

## A STUDY OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN COUNTTEE CULLEN'S SELECTED POEMS

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze racial discrimination issues in three poems written by Countee Cullen: *Tableau* (1920), *Incident* (1925), and *From the Dark Tower* (1927) to find out the unequal treatments such as race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, or social class membership, which is still relevant to current issues. The primary data of this study are *Tableau* (1920), *Incident* (1925), and *From the Dark Tower* (1927). The secondary data of this study is from online news in the United States. The research method used in this study is qualitative research. Racial discrimination portrayed in Countee Cullen's three poems has proven that the related issues are still happening in society nowadays. The problems related to the three poems are Interracial Married Couples, Racial Slur, "the N-word", the Black Lives Matter movement, and Equal Pay Equal Work for Black Women. These related issues correlate with Theodorson and Theodorson's theory of discrimination.

**Keywords:** African Americans, Black, Harlem Renaissance, racial discrimination, Countee Cullen

### ABSTRAK

*Penelitian ini memiliki tujuan untuk menganalisis masalah diskriminasi rasial dalam tiga puisi yang ditulis oleh Countee Cullen: Tableau (1920), Incident (1925), dan From the Dark Tower (1927) untuk mengetahui adanya perlakuan tidak setara seperti ras, etnis, gender, agama, orientasi seksual, usia, atau keanggotaan kelas sosial, yang masih relevan dengan isu-isu terkini. Data primer dari penelitian ini adalah Tableau (1920), Incident (1925), dan From the Dark Tower (1927). Data sekunder penelitian ini berasal dari berita daring di Amerika Serikat. Metode penelitian yang digunakan untuk melakukan penelitian ini adalah penelitian kualitatif. Diskriminasi rasial yang tergambar dalam tiga puisi Countee Cullen telah membuktikan bahwa sejumlah masalah terkait masih terjadi di masyarakat saat ini. Beberapa isu terkait dari ketiga puisi tersebut antara lain Pasangan Menikah Antar Ras, Penghinaan Rasial, "Kata Berawalan N", Gerakan Black Lives Matter, dan Equal Pay Equal Work for Black Women. Isu-isu terkait ini memiliki hubungan dengan teori diskriminasi Theodorson dan Theodorson.*

**Kata Kunci:** Afrika-Amerika, kulit hitam, Harlem Renaissance, diskriminasi rasial, Countee Cullen

**A. INTRODUCTION**

American Literature is divided into several periods or eras. One of them is the Harlem Renaissance. According to Nichols and Wing, "...renaissance is a word that means a rebirth or awakening, especially of culture, art, science, and philosophy" (2022). Harlem is a region of New York City, considered the focal point of a movement in the early 1900s. Nichols and Wing added, "This renaissance in the Black community and the appreciation for Black art, philosophy, and culture impacted not only people in Harlem but also those in communities around the world" (2022). Although the Harlem Renaissance did not end until the middle of the 1930s, its influence can still be seen today.

Renaissance can emerge from relatively large parts of the world or tiny areas of a single country. The Harlem Renaissance began in a small area of New York City in the 1920s. During the period of rapid economic growth after World War II, Harlem was home to many African Americans who migrated from the South to the North, facing substantial racial prejudice, violence by the white majority, and economic hardship. The African Americans wanted to escape trouble and have a better life in the North. Writer and poet Langston Hughes wrote, "Harlem was the promised land". The Harlem Renaissance is not only about Black people as authors (Worth, 2021).

Nichols and Wing said, "During the Harlem Renaissance, they showed a new way to see Black people as artists, musicians, and authors.... They followed their passion and dreams to create great music, art, and literature" (2022). The Harlem Renaissance's artists, musicians, and authors' books, thoughts, and songs helped the African American community. The movement in the Harlem Renaissance made the African American community gain confidence and self-esteem, even though they still faced rejection and oppression from political systems and people outside their communities (Nichols & Wing, 2022). This also had an impact on all of the African American poets in the Harlem Renaissance era.

Countee Cullen (1903-1966) was one of the best-known African American poets of the Harlem Renaissance. Countee Cullen is one of the best-known and most important figures in the Harlem Renaissance movement of the 1920s and 1930s. His work was published as his first poetry book when he was 22 (Constantakis, 2021). Countee Cullen was a well-known and admired figure in the literary world. He was born in New York City on May 30, 1903. His first published work was in free verse when he was fourteen. Having written poetry, people assumed he was an excellent reader and an above-average student (Perry, 1970).

Countee Cullen was one of the few blacks at DeWitt Clinton High School. As the number of activities he led, Cullen had little difficulty because of his race (Perry, 1970). The pivotal year in Countee Cullen's life was 1925. In the May issue of *Opportunity*, it is written: It was announced in the *Journal of Negro Life* that he won second place in a literary contest (Perry, 1970).

This study analyzes the racial discrimination issues in three poems by Countee Cullen. Several poems by Countee Cullen depicted racial discrimination, which is still relevant to current issues. During the pandemic, there was so much news about racial discrimination that happened to African Americans. Being an African American is hard enough to maintain the balance among the Whites. The Whites tend to act differently towards the African Americans. The Whites felt

superior or dominant compared to the African Americans. The African Americans had received much hatred just because of their skin color, which is Black.

This study discusses racial discrimination in Countee Cullen's selected poems, which is related to recent issues between 2019 and 2023. Several related online news sources in the United States support the arguments in this study. The discussion consists of an analysis and discussion of three selected poems by Countee Cullen. Then, the conclusion consists of an overall view of this study.

## **B. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **1. Previous Study**

Previous research serves as a supporting reference, providing a basis for comparison with this study to highlight innovations and show originality. One of the previous studies is from Schultz (2021). It investigates the role of verse in the Harlem Renaissance in forming African American personalities and advocating for social equity. It highlights how Harlem Renaissance writers enunciated subjects of racial awareness, elevation, and equity, and how these subjects reverberate in modern developments like Black Lives Matter. By analyzing works from writers such as Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, James Weldon Johnson, and Carrie Williams Clifford, the thesis illustrates how these writers utilized their art to challenge racial imbalances and advance respectful rights. In the findings, writers highlighted the disparities between African Americans and white communities in racial consciousness, cultivating an unmistakable African American personality and social pride. In racial uplift, through their verse, these scholars supported the height of the Dark community using instruction, aesthetic expression, and otherworldly direction. Then, in justice, their works served as calls to action for gracious rights and social value, laying the foundation for future developments.

### **2. Theoretical Framework**

#### **a. Discrimination**

Discrimination is a common and critical social issue. Even though nowadays people are more open-minded, discrimination is still happening. Many cases showed discrimination in the United States. For example, according to The New York Times, on May 25, 2020, there was a case about an African American person named George Floyd who was killed in white police custody (Hill, 2020). According to Al Jazeera, there was also a significant movement around the United States in 2020, "Black Lives Matter," about discrimination that shook the world (Gottbrath, 2020). These cases prove that discrimination can still be discussed. The relation between these cases and this study is the object of this study, which records reality.

#### **b. Discrimination by Theodorson and Theodorson**

Following the explanation above, discrimination is "the unequal treatment of individuals or groups such as race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, or social class membership" (Theodorson & Theodorson, 1979). Discrimination means unequal treatment against groups of people; in other words, it is the perpetrators of discrimination. Discrimination is usually used to describe the dominance of the behavior of the majority over that of the minority, which should act arbitrarily. A minority is a group recognized for race, religion, or ethnicity but harmed by prejudice (Theodorson & Theodorson, 1979).

Therefore, according to the above explanation, the analysis is based on Theodorson and Theodorson's theory. Race could be classified as racial profiling. Ethnicity could be classified as ethnic slurs. Gender could be classified as gender-based violence and the gender pay gap. Religion could be classified as discrimination against particular religious beliefs and religious intolerance. Sexual orientation could be classified as discrimination against LGBTQ+ and homophobia. Age could be classified as age discrimination in employment and age-based stereotypes. Moreover, social class membership could be classified as class-based discrimination and socioeconomic disparities. The classification of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, or social class membership can be defined in a few fields that can help to analyze the poems.

### **C. RESEARCH METHOD**

The research method used in this study is qualitative research. Sherman and Webb state, "qualitative research is concerned with meanings as they appear to, or are achieved by, persons in lived social situations" (2005). Therefore, the qualitative method is human-centered and seeks to understand how humans live socially. In addition, according to Ary, qualitative questionnaires deal with data in words and pictures rather than numbers and statistics (2010). Based on the explanation above, the analyst utilized qualitative research, as the data in this study was presented through words. Meanwhile, according to Ary's statement, Bogdan and Bicklen added that qualitative research is descriptive data, where the data collected are in the form of words or images rather than numbers (2010).

### **D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Countee Cullen's poems contain several issues of discrimination. This study only analyzes three selected poems by Countee Cullen: *Tableau* (1920), *Incident* (1925), and *From the Dark Tower* (1927). These three poems reflect the discrimination theory by Theodorson and Theodorson. "The African Americans community widely praised Cullen for his work" (Worth, 2021). Although he was praised, he still got discriminated against by the Whites. He even felt like the Whites treated him like a second-class citizen. Based on what he experienced, Cullen wrote about these experiences in his poem, *Incident* (Worth, 2021). The first poem is *Tableau* (1920) by Countee Cullen.

#### **1. *Tableau* (1920) by Countee Cullen**

##### *Tableau*

Locked arm in arm they cross the way  
The black boy and the white,  
The golden splendor of the day  
The sable pride of night.

From lowered blinds the dark folk stare  
And here the fair folk talk,  
Indignant that these two should dare  
In unison to walk.

Oblivious to look and word  
 They pass, and see no wonder  
 That lightning brilliant as a sword  
 Should blaze the path of thunder.

This poem depicts racial discrimination towards an interracial gay couple as seen in the first stanza. The first stanza defines the two men as partners in a romantic relationship. The black and white boys are “locked arm in arm as they cross the way”. These first and second lines describe an interracial gay (homosexual) couple. The third and fourth lines are a metaphor. The third line refers to the White boy. The word “day” is a representation of a White boy. At the same time, the fourth line refers to the Black boy. The word “night” is a representation of the Black boy. Though they are different, they are still considered beautiful creatures. Since the third and fourth lines beautifully capture them as “the golden splendour” and “the sable pride”.

The second stanza depicts African Americans and White society at that time. The fifth line describes the folk who were staring at the interracial gay couple behind the lower blinds. The word “dark” in the fifth line represents the skin of Black people. At the same time, the sixth line describes the folk who were talking (gossiping) about the interracial gay couple. The word “fair” in the sixth line represents the skin of a White person. The seventh line describes that the interracial gay couple indeed felt an anger flow through their skin. The eighth line describes that the interracial gay couple were enduring their anger and just kept walking. Again, by the fourth stanza, the fifth stanza also beautifully delivers the message that there are people who will silently stare and will gladly gossip about others.

The last stanza is more of a description of the two men's final feelings and reactions. The ninth line describes that they were not bothered by White people gossiping about them. They did not talk back; they just ignored them. The tenth line describes that they were walking away and did not look back at the White people—the eleventh and last lines are a metaphor. The eleventh line is the definition of slashing away the people gossiping about them. Moreover, the last line is the definition of the interracial gay couple who carved their path proudly. Therefore, the first poem, *Tableau* (1920) by Countee Cullen, is about sexual orientation and classified discrimination against LGBTQ+ and homophobia in discrimination theory by Theodorson and Theodorson. The second poem is *Incident* (1925) by Countee Cullen.

## **2. *Incident* (1925) by Countee Cullen**

### *Incident*

Once riding in old Baltimore,  
 Heart-filled, head-filled with glee,  
 I saw a Baltimorean  
 Keep looking straight at me.

Now I was eight and very small,

And he was no whit bigger,  
And so I smiled, but he poked out  
His tongue, and called me, "Nigger."

I saw the whole of Baltimore  
From May until December;  
Of all the things that happened there  
That's all that I remember.

This poem describes Countee Cullen's youth when he was eight years old. It is depicted that racial discrimination is seen as he described it in the second stanza, as he explores Baltimore City. There is another child who might be the same age as him who has experienced racial discrimination. The first stanza describes the speaker, in this case, Countee Cullen himself. He was riding around in Baltimore City. His heart and head were happy while he explored Baltimore City. Then he came across a Baltimorean who was staring at him.

The second stanza has described and depicted a clearer view of racial discrimination. It described that the speaker, in this case, is Countee Cullen himself. He was a small kid who was only eight years old. He described the Baltimorean who kept staring at him as no bigger than he was. This could mean that the Baltimorean was also around the same age as Countee Cullen. He tried to be polite and friendly as he smiled at the Baltimorean kid. The crucial part is in the third and fourth lines of the second stanza. As described in the second stanza's third line, the Baltimorean kid was unexpectedly sticking his tongue out. He refused to return Countee Cullen's smile. Moreover, lastly, the fourth line in the second stanza, the Baltimorean kid called Countee Cullen "Nigger". This word "Nigger" was a racial slur or commonly known as "the N-word".

The third stanza describes Countee Cullen's realization about his experience in Baltimore City. As seen in the whole third stanza, he comes to the realization. Despite all the things that happened to him, it only made him realize that at some point, he had to accept the world as it is. He cannot change other people to treat him fairly. He is the one who has to adapt because he is the minority among the majority. Therefore, the second poem, *Incident* (1925) by Countee Cullen, is about race classified as racial profiling and ethnicity classified as ethnic slurs in discrimination theory by Theodorson and Theodorson. Countee Cullen's last poem is *From the Dark Tower* (1927).

### **3. *From the Dark Tower* (1927) by Countee Cullen**

*From the Dark Tower*

We shall not always plant while others reap  
The golden increment of bursting fruit,  
Not always countenance, abject and mute,  
That lesser men should hold their brothers cheap;  
Not everlastingly while others sleep  
Shall we beguile their limbs with mellow flute,  
Not always bend to some more subtle brute;

We were not made eternally to weep.

The night whose sable breast relieves the stark,  
 White stars is no less lovely being dark,  
 And there are buds that cannot bloom at all  
 In light, but crumple, piteous, and fall;  
 So in the dark we hide the heart that bleeds,  
 And wait, and tend our agonizing seeds.

This poem depicts and describes the life of the African American community. In the first line of the first stanza, "We" stands for the African American community, which includes all men, women, and children. Which tends to "plant". The word plant means that the African American community is the ones who give or provide something. Meanwhile, the word "others" described the White community, which tends to "reap". The word reap means that the White community is the ones who take or deprive. Countee Cullen means that the African American community "...shall not always..." be the giver or the provider. The African American community's effort shall not always be taken for granted by the community.

The second line in the first stanza is "The golden increment of bursting fruit." This means that the African American community worked so hard that the outcome made the White community gain fortunes. It is unfortunate for the African American community that they were not paid enough for their efforts.

The third line in the first stanza, "Not always countenance, abject and mute,". This describes that Countee Cullen wants the African American community to be brave enough to voice their opinions in order to oppose the White community, and not accept all the White community's unfair treatment. The fourth line in the first stanza describes Countee Cullen wanting the African American community to hold on to one another modestly as brothers.

The fifth line in the first stanza, "Not everlastingly while others sleep". This describes that Countee Cullen wants the African American community not to overwork themselves. What is the point of being overworked while the others or the White community took their time to rest fully? The sixth line in the first stanza describes that Countee Cullen is questioning whether the African American community has made their body fully useful, along with speaking lowly towards the White community.

The seventh line in the first stanza, "Not always bend to some more subtle brute;". This describes that Countee Cullen wants the African American community not always obedient to the White community. The eighth line in the first stanza describes what Countee Cullen wanted for the African American community: never to shed a tear. The African American community must be strong to face the unfair treatment from the White community.

The first line in the second stanza means that Countee Cullen wanted to describe the African American community as the night came, they could ease the burden that filled their chest, for in the night, no others, which was the White community, could see them. The second line in the second stanza, "White stars are no less lovely being dark,". This describes the African American community was

no less attractive than the White community.

The third line in the second stanza means that Countee Cullen wanted to describe a community that could be many African American community members who cannot grow or develop in their lives. The fourth line in the second stanza, "In light, but crumple, piteous, and fall," means that Countee Cullen wanted to describe the African American community as miserable and a failure.

The fifth line in the second stanza means that Countee Cullen wanted to describe that the African American community was hiding in the dark, brokenhearted because of their miserable and failed lives. The last line in the second stanza means that Countee Cullen wants the African American community to wait patiently and pay attention to keep growing and developing. Hence, Countee Cullen believes that someday, some White community might change. They might accept the existence of the African American community and stop treating them differently. Therefore, the last poem, *From the Dark Tower* (1927) by Countee Cullen, is about Gender classified as gender-based violence and gender pay gap, and social class membership classified as class-based discrimination and socioeconomic disparities in discrimination theory by Theodorson and Theodorson.

In order to support the researcher's arguments on the analysis above, the researcher would like to bring up recent and relevant issues. First, the researcher would like to give the recent and relevant issues related to the first poem, *Tableau* (1920) by Countee Cullen. The interracial gay couples who are proudly representing themselves in society nowadays are becoming more common. The reasons behind it were a society that became more open-minded, hence even if they are accepting the existence of queer people among them. There are still some people who are against them.

Firstly, the researcher would like to show the first real proof of accordance with racial discrimination against interracial gay couples' issues. According to BBC News on December 13, 2022, the first sentence is that President Joe Biden has signed a same-sex marriage protection bill that is seen as a significant win for LGBT couples (Matza, 2022). With that being said, it is meant that interracial gay couples are allowed and accepted in the US under the law. The following statement reinforces this: the law requires the federal government to recognize the validity of all marriages, including those between LGBT and same-sex couples, that are legal in states (Matza, 2022).

The interracial gay couple's marriage is finally recognized in the law. The following statement is proof of it: it has been 55 years since the U.S. Supreme Court ruled to legalize interracial marriage for the first time in any state, but until now, it was not protected by federal law. Recent comments have raised concerns that future court rulings may overturn gay and interracial marriages. (Matza, 2022). Hence, it is becoming easier for interracial gay couples to express themselves without worrying about society because the law is protecting them.

Secondly, the researcher would like to show the second real proof by the interracial gay couple issue. According to Insider.com on February 1, 2023, the two actors represent an interracial married gay couple. Emmy Award-winning actor Billy Porter and Star Trek star Zachary Quinto are among the first new actors to be announced for the remake. The pair played as Randall (Porter) and Barry (Quint) Liebowitz-Jenkins, the multiracial adoptive parents of new characters Maya and



Frances. (Adekaiyero, 2023). In Disney Channel's *The Proud Family: Louder and Prouder*, the two gay dads are Randal and Barry. Randal is an African American gay man, and Barry is a White gay man. Also, according to DailyWire.com on May 14, 2021, the News entitled "Disney Rolling Out Children's Cartoon Featuring 14-Year-Old Activist With Interracial Gay Dads". There is proof about the two Gay Dads, "Actors Zachary Quinto and Billy Porter, both of whom are gay" (Brown, 2021).

This is proof that even in the entertainment industry there are queer representatives. Some people are becoming more open-minded and accepting of the existence of queer people. Hence, in the matter of voice actors of the series, they chose real-life gay people. The more people accept, the more they come out. If this becomes broadly spread out then queer people will live freely. The researcher had shown two proofs by the interracial gay couple issue shown in *Tableau* by Countee Cullen. Nowadays queer people are protected under the legal law.

Thirdly, the researcher would like to show the third real proof by the interracial gay couple issue. According to Travelandleisure.com on July 24, 2020, this article is about an interracial married gay couple, one of whom is a writer. He writes about their travel story together. My husband and I have travelled fearlessly enough to scare my parents-in-law, unafraid of the dangers an interracial gay couple might face abroad. (Hannaham, 2020). This is proof that, as an interracial married couple, they were not afraid to express themselves. To show some of the countries that they are a proudly interracial married gay couple.

The writer then adds, "The Philippines, Cape Verde, Vanuatu, Colombia. We will not go to Brunei, though. We disapprove of countries where it is legal to stone gay people to death" (Hannaham, 2020). Indeed, some countries are still very close-minded or conservative. However, some countries are strictly against LGBT people. This could be because some of the religions forbid the LGBT. According to what the writer said about Brunei, this country is well-known for having a majority of Muslim citizens.

Second, the researcher would like to give the recent and relevant issues related to the second poem, *Incident* (1925) by Countee Cullen. Firstly, the researcher would like to show the first real proof of accordance with racial discrimination toward the African American kid related to the racial slur or "the N-word" in *Incident* (1925) by Countee Cullen. According to NBC News on May 2, 2019, the first sentence in the news is a statement from "Michael Eric Dyson, the eminent African American scholar, author, and Georgetown professor..." (Aviles, 2019). Students called my grandchildren B-word, MF-word, N-word, and said they were going to take his father's gun and shoot him, Dyson told NBC News" (Aviles, 2019).

In that statement, it is clear that the racial slur is related to *Incident* (1925) by Countee Cullen, which still happens nowadays. Moreover, it is getting worse; the kids were even younger than Countee Cullen and the Baltimorean kid. The racial slur has also become more common. In *Incident* (1925) by Countee Cullen the racial slur was only "the N-word" or "Nigger". Meanwhile, in this case, there were two more racial slurs, "the B word" and "the MF word". The B word stands for Black and the MF word stands for Motherfucker. It was unfortunate for an elementary school to have experienced such a thing. This even happened at a school.

Secondly, the researcher would like to show the second real proof of racial discrimination toward the African American kid related to the racial slur or “the N-word” in *Incident* (1920) by Countee Cullen. According to CBC Kids News on May 15, 2019, the News entitled “‘They used it to hurt me:’ Teens talk about being called the N-word”. In this case, the kids are older; they were High School students. Nova Scotia Grade 11 student Kaylin Willis talks to kids about the history of the N-word and the implications of its use (Crosby, 2019). Kaylin Willis knows it is a sensitive topic to talk about the N-word. He heard kids used it in his high school, South Colchester Academy, in Brooklyn, N.S.

Kids think it is cool to say that, he said. “It is hard to get people to understand that it is an insult. (Crosby, 2019). Keilin spoke about his own experience to a Grade 8 class in Milford, N.S. It means subhuman, said Kaylin, who is an African American and is called the N-word by her peers. You tried to humiliate me, and it hurts. It is (Crosby, 2019). In that case, even in High School areas, racial slurs had become a common thing among the students. The worst part is that this behavior has been considered a cool thing to do.

Thirdly, the researcher would like to show the third real proof of racial discrimination toward the African American kid related to the racial slur or “the N-word” in *Incident* (1920) by Countee Cullen. According to NBC News, on May 23, 2023, this article informed us that even an announcer who is known as an educated one could still make such a mistake. Kuiper’s statement on Monday, when he was terminated, my sincerest apologies to anyone hurt by this. It was a terrible but honest mistake; I take full responsibility (Lenthang, 2023).

Third, the researcher would like to give the recent and relevant issues related to the third poem, *From the Dark Tower* (1927) by Countee Cullen. Firstly, the researcher would like to show the first real proof of accordance with racial discrimination. In *From the Dark Tower* (1927) by Countee Cullen, he focused more on telling the African American community to speak out. As seen in the poem, “Not always” is repeated thrice in *From the Dark Tower* (1927) by Countee Cullen. The researcher tries to relate this to the current issue.

According to ABC News on July 10, 2020, the News article entitled “How Black Lives Matter Became a multicultural awakening”. There is a statement in the news, “Some activists say that since the first protests in 2013, Black Lives Matter has blossomed into a multicultural awakening with an increasing number of white activists taking part” (Shanga, 2020). This statement is related to what Countee Cullen talked about in *From the Dark Tower* (1927), for he wanted the African American community to voice their voice. This is also in sync with what Countee Cullen hoped for: to wait patiently and pay attention to keep growing and developing. Hence, Countee Cullen believes that someday, some White community might change. They might be accepting the existence of the African American community and stop treating them differently since the news statement said that the number of white activists who took part has increased. This means that some of the White community has changed, and they care about the African American community.

Secondly, the researcher wants to show the second real proof of racial discrimination. According to CNN News on July 26, 2020, the News article entitled “How Black Lives Matter went from a hashtag to a global rallying cry”. There is a

statement in the news, "BLM's goal, according to its website, is to eradicate anti-Blackness and create a society where Black people can thrive in the US." (Asmelash, 2020). This has pointed out the means from Countee Cullen, which is no other than the existence of a facility for the African American community to voice their voice. Before, no facilities or organizations could accommodate the African American community, just like nowadays.

According to Blackenterprise.com on June 16, 2023, this article shows that people still hate the Black Lives Matter movement. This problem is very problematic for the people who support the Black Lives Matter movement, especially for the African American community itself.

According to Blackenterprise.com, we sincerely apologize to everyone hurt by this. It was terrifying, but it was honest." Scott Walker, 36, was found hanging above the Trinity Street mural, according to NBCCT. After Walker was caught red-handed, police were able to arrest Walker, who is currently being held on \$150,000 bail (Milner, 2023). This statement has proven that hate towards the African American community still exists. Even though there is still hate, the African American community grew stronger, for there is still love for the African American community among others.

The researcher wants to show the third real proof of racial discrimination. In *From the Dark Tower* (1927) by Countee Cullen, he was describing how the African American community works so hard that the outcome of it made the White community gain fortunes. This is so unfortunate for the African American community that they were not paid enough for their efforts. He also described how the African American community should not overwork themselves. What is the point of being overworked while the others or the White community took their time to rest fully? The researcher tries to relate this to the current issue.

According to BuiltIn on September 21, 2022, there is a statement in the news that African American women have lost more than \$20,000 this year due to the pay gap, according to the National Center for Women's Law, and received an average of 58 percent of the amount paid (Bowden, 2022). The researcher wants to show the third real proof of racial discrimination. According to Ms. Magazine on March 29, 2023, there is a statement in the news, by demanding equal pay for equal work and practicing #AskForMore, African American women can take action to reduce longstanding income and wealth shortages (Holder, 2023).

According to CBC News, September 21, 2022, the News entitled, "Black Women's Equal Pay Day – why does it mean?". "It marks how far into the year African American women must work to earn the same amount as white men did the year before" (CBCnews.com).

These statements from different articles relate to what Countee Cullen talked about in *From the Dark Tower* (1927), for he wanted the African American community to be paid enough for their efforts and not overwork themselves. This has pointed out the means from Countee Cullen, which is no other than the hope that the African American community is treated equally. Those are the proofs that Countee Cullen's selected poems can still be related to the most recent events in real life.

**E. CONCLUSION**

During the pandemic, there has been so much news about racial discrimination that has happened towards African American people. Several related News reports in the United States support the arguments in this study. Based on the analysis of Countee Cullen's *Tableau* (1920), *Incident* (1925), and *From the Dark Tower* (1927), it can be concluded that these poems are still related to the most recent issues between 2019 and 2023. In *Tableau* (1920), it can depict the most recent issues. This interracial married gay couple is in correlation with sexual orientation and classified discrimination against LGBTQ+ and homophobia in discrimination theory by Theodorson and Theodorson. Nowadays, some people are more open-minded, and the number of people coming out and embracing their identity is increasing. As long as some of society accepts them, the number of people who come out could increase significantly, such as #ComingOut and #PrideMonth. In *Incident* (1925), it can depict the most recent issues, the racial slur "the N-word", which is in correlation with race classified as racial profiling, and ethnicity classified as ethnic slurs in discrimination theory by Theodorson and Theodorson. In *From the Dark Tower* (1927), it can depict most recent issues, the BLM's movement and #AskForMore regarding the equal work equal pay for the African American Women which is in correlation with gender pay gap and social class membership classified as class-based discrimination and socioeconomic disparities in discrimination theory by Theodorson and Theodorson. Racial discrimination that is happening towards interracial gay couples, racial slurs, and the African American community are widespread social issues in society. Therefore, the African American community and people of all races also support Black Lives Matter.

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