

UNDERGRADUATE THESIS

SYSTEMIC RACISM AGAINST AFRICAN AMERICAN CHARACTERS'

PORTRAYAL IN TOCHI ONYEBUCHI'S *RIOT BABY* (2019)



By

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ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

UNIVERSITAS AIRLANGGA

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UNDERGRADUATE THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Sarjana Degree of English Department

Faculty of Humanities Universitas Airlangga

By

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SURABAYA

2022

DECLARATION

I declare that this undergraduate thesis submitted as a partial fulfillment for Sarjana Humaniora (S. Hum) degree of the English Department Faculty of Humanities Universitas Airlangga is entirely my own work and has been solely the result of my own original research. Hereby, I confirm that:

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Surabaya, July 05, 2022



Anindya Diqza Syafiiqa

121811233018

DEDICATION

I want to thank you firstly to my one and only God, Allah S.W.T, for giving me the strength to finish this thesis despite all the difficulties I might have felt along the way.

Thank you, Mom, for supporting me both financially and mentally by remaining to be a strong single mother who is willing to go far and roam about just to support me achieve my dream. You are the perfect definition of a strong independent woman, I love you.

Dad, if you see this from up there, I hope you are proud of me. I have done exactly what you wanted me to do your whole life and even though you are not going to be here with me on the day I graduate, always know that i did all of this for you. I love you.

Lastly, to my best friends, Ami, Eko, Nabila, and Puput, I love you all.

APPROVAL SHEET

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Portrayal in Tochi Onyebuchi’s *Riot Baby* (2019)

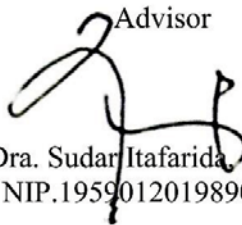
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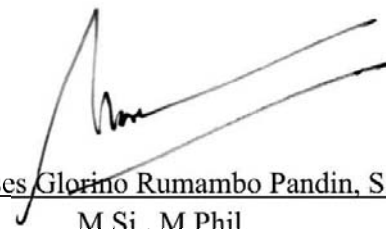
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Surabaya, July 5 2022

Anindya Diqza Syafiiqa

**"In the end, we will remember not the words of our
enemies, but the silence of our friends."**

Martin Luther King

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ABSTRAK

Rasisme sistemik adalah ideologi rasis yang tertanam dalam hukum dan peraturan masyarakat terutama di Amerika Serikat. Keberadaan rasisme sistemik sangat merugikan orang Afrika Amerika, terutama dari segi psikologi, kesehatan, dan struktur sosial ekonomi mereka. Rasisme sistemik dialami dalam kehidupan nyata dan tercermin melalui karya - karya sastra. *Riot Baby* adalah novel distopia kontemporer yang diterbitkan pada tahun 2019 oleh Tochi Onyebuchi dan telah berhasil mengembalikan ingatan tentang fenomena rasisme tahun 1992 yang menyebabkan kerusuhan Rodney King yang terjadi di Los Angeles. Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mendeskripsikan penggambaran rasisme sistemik dalam novel tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan kritik Afrika-Amerika sebagai konsep yang mendasari penelitian ini dan dianalisis menggunakan teori penindasan Joe Feagin dengan menerapkan tiga prinsip dasar, yaitu kerangka ras kulit putih, hubungan sosial yang terasing, dan perjuangan dan perlawanan yang konstan. Metode kualitatif dan pembacaan dengan teliti diterapkan untuk mendukung analisis penelitian ini. Hasil analisis ini menunjukkan bahwa rasisme yang digambarkan dalam novel *Riot Baby* bersifat sistemik dan tertanam dalam peraturan masyarakat. Kev dan karakter lainnya mengalami rasisme ini dan merasakan dampaknya pada kehidupan mereka. Beberapa dampak negatif tersebut adalah seperti depresi yang lebih kronis dan persisten, gejala depresi yang lebih parah, tidak diberikan akses kesehatan yang layak, mendapati rasa takut yang berkelanjutan, serta kesenjangan pada banyak status sosial-ekonomi seperti pendidikan, pendapatan, dan pekerjaan.

Kata kunci: *Riot Baby, Rasisme Sistemik, Afrika Amerika, Teori Penindasan, Dampak Negatif*

ABSTRACT

Systemic racism is the racist ideology that is embedded in the laws and regulations of society. The existence of systemic racism is very detrimental to African Americans especially in terms of psychological, health, and socioeconomic structure. Systemic racism is experienced in real life and reflected through literary works. *Riot Baby* is a contemporary dystopian novel published in 2019 by Tochi Onyebuchi and has successfully brought back the memories of the racism phenomenon in 1992 that lead to the Rodney King riot that took place in Los Angeles. This research is done to depict the portrayal of systemic racism in the novel. This research employs African American criticism as the underlying concept for this research and is analyzed using Joe Feagin's theory of oppression by applying three basic tenets namely the white racial frame, alienated social relations, and constant struggle and resistance. Qualitative methods and close reading are applied to support the analysis of this study. The results of this analysis show that the racism described in the *Riot Baby* novel is systemic and embedded in community regulations. Kev and the other characters undergo racism throughout the story and can feel its impact on their lives. Some of these negative impacts are chronic and persistent depression, more severe symptoms in depression, not given access to proper healthcare, constant feeling of fear, as well as disparities in many socio-economic statuses such as education, income, and employment.

Keywords: *Riot Baby, Systemic Racism, African American, Theory of Oppression, Negative Impact*