of identity, resulting in a unique and difficult experience that cannot be understood through one-dimensional analysis. With the concept of intersectionality, therefore, emphasizing the limitations of the idea that social structures overlap, resulting in double, triple or even more burdens that result in multiple forms of oppression. In her article *Mapping the Margins*, Crenshaw (1991) uses this concept to criticize how the law handles cases of domestic violence and rape, highlighting that women of color, especially black women, experience discrimination due to the overlapping of various systems of oppression (Haynes et al., 2020). As a result, the overlapping or intersecting forms discrimination such as (racism, sexism, and classism) that occur in the main black female character. Therefore, this study uses Crenshaw's concept, which identifies three types of intersectionality in the context of oppression against women of color and immigration: structural, political, and representational intersectionality. The three types are as follows:

C. Three Categories of Intersectionality by Kimberlé Crenshaw

1. Structural Intersectionality

Structural intersectionality explaining how race and gender interact with each other and cause women with black skin to experience inequalities that are different

from women with white skin. Women of color are positioned differently in the economic, social, and political worlds. Women of color are less likely to have their needs met than racially privileged women (Crenshaw, 1991). Structural intersectionality is an approach that conceptualizes and measures how systems of oppression interact between structural racism, structural sexism, and classism. Explaining how race, sexism, and classism interact and how women experience a range of oppression ranging from poverty to work issues, how this can have a simultaneous effect on health and shows if we only look at one oppression. The concept that highlights how the practices and policies of institutions (such as governments, workplaces, or legal systems) maintain inequalities (Durfee, 2021). These institutions can unconsciously create rules that reinforce inequalities, especially when they make assumptions that do not consider the experiences of marginalized groups.

2. Political Intersectionality

Political intersectionality here, is a concept that explains how women of color belong to two or more groups that both experience oppression, namely as women and as part of a particular racial group (Crenshaw, 1991). However, when the two groups often have conflicting or incompatible political agendas. Intersectional politics occurs when women are caught up in a political conflict related to issues of race and gender (Nur, 2022). These two issues are debated and not accommodated together. Political intersectionality relates to how feminist and anti-racist movements can simultaneously contribute to the marginalization of issues of

violence against women of color (Yuval-Davis, 2006). As a result, women of color are often marginalized in political struggles.

3. Representational Intersectionality

Representational intersectionality is a concept that examines how women of color are portrayed in popular culture, such as films, music, advertisements and social media. This representation is shaped by layered identities such as race, gender and social class (Crenshaw, 1991). Kimberlé Crenshaw also argues that black women are often rendered invisible or portrayed in problematic ways within cultural narratives. Similarly, Smrdelj & Pajnik (2022) note that women from minority groups, particularly women of color, are frequently represented in popular culture, media, and social discourse in ways that reinforce racial and gendered stereotypes. In essence, representational intersectionality highlights how images and narratives of minority women are constructed through the interplay of race, gender, class, and power in media representations often becoming a source of continued oppression.

D. The effects of Intersectional Oppression

In a study conducted by Jabboury et al. (2016), it was mentioned that intersectional oppression causes individuals to experience alienation. Therefore, the concept of alienation always takes various forms, but is often referred to by other names. Although it began to fade in recent years, the concept of alienation experienced a resurgence in the 1960s and 1970s using its original term. Alienation can be understood as the act of withdrawing or distancing oneself from situations

that we do not belong to (Ambadar, 2016). Covering various fields of study, alienation can reflect both positive and negative (Jabboury et al., 2016). This study focuses on the negative aspects of alienation arising from the intersectional oppression experienced by the main black female character in the novel *Assembly*. Crenshaw states that stacked identities such as race, gender, and class intersect to form more complex injustices. Thereby, to further explore the impact of this intersectional oppression, this study uses a framework from Seeman (1959), which divides alienation into five dimensions, including the following:

1. Social Isolation

Social isolation is a dimension that has a different meaning from powerlessness, meaninglessness, or normlessness. In this case, isolation emphasizes a sense of estrangement from the social environment as well as feelings of rejection or exclusion from the community (Seeman, 1959). Social isolation is the feeling of being separated from the community to which an individual should belong. This condition usually arises due to feelings of loneliness created by society, or due to social acceptance and rejection, for example when an individual belongs to a minority group. Based on Kalekin-Fishman, social isolation is the feeling of being separated from one's own community. This form of isolation not only affects social relationships, but can also reinforce other dimensions of alienation, such as helplessness, meaninglessness, and lack of guidance (Koul, 2023). Social isolation is closely related to the need for social support. A lack of social support, both emotional and material, makes individuals feel lonely, rejected, or withdrawn from their environment (Seeman, 1959).

2. Powerlessness

Seeman (1959) defines powerlessness as a form of alienation when a person feels they have no control or power to determine what happens in their life. As seen in Marxist views, this is often experienced by workers in the capitalist system, because important decisions are made by those in power, while workers only follow. Powerlessness is a condition in which a person feels that nothing they do can change the outcome they desire (Seeman, 1959). This feeling arises because of the gap between their hope of being able to control the situation and the reality that the possibility of achieving such control is very small.

As a result, individuals feel alienated, powerless, and even treated like tools or commodities, rather than as whole human beings. In short, powerlessness is the feeling of not having the ability to choose to take action as a way out.

3. Self-estrangement

Self-estrangement is a form of alienation when individuals feel separated or alienated from themselves. Fromm says this happens when people no longer live according to their own needs or values, but instead live according to external demands, like those of the capitalist system. In other words, self-estrangement means people aren't living as themselves, but as versions of themselves that are forced by social conditions, leaving them feeling empty, inauthentic, and less than what they could achieve in life (Seeman, 1959).

4. Meaningless

Meaninglessness is when someone's mental state loses direction, they don't know the meaning of their life, and feel that their efforts are pointless (Sarfraz,

1997). Seeman (1991) states that this second form of alienation refers to an individual's feeling that they do not understand or find meaning in the events they experience. Feelings of emptiness, aimlessness, and futility arise because the individual fails to find or give meaning to their life. Therefore, although they try or go through the motions, there is still a feeling that everything is meaningless and brings no satisfaction (Ngore, 2022).

5. Normlessness

Normlessness is an alienation rooted in the concept of “*anomie*” proposed by Durkheim (1976) and Merton (1957). In general, “*anomie*” is a description of a condition in which the social norms that regulate individual behavior no longer function effectively (Sarfraz, 1997). Following this concept, Seeman argues that normlessness can be understood as a situation where rules or social norms that are usually used as guidelines are no longer effective. As a result, individuals believe that using methods that are not approved by society are actually more effective. In this situation, individuals see breaking the rules as a reasonable way to achieve success, because official rules are considered irrelevant or no longer helpful (Seeman, 1959).

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

In this chapter, the researcher describes the methods used in this study, which includes research design, data sources, data collection, and data analysis.

A. Research Design

In this study, feminist literary criticism is used to analyze elements in literary works. The concept of intersectionality is also an important contribution of feminist theory (Weldon, 2008). In this study, feminist literary criticism is used to analyze elements in literary works. The concept of intersectionality is also an important contribution of feminist theory (Weldon, 2008). This study analyzes how the main black female character in Natasha Brown's novel *Assembly* uses an intersectionality approach. In this study, intersectionality as proposed by Kimberlé Crenshaw is used as an analytical lens to discuss oppression caused by race, class, social status, and gender in the form of intersectionality. Seeman's theory of alienation is used as a supporting theory to analyze the effects of intersectional oppression experienced by the main black female character in Natasha Brown's novel *Assembly*.

B. Data Source

The data source of this study is taken from the novel titled "*Assembly*" by Natasha Brown. The novel was first published by Hamish Hamilton in 2021 and also was published by Penguin in 2022 and contains 74 pages. The novel *Assembly*, has been nominated for several awards, including the Folio Prize, Goldsmiths Prize, and Orwell Prize for Fiction. There are three versions of this novel, with Penguin

publishing a print book, an e-book, and an audiobook. Therefore, the data is taken from the printed version and e-book version in the form of dialogues, monologues, words, phrases, and sentences in the novel *Assembly* by Natasha Brown.

C. Data Collection

In data collection, the researcher out some steps to collect the data. First, the researcher repeatedly read the novel titled *Assembly* and understood the story, especially the main black female character. Second, the researcher highlighted words, sentences and dialogues that indicated analytical data relevant to the research problem. And third, the researcher organizes the data according to its relevance in the study. Finally, the researcher collected data from the novel *Assembly* that related to intersectional oppression that occurred to the main black woman character.

D. Data Analysis

In data analysis, the researcher focuses primarily on analyzing the intersectional oppression experienced by the main black female character in the novel *Assembly* by Natasha Brown using Kimberlé Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality and Seeman theory of alienation as a supporting theory. First, the researcher analyzes the data by classifying the intersectional oppression experienced by the main black female character and highlighting the evidence that shows the existence of intersectional oppression, second the researcher analyzes the data by mention the effect of intersectional oppression, then the researcher interprets the data based on existing theories and finally make conclusions based on the findings in this study.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the analysis conducted by researcher in addressing the research problem. This chapter explains and discusses forms of intersectional oppression based on three categories of intersection proposed by Crenshaw, namely structural, political, and representational intersections. It also answers the second research question, namely what are the effects of intersectional oppression on the main black female character in Natasha Brown's novel *Assembly* through Seeman's five alienation theory. Therefore, the findings in this study focus on the intersectional oppression experienced by the main black female characters and the effects caused by intersectional oppression.

A. Intersectional Oppression Experienced by The Main Black Female Character in Natasha Brown's *Assembly*

Based on Crenshaw's theory, that “*intersectionality*” refers to the ways in which many identities, including socioeconomic race, class, and gender, overlap to produce distinct experiences of privilege, discrimination, and oppression. Crenshaw also states that this intersectionality approach focuses on the intersection of race and gender, highlighting the importance of considering various aspects of identity when understanding how the social world is shaped (Crenshaw, 1991). Therefore, through this theory, the life experiences of the main black female character are greatly influenced by her intersecting identity as a woman, a black person, and someone with high social status. The main black female character experiences intersecting structural oppression in the form of injustice and inequality that occurs

in the institution where she works. She experiences layered political oppression, where she is placed in the political agenda of an institution that does not truly support her, as well as layered representational oppression, where she is forced to represent her institution and exploited to become a symbol of “*diversity*” in the institution where she works and it is being represented inversely to the pressure it experiences. To further examine the intersectional oppression experienced by the main black female character in Natasha Brown's *Assembly*, Crenshaw (1991) identifies three dimensions of intersectionality, as follows:

1. Structural Intersectionality

In the social sphere, inequality often occurs through systems and structures that are supposed to protect. This is similar to the structural concept of intersectionality, which examines how institutional policies such as government, workplace, or legal systems actually contribute to inequality (Durfee, 2021). This inequality can take the form of systemic oppression, which occurs mainly among minority groups such as black females. In this context, the researcher found that the main black female character in the novel *Assembly* experienced this inequality at the institution where she worked.

In Natasha Brown's *Assembly*, the main black female character is placed in a vulnerable position at work. As an employee in a financial company that is predominantly led and dominated by black men, she sits at a desk that is strategically visible from her supervisor's office. This position, which seems normal in an office setting, actually opens her up to being watched and harassed by her supervisor. Behind the glass, her supervisor can easily observe her body and

movements, then routinely calls her extension just to comment on her physical appearance, including the work clothes she wears, as if she were a sexual object. Worse still, she was also ordered to perform small, degrading tasks, such as picking up a stapler, drinking water in one gulp, or throwing away chewing gum according to her supervisor's instructions over the phone.

This is illustrated by the experiences of structural oppression on the main black female character in Natasha Brown's *Assembly* in the workplace are contained in the following data:

Datum 1:

He could see her at her desk from his office and regularly dialled her extension on comment on what he saw (and what he made for it): her hair (wild), her skin (exotic), her blouse (barely containing those breasts). Over the phone, he instructed her to do little things. This humiliated her more than the bigger things that eventually followed. Still, she held her stapler up high as directed. Drank her entire glass of water in one go. Spat out her chewing gum into her hand. (p.4)

This quote shows that the main black female character is a woman employed in a predominantly white financial company. “He” refers to her male supervisor, who always supervises and comments on the main black female character, she is commented on as a woman and “her skin (exotic)” as a woman who has black skin color. The character, who is both a man and her boss, uses his structural privilege as a supervisor to comment on the body of the black woman who works under him. He calls her not for work-related matters, but to make sexual and racist comments. This constitutes oppression in the form of verbal harassment within social institutions. It is not merely harassment but also a form of domination shaped by a work structure that does not provide protection or a safe space for Black women. This shows the power where women are restricted and placed in a less valued

position in the work environment. Thus, confirming that the main black female character experiences gender and racial oppression that interacts structurally in the work environment.

The words “*wild*” and “*exotic*” refer to the appearance of the main black female character, and also contain colonial stereotypes that have long been attached to black women. Therefore, this is not just a personal comment, but part of a social structure that places black women in a position where they constantly have to face degrading stares and judgments. Her body is not only seen but also commented on and constructed through the lens of racial and gender dominance. The dominance of race and gender is evidence that structural oppression occurs in an institutional context, without consequences for the perpetrators. Male characters are considered to have power, while women have no space to refuse or resist. In terms of intersectionality, this experience highlights how black women face double pressure: they are seen as women within the patriarchal system and as racial individuals within the white community (Carastathis, 2014).

Therefore, this situation shows how the concept of structural intersection becomes relevant, as it highlights how the practices and policies of institutions (such as governments, workplaces, or legal systems) maintain inequalities (Durfee, 2021). Thus, the workplace, which should be a professional environment, has instead become a place where power relations based on race and gender prevail. The office structure, with its placement of desks, the supervisory position of the male white boss, creates a situation in which the main black female character, becomes vulnerable because of her identity. This demonstrates that even in modern

and professional work environments, power continues to operate through the body and identity of the individual.

Since long ago, women have often experienced violence from men through harassment by verbal abuse and physical actions that hurt the body (Nisa, 2023). This way, the oppression that the main black female character experiences isn't just in the form of verbal harassment from her male co-workers, but also extends to her social life. As a woman who's also upper-middle class and black, she's in a position that's super vulnerable to this kind of oppression. In fact, her surroundings make her feel unsafe and targeted even though it is clear that she is part of them legally, as a fellow citizen and as a nation.

The oppression experienced by the main black female character in the novel *Assembly* is not only present in the form of direct harassment at workplace. It also comes from the long historical legacy she carries. She realizes that her current life stands on the sacrifices of previous generations who have struggled and suffered greatly to pave the way for her. However, rather than being a source of pride, this legacy has instead become a great burden for her. This is reflected in her confession:

Datum 2:

Generations of sacrifice, hard work and harder living. So much suffered, so much forfeited, so much - for this opportunity. For my life. And I've tried, tried living up to it. But after years of struggling, fighting against the current, I'm ready to slow my arms. Stop kicking. Breathe the water in. I'm exhausted. Perhaps it's time to end this story. (p.14)

This quote shows the structural burdens experienced by the main black female character and that these structural burdens have been passed down from generation to generation. That the social and economic structure requires the main black female character to make more sacrifices, and work harder to achieve equality or equality

with the majority group. She feels bound by the demands to always live up to expectations, as if her life is a debt that must be paid to the past. This pressure makes her emotionally exhausted, even causing her to want to give up. Such experiences and the statement “*I'm exhausted*” on the main black female character, are the result of the confluence of two or more identities that overlap and occur in an unequal society.

Thus, this quote demonstrates that the structural burden experienced by the main black female character is one that has been passed down across generations and reinforced by unequal social and economic structures. Because the generations before her had demanded that the main black female character work harder to be seen and recognised by her social circle, she grew up carrying that burden. As a Crenshaw (1991) states, that women of color are positioned differently in the economic, social, and political worlds. Women of color are less likely to have their needs met than racially privileged women. Unfortunately, even though she worked very hard and tried to be seen, she still felt other from herself.

This feeling of otherness arises when the main character receives health benefits from the institution where she works. She feels that economically she can access them, but socially and in terms of her identity, she still feels unworthy. Basically, black women especially women often face systemic barriers in accessing public services such as health, education, and legal protection (Rizqiyana, 2024). In addition to carrying the burden of sacrifice from previous generations, the main black female character, in the *Assembly* also feels guilty towards her community. She realizes that she has certain privileges, such as easy access to private health

services, while other black communities still have to fight hard to get them. This difference makes her feel guilty and alienated at the same time. This is reflected in his confession in the following quote:

Datum 3:

Yesterday, as I sat waiting in the bright reception area of the private oncologist's Harley Street office I had visited now three times, I experienced a detachment-not imagined; no, it was a tangible, physical phenomenon. Something had plucked within. An untethering of self from experiences. (p.15)

This quote illustrates that there is a feeling of guilt towards the community when she gets adequate health facilities provided by her office. The main black female character mentions “*Harley Street*” which is a symbol of elite and private high-end healthcare services in England. Although she can afford these services economically, she still feels socially and identity alienated. Her identity as a black woman in an institutional setting dominated by white, upper-class, and masculine norms. In terms of structural intersectionality, this refers to how an institution fails to address the needs of individuals at the intersection of various identities (Crenshaw, 1991). Thus, this quote demonstrates that structural oppression does not always manifest as direct violence but rather as a subtle yet profound erasure of existence. “*Detachment*” symbolizes how social and institutional systems can create a separation between an individual and their own lived experience. In addition, she feels alienated by what she has achieved. Like a feeling of unworthiness, and this shows that the access she gets and the privileges she gets do not erase the feeling of being marginalised.

After realizing the privileges in his life, such as easy access to private health services, the main black female character actually feels guilty towards her own

community. She realizes that her current position is not normal for most other black people who have to fight hard to get it. This guilt further emphasized her alienation, although she was part of the community, because her life experiences were different due to the privileged social position she held.

This feeling of guilt carried over into the workplace, where she never felt truly accepted. In order to survive, she had to appear perfect, work harder, and constantly prove her identity. This is another form of structural oppression, where her identity is constantly questioned and shaped by social structures that she did not create herself. This is reflected in the following quote:

Datum 4:

No common country or culture linked us other than British (which could only be claimed hyphenated or else parenthesized by the origins of those whose deaths our mothers detailed over the phone). It was survival only in the sense that a meme survives. Generational persistence, without meaning or memory. (p.16)

This quote shows that the main black female character can never fully claim to be 'British'. This quote illustrates that the British social structure is never fully accepting despite generations of people living there. The main black female character's existence is always associated with her 'foreign' origins, which are considered "other" by the dominant society. Although the main black female character has lived in England for several generations, British social structures do not fully accept the existence of black communities. This creates a deep sense of alienation and shows that social acceptance is conditional. As a black woman and an immigrant with unclear origins, the main black female character often faces layered pressures to prove herself worthy of acceptance. As Crenshaw (1991) states, structural intersectionality explains how race and gender interact and cause black

women to experience inequality that differs from that experienced by white women. Women of colour are positioned differently in the economic, social and political world (Durfee, 2021). In order to achieve equality with the majority group, the main black female character must make greater sacrifices and work harder. Where overlapping identities can increase vulnerability and deepen pressure on the main black female character.

Consequently, the quotes above show that the main black female character experiences structural oppression by the institutions where she lives and works. This supports the structural intersectionality proposed by Crenshaw (1991), how intersectionality of oppression works simultaneously, not separately or alternately. As a woman, as a Black individual, but also as evidence that marginalised individuals can be erased by history at any time.

The fact that her hard work was never fully recognized further emphasized the fragile position of the main black female character in the novel *Assembly*. Just to be seen, she had to work twice as hard as everyone else. The system she worked in and the social norms placed her in a situation where she had to constantly prove her existence. Her identity is not enough; she must be reconfirmed through performance, achievement, and relentless sacrifice. This is confirmed in the quote:

Datum 5:

“We’ve seen now, just as then, the readiness of this government and its enterprising Home Secretary to destroy paper, our records and proof. What is citizenship when you’ve watched screaming Go Home vans crawl your street? When you’ve heard of the banging, unexpected, always, at the door? When British, reduced to paper, is swept aside and trodden over? The passport cover feels smooth and new in my hands”. (p. 380)

This quote relates to how social systems and institutions such as laws, policies, and public services create barriers for individuals with overlapping identities. The main black female character not only experiences oppression in the workplace or pressure from previous generations, but also receives threats from state institutions that are supposed to protect them. This quote shows that citizenship status is not a guarantee of protection, but rather something that can be revoked by a system. This constitutes real administrative oppression for marginalised communities. This quote shows that the phrase “*Go Home vans*” is a real example of structural intersectionality, where the British legal system and immigration policies create specific oppression against people of colour, how national identity can be reduced to a mere document that can be revoked or ignored. Citizenship no longer means protection or a sense of belonging, but rather something vulnerable (Crenshaw, 1991). Yet even when she holds a passport and has contributed economically and socially, her identity remains in doubt.

Furthermore, it is evident that the structural oppression experienced by the main character is reflected in the social structure and where he lives. Crenshaw (1991) states that women of colour are positioned differently in the economic, social and political spheres. For example, even though he is a British citizen who follows government policies as required, works and pays taxes as her civic duty, this recognition will never be enough. Her identity is still viewed as different, which indicates that the social system places power in the hands of the dominant group (white people) to determine who is considered to be a ‘*true*’ member of society.

This situation reveals a broader form of structural intersectional oppression, not only in the workplace, but also at the national level. The government system and political institution treat their identity as something fragile. They are always questioned and never feel secure. Thus, they live in a double bind, having to prove themselves to the working institution while facing the reality that their own citizenship may be considered invalid by the political structure.

This is in line with Crenshaw's (1991) concept that intersectionality is a concept where black women's identities do not consist of just one aspect, but a combination of several identities such as race, gender, social class that overlap. These combinations create different and complex forms of oppression. As a result, it can affect the social position, political policies and the way black women are represented. Therefore, this concept shows that the oppression of women comes not only from their identity, but also from their social environment, such as legal policies, stigma, and the people around them. Thus forming a social system that can oppress women continuously (Nur, 2022).

In addition to the workplace and access to public services, structural oppression is also clearly reflected in the social structure and environment in which she lives. In the *Assembly*, although the main black female character is a legal British citizen who follows government orders, works, and pays taxes like any other citizen, this recognition is never enough. Her identity is still considered different. This shows that the social system places full power in the hands of the dominant white group to determine who is entitled to be called a member of society. The following quote emphasizes this feeling of not being recognized:

Datum 6:

Here's the thing. I've been here five years. My wife – seven, eight. We've been working, we've been paying our taxes. We cheer for England in the World Cup! So when the government told us to register; told us to download this app and pay to register, it hurt. This is our home. We felt unwelcome. It's like if they said to you: Go back to Africa. Imagine if they told you: no-no, you're not a real Brit, go back to Africa. That's what it's like.

I mean it's – well, you know. Of course you do, you understand. You can understand it in a way the English don't. p.7)

Datum 7:

"I pay my taxes, each year. Any money spent on me: education, healthcare, what riots? I've paid it all back." "I am what we've always been to empire; pure, fucking profit. A natural exploit and exploit, denigrate, and exploit." (p.34)

This quotes on datum 6 and 7 shows that the main black female character has tried to be accepted by contributing and integrating into the British society. The main black female character strives to be an immigrant who contributes fully to the country he lives in, by working, paying taxes, and even supporting the national team. However, in reality, her identity is not truly recognised by law. Government policy still requires re-registration through an application and payment to confirm citizenship status. This shows that the black female main character, who is both black and an immigrant, is in a position where her identity is vulnerable to erasure. It also shows that the social and legal systems ignore the identity of immigrant groups. As stated by Crenshaw (1991) that structural intersectionality refers to how an institution fails to address the needs of individuals at the intersection of various identities.

Additionally, the statement "*Go back to Africa*" is racist. This serves as evidence that politically, it shows that the protection of immigrants, especially minority citizens, is not considered and their voices are not heard. Although the

main black female character is a legal citizen, she is still questioned and can be deported at any time. He is still considered a member of a certain group and is marginalized. Instead of providing a sense of security, government institutions actually reinforced feelings of alienation and rejected the main black female character's identity as part of British society.

Thus, this section reaffirms the concept of structural intersectional oppression. Oppression is not only present in the professional sphere, health, or generational history, but also in social structures and citizenship. The main black female character is never truly free from the perception that she is “*other*”, even when she has fulfilled all her obligations as a citizen.

The experience of not being recognized as a full citizen is further reinforced by government policies that are overtly discriminatory. Although the main black female character, has fulfilled all her obligations as a citizen, working, paying taxes, and following the rules, she is still faced with reality. This is evident in the government's campaign promoting the use of vans bearing threats of deportation, which indirectly target Black communities and immigrants. As described in the following quote:

Datum 8:

The white hand printed on the white van brandishes silvery cuffs against a black backdrop, beside large stamp-effect typeface searing the playground familiar taunt into taxpayer-funded legitimacy: GO HOME or face arrest.

This quote shows how the dynamics of power in a country, where the main black female character lives, use images and words that are disseminated and seen by the public to show who is in power and who is not considered or marginalised

in society. As reported by to the BBC, the phrase “*GO HOME or face arrest*” was part of a controversial advertising campaign launched by the British Home Secretary in 2013. “*GO HOME or face arrest*” was both a slogan and a threat directed at immigrants or those deemed ‘*illegal*’ residents. This highlights that even though the main black female character is British, contributes to paying taxes, and is legally part of British society on documents, her identity is still questioned and doubted. Thus, the state, which should provide a safe space for all people regardless of race, gender, and social class, has instead created an advertisement campaign in the main black female character's neighbourhood that indicates that official institutions play an active role in creating a sense of insecurity for groups at the intersection of identity. This is structural oppression because it is carried out by official institutions, disseminated to the public, and directed at certain groups.

Evidence that the British applied their colonial legacy is the black female character's presence at a gathering of British people during a garden party at her boyfriend's house. In a situation that should have been relaxed and personal, she was once again targeted by white workers of lower social status. This evidence confirms that even though she was a guest in a higher-class environment, her race and gender identity were still reasons for her to be treated poorly. Once again, she felt that she was not recognized as an equal, but rather positioned at the bottom of the racial hierarchy.

This demonstrates that despite her higher social class, her racial and gender identity still leaves her vulnerable to degrading treatment. This also demonstrates that race or social class alone is insufficient to protect Black women from

oppression. The presence of the main black female character, who is dominated by white skin, is seen as disruptive. The statement that she, as a white person, is a worker and serves the main black female character, who is Black, reflects a social hierarchy that is not based solely on class but also on race and gender. This quote shows that the social system also provides unique experiences for the main black female character. The main black female character was laughed at and made fun of because the main black female character was a Black person who was at the garden party, while white workers were in a low social status, namely being laborers. This shows that the social system is not in her favour. The success she achieved is still questioned and underestimated because she has Black skin.

Through a sequence of experiences, the main black female character in the novel *Assembly* clearly illustrates how structural intersectional oppression works and shapes the main black female character's life. In the workplace, she is placed in a vulnerable position where her body and identity become objects of abuse while she is required to constantly prove herself in order to be accepted. This oppression does not appear suddenly, but is rooted in the historical legacy of previous generations. The pressure to continue this “*burden*” makes them feel guilty when they realize the privileges, they have that their community cannot enjoy. This guilt arises because society demands more from black people, but does not treat them fairly.

Furthermore, her British citizenship did not guarantee her acceptance. Although she worked, paid taxes, and fulfilled her obligations as a citizen, her identity was still considered different. Government campaigns such as racist

propaganda emphasized that the state itself provided full support. This is where the concept of structural intersection becomes relevant, as it highlights how the practices and policies of institutions (such as governments, workplaces, or legal systems) maintain inequalities (Durfee, 2021). Therefore, the intersectional oppression experienced by the main black female character is reflected in the social, political, and cultural structures that place black female in a vulnerable position. Her identity is repeatedly questioned, her body is objectified, her citizenship is denied, indicating that the system inherited from colonialism continues to be developed in all aspects of daily life.

2. Political Intersectionality

Political intersectionality highlights how black women are in a double bind in different political agendas. Differences in priorities among political movements can mean that black women are often not fought for or heard. For example, feminist movements often focus solely on white issues while ignoring racism, and anti-racism movements often focus solely on minority men (black men) and ignore sexism. As a result, the experiences of black women are often unrepresented and overlooked by either of these movements. Crenshaw (1991) states, women who have black quilts are often invisible and unconsidered in political agendas. They are often not given a place because they are at the intersection of being a woman and having black skin.

This quote shows that the experience of immigrants with black skin, such as the main black female character in this novel, shows that they have no place in the political narrative in the UK. They are considered outsiders or foreigners who do

not have legitimate historical and political representation, so this has an impact on their voices which are often ignored in political decision-making.

In this case, the main black female character, a black woman labelled as an immigrant, has had British citizenship since birth. However, this means that she is still considered an immigrant and is more vulnerable to a political environment that often does not provide protection or defence for black immigrant women. Throughout her institution, she was used as a tool, often forced to appear as a speaker at schools, universities, and women's panels to serve as a motivator and symbol of diversity, as if she represented both feminism and diversity issues. However, in reality, this was all part of the institution's branding, which did not truly consider her experiences. Meanwhile, the main black female character still experiences structural oppression in the form of sexism and racism. Thus, being a speaker is not something she wants; she feels forced into it because black main characters are not truly represented, not as a form of support for her intersectional identity, but because that intersectional identity makes her invisible to political agendas that should be on her side and protect her. As contained in the following quotation:

Datum 9:

I do these talks – schools and universities, women's panels, recruiting fairs – every few weeks. It's an expectation of the job. The diversity must be seen. How many women and girls have I lied to? How many have seen my grinning face advocating for this or that firm, or this industry, or that university, this life? Such questions aren't constructive. I need to catch up on the morning's lost hours. (p.11).

Her experienced full pressure in her work environment, "... *The diversity must be seen*" she was forced to become a speaker as a form of diversity even though diversity itself was only a formality shown by the institution where she worked

without any real structural changes. This is not done out of self-will, but to fulfil the expectations of the institution she works for. The quote shows that the institution where the main black female character works uses her identity as a black woman to meet the expectations of the institution she works for. Speaking in public or addressing a forum is not a form of empowerment, but rather part of a system that demands she, as an individual from a different group, continue to appear as a symbol of diversity. Thus, this shows how an institution systematically regulates who should be seen and how they should act.

Diversity is not shown as something of substantive value but rather as an image that must be displayed. The main black female character is not valued for her competence in her field nor for her efforts, but rather for her identity, which is considered to fit the narrative of diversity that the film wants to portray. Therefore, this quote serves as evidence of the intersectional oppression experienced by the main black female character, where the workplace system and social norms place them in a position where they must constantly prove their existence. They not only work diligently professionally but are also burdened with the exhausting and unequal task of representation. In the context of intersectionality, this pressure stems from the intersection of gender, race, and social class, forcing the main black female character to bear double expectations.

In this case, institutions that appear to promote diversity and feminism are not actually neutral, as key figures feel burdened and unsafe. As a result, black women are caught between two agendas that are supposed to provide protection, regardless of race, gender, social class, or immigration status, but in reality, do not benefit

them. Ultimately, political intersectionality understands that experiences of injustice are not always caused by a single identity factor (Crenshaw, 1991). Individuals at the intersection of social identities face interrelated barriers, whether in the form of racial discrimination or racism. In the case experienced by the main black female character, she is not truly represented by her intersecting identities, but rather becomes a tool for branding. This shows that the political agenda within her institution cannot represent her and be on her side. Instead of protecting them, the political agenda adds to the double burden of the existence of groups that are considered foreign (Crenshaw, 1991).

3. Representational Intersectionality

Representational intersectionality is a concept that explains how women from minority groups, especially women of color, are represented through popular culture, media, and social discourse in ways that often reinforce racial and gendered stereotypes (Srnđelj & Pajnik, 2022). In the life of the black female main character, she has worked hard to be seen and recognized in her environment. Thus, her achievement of working in a field of finance that is predominantly white is remarkable, given that black women are more likely to experience low-paying jobs, multiple role stress, and other health problems associated with mental illness as a result of various forms of oppression, racism, and sexism (Torres et al., 2024).

After experiencing structural oppression that limited her movement in the workplace and the citizenship system, the main black female character also faced political oppression. Her identity as a black woman was exploited for the benefit of institutions. She was required to appear at schools, universities, and women's panels

as a symbol of success and diversity, but the oppression did not stop there. She enters into representational oppression, where she is no longer exploited, but also constructed in the form of a symbol created for the benefit of institution branding. Her identity is represented as a motivational narrative that does not correspond with her life experience. The contrasting treatment shows that what happened is not the same as her representation as an individual. In this case, her representation is not reality, but rather a tool to reinforce the dominance of the majority group. This is reflected in the following quote:

Datum 10:

It's not my life, but it's illuminated two metres tall behind me and I'm speaking it into the soft, malleable faces tilted forwards on uniformed shoulders. I recite my old lines like new secrets. Click to the next slide. Giant, diverse, smiling faces in grey suits point at charts, shake hands and wave behind me. The projector whirrs and their smiles morph into the bank's roaring logo. Time to wrap up. I look out around the rows of schoolgirls. Thank them for listening, before taking questions. One asks if I live in a mansion. It was a hit, the programme coordinator tells me and the head teacher nods a frazzled bob of greying hair. Her tense lips part, flashing coffee yellow teeth. We're walking round and down a small back stairway and I'm gagging on the warm air, that boiled-veg school smell. The head teacher thanks me for coming, says the girls were all inspired. Shrieks, laughter and a booming, melodic chatter echo around us as the students splash out of the assembly hall and into concrete corridors. Simply inspirational, she says. (p.10)

The quote above shows that the main black female character is a presenter at one of the schools, universities, and women's panels, where she is an inspirational person. Inspirational because she is a black woman and can enter the corporate world and get a middle to upper social position. The word “*diverse*” indicates how the institution she works for tries to show diversity in race, gender, or social background. But this diversity is just for show and is part of the bank's image. The bank uses the image of “*diversity*” for personal branding purposes, not for social justice. The face of “*diversity*” is not a real representation but merely a mask to

conceal the power of the institution. The identities of those who are diverse are lost and replaced with a professional image or branding accepted by the social system.

The statement “.... *If I live in a mansion*” is a satire that shows the stereotype that success is finding wealth. The fact that this happens to a minority woman is considered exceptional and inspiring, not something that is normal. The main black female character felt that she had lied to the public. In the public sphere, she often feels that they only use her as a symbol of diversity, thus making her an inspiration rather than an individual whose reality as a different person is more complex and stressful. When in fact, diversity itself is only a formality without real support from the workplace.

Even though the main black female character's identity is represented as diversity in the workplace, in this case, the main black female character's identity is actually the target of racial abuse in public spaces. The fact that she is insulted with harsh and racist words shows how the representation of black women is often negative. Hence, both in the workplace and in public spaces, she continues to experience racial stereotyping.

In the novel *Assembly*, the main black female character experiences verbal abuse in public spaces. She does not feel safe, even in public places that should provide her a sense of freedom and comfort. In one scene, she is harassed by a homeless man near Aldgate station. The man gets too close and corners her between his body and the edge of the train tracks. With his face pressed against the main black female character, the man utters the highly degrading racist word “*fucking n—r*”. After that, he laughed and walked away, leaving the main black female

character feeling humiliated and threatened. This incident shows how her layered identity as a woman and a black woman puts her in a vulnerable position. She faces not only sexism but also racism attached to her body. Even in public spaces, she cannot escape feelings of fear, injustice, and oppression. As illustrated in the following quote:

Datum 11:

“The other day, a man called me a fucking n—r. A panhandler at Aldgate, big guy, came up too close, and trapped me – between him and the steep drop down to the tracks. He leaned right into my face and spat out those words. Then, laughing, he just walked away”. (p.34)

This quote shows how the social and physical systems put the main black female character at the intersection of identity (race, gender, and social class) and vulnerable in certain situations. The main black female character is a direct victim of racial harassment, the harsh phrases uttered are highly offensive racialised words. As such, the combination of identities that often leads to oppression characterizes the potential for physical harm and lack of protection from political systems and policies. Their lack of voice, or lack of being heard, means that these experiences of violence are not considered or trivialised in policy discourse. Thus, these experiences cannot be understood from a gendered perspective alone but rather there is an overlap that exacerbates their impact.

Similarly, in the broader social context, her overlapping multiple identities continue to shape the way she is viewed and treated, reinforcing her marginalisation through everyday interactions. While attending a garden party at her boyfriend's house, a space that should have been relaxed and personal, the main black female character, was once again the target of demeaning racist comments. Even from

white workers with low social status, she was still seen as “*other*” rather than as an equal guest. As described in the following quote:

Datum 12:

“” *Ey-hey. Pretty lay-day*””.

One of the labourers, carrying a large folded table under his arm, calls out from a few metres away. When I look over, he stops walking, sets the table down and leans against it.

““*Pretty lady, you think it's fair? You stroll in the sunshine while I work, eh? What a world!*””.

Pretty lady? he calls after me. Joking, pretty lady come back! I keep going until I no longer hear his laughter. (p. 49)

The quote shows that the representational oppression experienced by the main black female character does not only occur in formal institutions such as the workplace, but also extends into the social space where he lives, which should be relaxed and personal. By attending a garden party at her boyfriend's house, a white man of high social status, the main black female character becomes the target of verbal harassment from white workers of lower social status. The labourer calls her using language that is flirtatious and seems condescending. The phrase ‘...*you think it's fair?*’ is a question of disapproval, because the main character, a black woman, is a guest in the upper middle class, while the labourer is a white man who is considered superior and powerful. This highlights the inequality between white and black people, where white people are expected to be in a higher position, while black people are in the position of work or the lower class. The upper class uses them as tools and objects of sexism, while the lower class degrades them because they feel oppressed. Thus, Black women's identities are never considered neutral; they are always objects of their social environment. Gender, race, and social class interact as power structures to produce social inequality (Connell & Press, 2021). This is not only because she is black, but also because social class and gender form

social structures that produce inequality due to power imbalances (social research, 2022).

In representational intersectionality, Crenshaw (1991) explains that Black women are often portrayed in culture and social interactions in a demeaning, stereotypical, or distorted manner. How visual or narrative representations are formed from a combination of dominant narratives about race and gender, and recognizing that contemporary critiques of racist and sexist representations often do not take into account the experiences and positions of women (Crenshaw, 1991). Furthermore, not only in their professional lives but also in their personal lives, the main black female characters are often portrayed or represented as objects. The main black female character is socially and visually constructed by other characters, not based on their reality. As such, both in the workplace and in public spaces, she continues to be a victim of oppressive views and treatment. This shows that the representation of black women is still full of inequality and bias.

In research Elizabeth et al. (2025) stated that black female's experiences are more complex than a single facet of oppression, such as their gender. Not only are they marginalized as women and as a black individual, but they may also face oppression due to other factors, including their race and social class. As a result, carry a double burden, or possibly even more. Therefore, these three forms of oppression are interrelated and indivisible. First, structural oppression oppresses the main black female character, through social, economic, and legal systems that do not fully recognize her identity, forcing her to constantly prove herself and remain in a vulnerable position. Second, political oppression arises when her existence is

exploited for the benefit of institutions, where she is used as a face of diversity without truly voicing her reality. Thirdly, representational oppression reinforces political oppression. Her identity is displayed as a symbol of diversity to build a positive image for the institution, when in reality this is not the case. In public spaces, she continues to experience racially charged verbal abuse, which shows that her identity as a black woman is not truly valued and is still viewed through stereotypes. Thus, both at work and in society, she remains trapped in an unfair perspective that appears to support diversity but actually still hides discrimination. As such, oppression cannot be understood solely from a single identity, but rather as the result of overlapping structural, political, and representational factors that are interconnected (Carastathis, 2014). This proves Crenshaw's (1991) theory of intersectionality, which states that race, gender, and class interact to form unique and complex experiences, creating inequality and places a burden on marginalized groups.

B. The Effects of Intersectional Oppression to The Main Black Female Character's life in Natasha Brown's *Assembly*

Crenshaw's (1991) perspective on this matter emphasises that women of colour often experience multiple layers of oppression, meaning they also bear a more complex burden than other groups. This idea is clearly reflected in the life of the main black female in the novel *Assembly*, where the main black female character is affected by intersectional oppression in all aspects of her life. Therefore, the effect of intersectional oppression on the main black female character in *Assembly* encourages feelings of alienation within her. Alienation is defined as a condition in

which a person experiences feelings of isolation and loneliness, a sense of not belonging, loss of self-confidence, feelings of anxiety and tension, rejection of social values and standards, distancing oneself from family life, suffering, and ongoing psychological pressure, causing the individual to feel detached from their environment (Zorcec et al., 2023).

The main black female character experiences alienation within herself, where the main black female character, feels isolated despite her physical presence at work because the institution where she works is dominated by white people. As a result, this environment causes psychological fatigue, as she is constantly exposed to structural pressures that isolate her and place her under continuous stress.

Seeman (1991) divided alienation into five dimensions. These five dimensions will be discussed in detail in the following subsections:

1. Social isolation

Seeman (1991) describes as social isolation is a condition in which individuals feel separated from their social environment because their values, aims, or the main black female character is not considered to be in harmony with the surrounding community. This form of alienation is usually characterised by feelings of loneliness, inner emptiness, insecurity, strained social relationships, and distance from others (Ngore, 2022). In the novel *Assembly*, the main black female character, demonstrates this. Although she is legally a British citizen and works in a predominantly white professional environment, her existence is often not recognised, considered, or even ignored. This situation makes her feel that she does not belong or have a sense of community. In other words, her social status or legal

citizenship is not enough to guarantee her acceptance in a society that still holds unfair views or attitudes towards individuals or groups based on their race or ethnicity. These views manifest themselves in the form of prejudice, stereotypes, or conscious or unconscious differential treatment. This is what makes her presence still considered 'intrusive'. The evidence is as follows:

Datum 13:

"Still, I remain physically here. And I do not feel safe. My presence unsettles colleagues, strangers, acquaintances, even friends. Yes, I've felt the spray of my co-worker's indignation as he speak-shouts his thoughts re affirmative action". (P. 55)

This quote indicates that the main black female character says that even though she is physically present, her body alone is enough to trigger negative reactions. She is positioned as the emotional target of her colleagues, who are predominantly white, and causes discomfort to those around her without needing to take any action or say anything. This condition reflects what Seeman (1959) argued that social isolation is a dimension that has a different meaning from powerlessness, meaninglessness, or normlessness. In this case, isolation emphasizes a sense of estrangement from the social environment as well as feelings of rejection or exclusion from the community. This form of alienation is usually characterised by feelings of loneliness, inner emptiness, insecurity, strained social relationships, and distance from others (Ngore, 2022). Thus, this becomes a source of insecurity for her. Rather than causing fear of physical threats due to always being an object, the main character feels more inclined towards feelings of not being accepted, not being wanted, and always being watched. This is because the main black female character experiences not just one form of oppression, but multiple layers of oppression,

whether racial, gender, or in the context of social policies that create a double burden manifested through feelings of otherness.

The main black female character's experience of alienation is not only evident in her direct interactions with her colleagues at work, but also in her personal choice to avoid social environments. While in the previous quote she is described as feeling insecure and socially rejected, in the next section this alienation is evident in her actions as she withdraws and seeks a safe space. This is illustrated in the following quote:

Datum 14:

She often sat in the end cubicle of the ladies' room and stared at the door. She'd sit for an entire lunch break, sometimes, waiting either to shit or to cry or to muster enough resolve to go back to her desk. (P. 4)

This quote illustrates how the main black female character chooses to isolate herself in response to the intersectional oppression she experiences. The social pressure at her workplace causes her such emotional distress that she withdraws and seeks a safe place. They make the toilet their only safe place. By spending their break time in the toilet cubicle, whether to cry or simply to gather the courage to return to their desk. This behaviour demonstrates a form of social alienation, where they choose to distance themselves from their colleagues rather than interact, further reinforcing their feelings of being unrecognised, unaccepted and unheard in their environment.

This act of withdrawal is in line with Seeman's (1991) concept of social isolation, which is a condition of alienation characterised by loneliness, emptiness, and hopelessness from other people. This is also in line with the minority stress theory proposed by Meyer (1995), which states that minority groups often

experience continuous psychological pressure due to discrimination, negative labelling, and marginalised social positions (Piara et al., 2025). In the case of the main black female character, the alienation he feels is not a personal fault, but rather the result of a social system that structurally excludes individuals based on race and gender. Thus, this shows that interactional oppression encourages the main black female character to withdraw socially, thereby deepening his feelings of alienation.

2. Powerlessness

The experience of alienation experienced by the black female main character not only manifests itself in the form of social isolation that makes her unaccepted in her environment, but also continues in the form of feelings of powerlessness in facing her own life. As Seeman (1991) states, powerlessness is a condition in which a person feels that there is nothing they can do to change the desired outcome. In *Assembly*, this condition is experienced by the black female main character who realises that her life choices are determined by social rules and expectations. She feels that she does not even have full control over her own body. This can be seen in the following quote:

Datum 15:

Nothing is a choice. But I don't trust myself to say what I mean, so I just say I'm leaving. It's time to get back to work. I look around for my things, I need to go. Nothing is a choice. And death is not a no-op. It has side effects. I think of the cashflows: the immediate-death scenario. It's the tallest bar in the chart, a grab at money from years to come. A present valuation of me. It won't be beautiful – she's warning now – it isn't poetry. It won't be what I imagine. Oh and I do know that, I know but – what do I care of beauty? Nothing is a choice. And I want it. I reach for my bag, then stand and turn. Unhook my coat from the door. She stands, too. Her face a creasing expression of concern and disapproval. (p.32)

This quote shows that the main black female character's layered identity and the intersectional oppression she experiences have a huge impact on her personal

life. In the novel, she is diagnosed with cancer, but this disease is not only seen as a medical condition, but also as a financial asset. In other words, her body is valued based on how much her treatment will cost, how much insurance can be claimed, or even her economic value if she dies. In other words, although she works hard for everything, she is legally a British citizen, has access to private healthcare, and belongs to a high social class, her life is still considered a burden rather than that of a whole human being in need of medicine.

This is in line with Seeman's (1991) explanation that powerlessness is a feeling of helplessness when an individual feels that whatever they do will not change the outcome they desire, because that outcome is determined by social factors. Even when the main black female character faces illness, she cannot fully control it. The choice to seek treatment, quit, or speak honestly is all influenced by social pressure, economic demands, and social views. As a black female, there is almost no room to determine her own path because there is always external judgement. So clearly, it is evident that this experience shows a form of alienation in the form of powerlessness, where the main black female character, cannot control her own life and decisions.

3. Self-estrangement

Previously, the main black female character experienced alienation in the form of powerlessness, because she felt she had no control over her life or her body, and the pressure she experienced deepened until it affected her. In the oncologist's waiting room where she underwent cancer screening, she experienced something even more profound: a sense of separation from herself. Not only did she have to

deal with medical issues when she was diagnosed with cancer and had to undergo treatment, but also with additional burdens stemming from her position as a black woman. These burdens showed that intersectionality not only marginalised her in social spaces, but also in her personal and health spaces. This situation arose as a result of the intersectional oppression she continues to experience as a woman, a black person, and a member of a certain social class. Amidst the demands to always appear perfect and conform to white society's standards, she lost her sense of wholeness. This is illustrated in the following quote:

Datum 16:

Yesterday, as I sat waiting in the bright reception area of the private oncologist's Harley Street office I had visited now three times, I experienced a detachment – not imagined; no, it was a tangible, physical phenomenon. Something had plucked within. An untethering of self from experience. (p.15)

This quote shows a sense of despair from reality and from herself. That the feeling of detachment from reality or herself “*I experienced a detachment*” said by the main black female character. Seeman says that self-estrangement is a condition in which individuals feel separated from themselves, from their true desires and life experiences, which often leads to feelings of emptiness or void (Zorcec et al., 2023). The main black female character does not describe this feeling as something that is only imagined, but actually felt physically. She feels a sense of detachment from herself or her environment. This show indicates self-estrangement, in which the main black female character is depicted as feeling separated from her experiences.

Furthermore, this condition is what Seeman's (1991) theory refers to as self-estrangement. Self-estrangement is a form of alienation when individuals feel separated or alienated from themselves (Seeman, 1959). The layered pressures,

whether from work, social status, racial and gender identity, and class, made the main black female character feel alienated not only from her environment, but also from herself.

This feeling of alienation means that the main character no longer feels detached, but also feels a loss of identity and control over himself. This is illustrated in the following quote:

Datum 17:

My own is gone. I've sunk too deep, pulled down further by a creeping, winding tightness around my limbs. Still, I hold my breath. (p.14)

This quote describes the condition of the main black female character, experiencing a loss of self. The phrase '*My own is gone*' indicates that she feels her identity and control over herself have been lost, resulting in a long-standing pressure that continues to build. The feeling of being suffocated, described as '*tightness around my limbs*,' shows that the oppression she experiences is not only psychological but also physical. Self-estrangement, as Seeman explains, is linked to an individual's inability to communicate with themselves and their feelings, as well as the emergence of a sense of separation from what they truly desire (Koul, 2023). This condition typically manifests through feelings of emptiness and boredom in life.

4. Meaningless

In a workplace where he never felt truly accepted. To survive, she had to appear perfect, work harder, and constantly prove her identity. It was also a place where her identity was constantly questioned and shaped by social structures, she did not

create herself, causing a burden that manifested itself in the form of mental and physical exhaustion, which drove the main black female character to experience alienation in the form of a void of meaning. A meaning less emptiness occurs when individuals are no longer able to find meaning or purpose in their lives. As Seeman, (1991) states, this condition occurs when individuals are unable to understand or explain the meaning of their own actions, leaving their lives feeling empty and meaningless. Loss of meaning is a situation in which a person does not understand their situation and does not know what to expect (Healy, 2020). This is reflected in the main black female character, when all her efforts go unnoticed, her hard work feels futile to her. She even feels depressed although she has worked hard. She feels that her life is meaningless. Every decision and every effort she makes feel meaningless. This situation is reflected in the following quote:

Datum 18:

Every day is an opportunity to fuck up. Every decision, every meeting, every report. There's no success, only the temporary aversion of failure. (p.23)

This quote explains that feelings of alienation have no meaning. For the black female character, every effort she makes is not a path to success. It is merely a delay of failure. This indicates that her life has lost its meaning and significance. As a result, she views her life as nothing more than exhausting. The loss of meaning in her hard work, her choices, and even her life itself reflects how meaninglessness has become another form of alienation experienced by the main black female character. Therefore, this also confirms that the intersectional oppression she experiences is not only social in nature, but also affects her perception of herself and the way she interprets life.

5. Normlessness

After experiencing meaninglessness, where every effort and decision feels meaningless, the main character in *Assembly* faces alienation in the form of normlessness. Even as a black woman from a high social class, she still feels oppressed because social norms and rules do not apply fairly to her. It is evident that she has to work twice as hard as other groups. In this situation, she is forced to sacrifice her comfort and even her identity in order to fit in and be accepted in her environment. However, this adjustment never fully satisfies her, but instead causes her to lose herself. This is illustrated in the following quote:

Datum 19:

I have lived life by the principle that when I face a problem, I must work to find an action I can take to overcome it; or accommodate it; or forge a new path around it; excavate the ground beneath it, even. This is how I've been prepared. This is how we prepare ourselves, teach our children to approach this place of obstacle after obstacle. Work twice as hard. Be twice as good. And always, assimilate. (p.51)

This quote shows that the main black female character has worked hard to be accepted, in accordance with social norms. Young (2014) states that oppression occurs when individuals or groups prevent others from living as fully human beings. This can happen by degrading their dignity, denying them education or opportunities, or restricting their access through rules, customs and norms that are considered normal. The general norm in society is that if you work hard, you will reap fair rewards. However, this is not the case for the main character, who is considered “*other*”, because she is black, female and of high social status. Even when she is in the upper social class, social norms are no longer effective as rules for her. The norm of working hard and being considered successful still applies in general, but for the main character, who is black and female, even though she is

considered successful, this norm no longer applies because she has to work twice as hard, be twice as good, and continue to sacrifice her identity. This is in line with Merton's theory in Seeman's (1959) theory, to achieve "*culturally prescribed goals*" in the form of success is not in accordance with the means available to achieve it, so he must choose alternative ways that are not in accordance with the rules. In the case of the main character, he suppresses his identity and must continue to assimilate. Thus, the norm of hard work will bring success, turning into a burden that requires her to work twice as hard just to be recognised and seen. This indicates the alienation of normlessness, where generally accepted rules are no longer effective for her as a black female. As a result, she feels alienated and trapped in a demanding system that never gives her freedom.

The overall experience of the black female main character in the novel *Assembly* shows how the intersectional oppression she experiences leads her into various forms of alienation, as described by Seeman (1991). She experiences social isolation, where even though she is physically present in the workplace, her presence is still seen as disruptive and not fully accepted. She also feels powerless, as her life and even her body are not entirely under her control, but are determined by the social structures that oppress her. This condition deepens when she experiences self-estrangement, which is alienation within herself due to the pressure to always conform to the standards of the majority society. This situation gives rise to a sense of meaninglessness, where all her hard work is futile and meaningless. Ultimately, all these experiences lead to normlessness, where social norms that

should be fair lose their effectiveness, forcing her to sacrifice her comfort and identity to work harder in order to be recognised and accepted.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Through analyzing the forms of intersectional oppression based on Kimberlé Crenshaw's theory and examining its impact on the main black female character in Natasha Brown's novel *Assembly*, the researcher has reached the concluding chapter of this study. In this chapter, the researcher presents conclusions regarding the findings and discussion of the research issues addressed in the previous chapters. Additionally, the researcher offers several recommendations to readers and future researcher, particularly in analyzing the same topic of discussion.

A. Conclusions

Based on the results of the research conducted, this study found that in Natasha Brown's novel *Assembly*, using Kimberlé Crenshaw's intersectionality approach, the life experiences of the main black female character are greatly influenced by her layered identities as a woman, black, and with high social status. The main black female character experiences intersectional structural oppression in the form of injustice and inequality that occurs in the institution where she works. She experiences layered political oppression, where she is placed on the political agenda of an institution that does not truly support her, and layered representational oppression, where she is made to represent her institution, exploited to serve as a logo of “*diversity*” in the institution where she works. In the end, the intersectional oppression she experiences stems not only from her gender, but also from her overlapping identities, which create a layered effect.

As a result, all the pressures experienced by the main black female character create a feeling of alienation. These include social isolation, where the main character experiences social alienation from her environment; powerlessness, where she has no control over her life or even herself; self- estrangement, where she also feels other towards herself; meaninglessness in her achievements, and normlessness, where existing social norms do not fit her. Ultimately, even the success she has worked hard for cannot protect her from intersectional oppression. That is all. Kimberlé Crenshaw emphasize that the experiences of black women can only be understood when we look at the intersection of race, gender and class simultaneously, when these intersections are ignored, black women become invisible, underrepresented, and often unprotected.

B. Suggestions

Based on research conducted on Natasha Brown's novel *Assembly*, which discusses intersectionality in relation to the experiences of the main black female character, it is recommended that further research explore similar works or themes using a psychological approach as a tool for analysis. A psychological approach to literature can broaden our understanding of the psychological condition of characters who experience intersectional oppression, so that analysis does not only focus on social structures and identity representation, but also on the internal and emotional effects experienced by individuals. By combining intersectionality theory and psychological theory, future research is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the inner experiences of individuals living in conditions of overlapping and intersecting identities.

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CURRICULUM VITAE



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