



# Reading Issues of Race and Ethnicity Through Yellowface Novel as Popular Literature

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## ABSTRACT

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The novel *Yellowface* by Rf. Kuang has become one of the most popular novels and a best seller since its initial publication. This popularity brings pros and cons by readers because the issue narrated in the novel is an issue that will never be resolved, namely the issue of race and ethnicity in America. This research will use the Goodreads platform to collect data on readers' responses to *Yellowface* by Rf. Kuang. To analyze this, the researcher uses Stuart Hall's reception theory. The data in this study is taken with a qualitative descriptive method, which describes based on reader reviews on the Goodreads platform. With the theories and methods used, this research will produce data on readers of the novel *Yellowface* on the Goodreads platform, analyze readers with dominant receptions, analyze readers with negotiated receptions, and analyze readers with oppositional receptions.

Keywords: *Yellowface*, Goodreads, Popular Literature, Reception

## INTRODUCTION

Rf Kuang's *Yellowface* has been a popular novel since its initial publication in 2023. Almost all book reviewers recommend reading this 336-page book. *Yellowface* is also a book that is always included in the fiction book recommendations on the goodreads platform. Goodreads is a social networking platform that focuses on books and literature. Like other social networks, Goodreads features friends, groups, and discussions. However, what sets it apart is the ability for members to display a list of books they have read, are reading, and will read. On this site, users can share book recommendations by

providing reviews and comments. Retrieved from the web (Goodreads, n.d.) Goodreads is the world's largest book reading and recommendation site, with the aim to help readers find books they love and get more out of their reading. Goodreads users can search and recommend books, track their reading, and interact with a community of other readers. Goodreads is also one of the platforms that influence the rating of a book.

With its popularity, the novel *Yellowface* received the Goodreads Choice Award Winner for Best Fiction (2023). In addition to getting awards from Goodreads, *Yellowface* also received many awards and nominations including *British Book Awards for fiction (2024)*, *Audie Award Nominee For Fiction (2024)*, *Foyles Books of the Year Winners (2023)*, *Libby Book Awards Winners Best Book Club Pick (2023)*, *New England Book Awards for fiction (2023)*, *Los Angeles Times Book Prize Nominee for Audiobook 2023 (Gelt, 2024)*, *Best Book Goodreads Choice Awards for Fiction (2023)*, *New England Book Awards For Fiction (2023)*, *Barnes & Noble Book of the Year Award Nominee (2023)*, and *She Reads Best of Award for Book of the Year (2023)*.

With the popularity of *Yellowface*, many people read it and then the readers gave their reviews on Goodreads. *Yellowface* is largely described as a satire on racial diversity in the publishing industry as well as a metafiction about social media, particularly Twitter. Although the novel won many awards, with its popularity, and sensitive content, many readers were disappointed with the storyline in *Yellowface*. As mentioned earlier that the central theme of the novel is a satire on racial diversity in the publishing industry, many readers commented on the racial diversity. Many readers were also confused about the characterizations of the main characters, June and Athena. Athena is a popular Asian-American writer and June is an ordinary White - American writer. June and Athena have been friends since they were students at Yale University, and both are writers. The difference is that Athena is more famous than June. June is described as an ordinary white writer who steals Athena's manuscript when Athena suddenly dies in front of her. Athena is a famous American writer and a favorite writer in the literary industry (which includes the publishing industry). Athena's popularity made June shirk so June unhesitatingly stole Athena's manuscript when Athena suddenly died in front of her. Then June handed it over to the publisher and claimed it as her work. June managed to create a new image and change her identity to Juniper Song Hayward to harmonize with her new Asian-themed work. the book entitled *The last front* was a huge success. However, June could not escape Athena's shadow and later June confessed that the manuscript of *The Last Front* was stolen from Athena's manuscript (Kuang, 2023).

However, at the end of the story, June's character, who commits heinous acts of identity forgery, theft, and plagiarism, is made to seem unrepentant, as if what June did was "normal". This is biased because the author of *Yellowface*, Rebecca F Kuang, is an Asian-American writer, which has led to confusion among readers who can be seen from their comments on the Goodreads platform. *Yellowface*'s popularity is then questioned. The popularity of *Yellowface* is inseparable from the role of readers in reviewing the contents of the novel.

Based on this explanation, the researcher wants to analyze how the novel *yellowface* became popular seen from the comments or review of readers on the goodreads platform. by looking at the comments on the goodreads platform, this can provide insight into what factors contribute to the popularity of the novel from the reader's perspective. this research will be analyzed using Stuart Hall's reception analysis theory using Stuart Hall's encoding-decoding because this theory focuses on the audience's reception of information from the media, through a semiotic approach. Reception theory (reader interpretation) focuses on how readers or audiences receive messages, not on the sender of the message. The meaning of the message depends on the cultural background and life experiences of the audience itself. Audience research according to Stuart Hall (in Baran, 2004:269-270) has a direct concern with: (a) analysis of the social and political context in which media content is produced (encoding); and (b) consumption of media content (decoding) in the context of everyday life. Reception analysis focuses on individual attention in the mass communication process (decoding), namely on the process of meaning and deep understanding of media texts, and how individuals interpret media content. According to Stuart Hall (Hall et al., 2005:128), Audiences decode media messages through three possible positions, namely: dominant hegemony, negotiation, and opposition positions.

There have been previous analyses of *yellowface* by (Kaimuddin & Fadila, 2024), their research examines how June Hayward, the main character in R.F. Kuang's *Yellowface*, negotiates and constructs her identity after stealing her friend Athena's manuscript. Using literary criticism and Stuart Hall's theory of identity negotiation, this study analyzes June's transformation into "Juniper Song" and how she claims authorship of *The Last Front*. The analysis reveals that June's identity is shaped through interaction, agency and resistance. She adopts elements of Asian culture-such as the concept of "keeping face"-to legitimize her role as a Chinese writer. Four key aspects are identified in her identity construction: culture, history, power and hybridity. Her transformation reflects a complex mix of personal ambition and cultural appropriation. Then, for analysis with Hall's

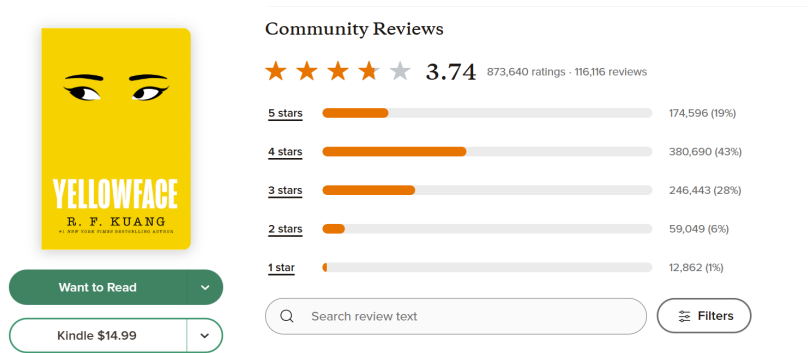
reader's response theory, which was carried out previously, is an analysis by (AFIF & ARDHIAN, 2025) This research discusses how audiences accept and interpret gender stereotypes in the Gadis Kretek series. The aim is to describe the audience's response to gender representation in the series. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data was collected through interviews, literature studies, and documentation, then analyzed with Stuart Hall's reception theory (Encoding/Decoding). The results showed that most informants were in an oppositional position, rejecting stereotypes that are considered demeaning to women. Others are in a negotiated or dominant position, accepting gender roles in a cultural and historical context. Differences in cultural background, experience, and knowledge make the meaning of the series diverse, indicating that Gadis Kretek does not fully shape the audience's views uniformly. Can be concluded that the difference between the research to be carried out with previous research is in the material object and the theory to be used. In this analysis, the material object to be analyzed is the novel *Yellowface* by rf. kuang with Stuart Hall's Reception theory.

## METHODS

This research is a qualitative research method. Qualitative research is research that intends to understand the phenonema of what is experienced by the research subject, for example behavior, perception, motivation, action holistically and by means of description in the form of words and language in a special natural context (Moleong, 1989). This research uses descriptive qualitative research methods using Stuart Hall's reception analysis and semiotic approach, because literary works are expressions of certain human needs, while as semiotic facts, literary works have distinctive characteristics that need to be known. As a semiotic fact, literary works have a double existence, which is at the same time in the sensory world (empirical) and the non-empirical world of consciousness. the first aspect of its existence can be seen by the senses (physical form), while the second aspect of its existence cannot be seen by the senses (Faruk H. T., 2012:77-78). This indicates that the existence of literary works can be felt through the meaning that is interpreted by each reader.

## RESULTS

Novel *Yellowface* by Rf Kuang is one of the popular novels with a rating of 3.74 / 5 on goodreads. The rating will change according to the number of people who give ratings on the Goodreads platform. as Of June 28, 2025, with a rating of 3.74, yellowface has been reviewed by 166,166 Goodreads users and has been rated by 873,640 Goodreads users. This can be seen in the following image:



Source: (goodread, Ratings & Reviews for Yellowface)

Yellowface novels becoming popular does not only depend on the number of readers and reader responses. However, a good story will make the writing popular. According to (Apriliana & Wati, 2023) a good story is a story that is united in a plot. With a plot that is interconnected will make the story understandable to the reader. In addition to the plot that is interconnected the story written must be accepted by reason. With a story that makes sense, this story will be accepted by readers. This 319-pages novel tells the story of two main characters named June (White - American) and Athena (Asian - American) who are both writers. June Hayward feels like a failure in life. As a white woman in her late 20s, she feels like she's lost everything to her friend Athena Liu-a beautiful, smart, and successful Asian novelist. One night, while celebrating Athena's success, tragedy strikes: Athena dies suddenly from choking. In the midst of panic, June discovers Athena's unpublished manuscript. She stole it, modified its contents, and published it under the title *The Last Front*. The novel, about Chinese laborers in World War I, was an instant hit. June suddenly became a famous writer, flooded with praise and offers of movie adaptations. However, her popularity began to crumble when the public-especially the Asian community-questioned the authenticity and intentions behind her work. In addition, the most important thing in a novel is conflict (Floretta V.D, 2024). The following data on reader reception according to Stuart Hall is divided into three types:

### 1. Dominant Reader Reception

Dominant Hegemony as a situation where "the media produce the message; the masses consume it. The audience reading coincides with the preferred reading" (the media delivers the message; the audience receives it. What the media conveys is coincidentally also preferred by the audience) (Hall et al., 2005). A situation where the media conveys messages using the dominant cultural codes in society. It can be concluded that, the dominant hegemonic position refers to readers who agree with the author's message regarding social issues such as racism and cultural appropriacy expressing their acceptance. The

following data shows the Dominant Hegemony Position of Yellowface readers on the Goodreads platform through the following table:

| NO | User Name                                     | Reviews  |
|----|---|--|
| 1. | Emma Griffioen<br>331 reviews 3,084 followers | <i>Yellowface by RF Kuang was fast-paced, satirical, intriguing, and unique! I've never heard of or read a book with a similar concept, which I found so refreshing. June's internal monologue was absolutely insane, especially in the first half. I didn't even know how she could dig herself deeper into the hole, but she never failed to dig herself deeper and deeper. I was left with my jaw dropped at the end of multiple chapters. I really enjoyed the insight into the racist publishing industry that Yellowface gave. One of the sentences that struck me the most was "Bestsellers are chosen. Nothing you do matters." I assumed this was often the case, but it opened my eyes to how much ads and promotions for certain books impact the chance of me reading them. Overall, I had such a fun time buddy reading Yellowface with Sue! I've heard incredible things about RF Kuang for years, so I am very happy to finally have picked up one of her books. Needless to say, I'll be reading her entire backlog!</i> |
| 2. | Monte Price<br>769 reviews 2,192 followers    | <i>It's a story about the lies people tell to rationalize their own behaviors, the myths they construct around themselves to be able to move through the world, and what a woman is willing to do to reinvent herself in her own eyes. It's a fascinating read, one that will stick with the reader. Honestly, as a contemporary girlie this book is a little special because it's a contemporary from Kuang, so I'm got to eat extra good in the reading experience of this one.</i>  |
| 3. | Jorie<br>363 reviews, 110 followers           | <i>wisted, tense, and utterly captivating. At once an excellent execution of the thrill of watching a trainwreck, and an evisceration of the culture that delights in doing so. R.F. Kuang's Yellowface is a perfect time capsule of our current period: A modern world so intent on preserving racist power structures, trying to make room in them for diversity when they weren't built for such accommodation. Critiquing them through the lens of the publishing industry, Kuang explores the way POC authors are rejected, pigeonholed, and have their stories silenced or told for them time and again. This tightly written, anxiety-inducing, and oftentimes funny novel reveals how these publishing trends - these racist roots - make it so easy for main character June to not just appropriate POC author Athena Liu's work, but her culture and her life. This is not overhyped in any way. It is a timely read, important and entertaining.</i>  |

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| 4. | Hank<br>911 reviews | <i>A toxic mix of misogyny, racism, cancel culture, social media and the publishing industry's perpetual obsession with the next big thing leads to a surprisingly fun novel. It all boils down to self interest, manipulating the story, gaining the upper hand, doing whatever it takes. If publishing is rigged, you might as well make sure it's rigged in your favor. A surprisingly fun, wild book, that takes a hard look at the publishing industry that is always searching for the next big thing in an increasingly fraught and polarised society.</i> |
|----|---------------------|---|

In the first comment, the reader describes *Yellowface* as a satirical, interesting, and unique novel, indicating a predominant acceptance of Kuang's storytelling style and innovative themes. The reader is impressed by June's internal monologue and how it deepens the story, and appreciates the social critique of the racist publishing industry. The quote "Bestsellers are chosen. Nothing you do matters." opens the reader's eyes to the influence of advertising and promotion in the publishing industry, which confirms the dominant reception of the novel's critical messages. In this case, Emma as a reader of *Yellowface* approves of the narrative.

The second comment highlights the lies told in June's character to rationalize her behavior and transformation as a woman in the novel. Readers found this narrative compelling and memorable, confirming the dominant acceptance of the complex psychological and social themes in the story. Readers also found it special that the novel is a contemporary work by Kuang, showing a special appreciation of the author's work in a modern context. By reading *Yellowface*, Monte Price highlights Kuang's represented satire of the character June who has rationalized her lies as if she is good in order to make her image as a writer successful.

The third commentary calls the novel a tense and compelling story, while criticizing a culture that revels in disaster. Readers rated "*Yellowface*" as a perfect time capsule for the current period, where racist power structures are maintained despite attempts to incorporate diversity. Kuang critiques the publishing industry through the way POC (People of Color) writers are rejected and silenced, which readers strongly resonate with. The tight and sometimes humorous narrative shows how the racist roots in the industry make it easy for the main character, June, to appropriate Athena Liu's work and culture. This comment from Jorie confirms that the novel is not exaggerated and is an important and entertaining read, showing a dominant acceptance of the social critique raised by Kuang.

The final comment describes the novel as an in-between representation of misogyny, racism, cancel culture, social media, and

the publishing industry's obsession with seriousness that resulted in the surprisingly enjoyable novel *Yellowface*. Readers see the novel as a reflection of the author's self-interest as an Asian American, manipulation of the story, and attempts to make a profit, reflecting the dominant acceptance of a critical view of the publishing industry and an increasingly polarized society. The novel is perceived as a wild and fun read, which provides a harsh view of the publishing industry, reinforcing the dominant acceptance of the Author's messages and themes.

Overall, this analysis shows how readers actively interpreted, and appreciated the various complex themes in *Yellowface*. Readers also like the storyline, which is relevant to the social circumstances that occur in the publishing industry and in everyday life today. Thus, the social critique of the dynamics of racism to the psychological dynamics of the characters, all of which are perfectly conveyed through an interesting and provocative narrative in Rf. Kuang. Short-coding the audience of *yellowface* novel readers in the dominant position results in the view that what Rf. Kuang in *Yellowface*, which satirizes the issue of racism in the publishing world, is fully accepted by the audience of readers on the Goodreads platform.

## 2. Reader Reception Negotiation

Negotiated acceptance is when readers accept the delivery given, but there are some things that are actually rejected by readers but they make exceptions to these things. The negotiated position is a position where the audience accepts the dominant ideology but rejects its application in certain cases. In this case, the audience is willing to accept the dominant ideology that is general in nature, but they will make some exceptions in its application that are adjusted to local cultural rules (Hall, dalam Ghassani & Nugroho, 2019:130). In the reader's reception of *Yellowface* through the Goodreads platform, there are several reader receptions that lead to negotiated acceptance in their responses. In this case, there are 4 reader responses that fall into the category of reader negotiation towards the novel *Yellowface*:

| NO | User Name   | Reviews  |
|----|---|--|
| 1. | Charlotte McConaghy<br>Author 23 books<br>4,415 followers | I really enjoyed this — it's funny, disturbing, clever, satirical and outrageous — but I guess due to the vile main character (her vileness was, of course, the point) I didn't really have an emotional connection to it... Still, I'd recommend, bcs this is good fiction. |
| 2. | emilybookedup<br>442 reviews,                             | This book made me feel so many emotions while reading it and I think that was my favorite part. The  |

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|    | 5,934 followers                          | <p>pacing ebbs and flows, the story is quite slow and it made me bored, and that is a critique of mine (the middle really dragged for me) but I think that allows the reader to sit with the content and decide how they really feel. To be honest, this book made me feel paranoid and anxious—but not entirely in a bad way? June was stressing me out!!! And her publisher/agent?? Sheesh!!</p>   |
| 3. | emma ♡<br>106 reviews,<br>658 followers  | <p>juniper hayward was very self-centered and arrogant. but for some reason, it wasn't in a way that made me hate the book. it only made it more interesting. i've never read about a character like juniper so it was very surprising reading some of the dialogue!</p> <p>bottom line, i hated june, but i liked the book. the ending was a little unexpected and slightly unrealistic. im not sure anything like this would happen in real life, and it kinda threw me off. but it's RF Kuang, and if that's what she thought was best for june, then so be it!</p> <p>overall, i would recommend this to nearly everyone. this was out of my normal genre and i still found it interesting.</p>  |
| 4. | Sheri<br>1,230 reviews,<br>120 followers | <p>Slow-moving but got better in the second half. Sadly, the important themes didn't reach me until they were point-blank dumped on me in the last 10%. I should have thought more about them earlier but instead found myself focused on June and her character development. I was unsympathetic to her as she was self-absorbed and always played herself as the victim, and honestly, I wanted to see the comeuppance that would befall her after her transgression. After the themes registered, I was still left feeling like the story direction was not absolute maybe because I spent too much energy on June. Was this a character analysis of June, and by extension, authors driven to succeed? Or was this a look at the inner workings of the publishing industry? Or maybe even a commentary on the volatility of popularity? Or is it about that which was declared in the final pages, the currently relevant topics of cancel culture, reverse racism, and diversity?</p> <p>Going back to the publisher's blurb - "Yellowface grapples with questions of diversity, racism, and cultural appropriation, as well as the terrifying alienation of social media." - I find that yes, all of these were touched on, but none were particularly</p> |

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|  |  | strong leaving the question of a theme uncertain for most of the book. 3.5 stars that I will round up to four, but this would have been a solid 4 stars if the intention had been more definitive. |
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An analysis of these excerpts using Stuart Hall's negotiation reading shows that these readers have a complex relationship with R.F. Kuang's "Yellowface". They acknowledge and appreciate certain elements of the novel, such as humor, satire, and social criticism, but also show internal conflicts with some aspects of the novel.

One reader mentioned that although they enjoyed the humorous and satirical elements of the novel, an emotional connection with the vile main character was not achieved. The negotiated reading was evident in the way he acknowledged the novel's narrative strengths, yet at the same time, he could not fully accept or connect with the main character. This shows that the reader accepts most of the novel's message but has a different or modified view of its meaning.

Another reader felt a lot of emotions while reading the novel, although there were parts that bored them due to the slow storyline. This reader criticized the inconsistent pacing but also appreciated the way the novel allowed reflection on its content. This also included a negotiated reading, where the reader agreed with some aspects of the narrative but still criticized other elements as unsatisfactory.

A third reader noted that while they disliked Juniper Hayward's self-centered and arrogant character, it did not make them hate the book. Instead, these dislikable characters made the novel more interesting. This indicates a negotiated reading where the reader accepts the complexity of the characters as part of the novel's appeal, despite having negative feelings towards the character traits.

The final reader stated that they struggled to grasp the important themes of the novel until the end. They felt that the focus on June's character development prevented them from seeing the broader themes raised in the novel. This is another form of negotiated reading, where the reader recognizes the existence of important themes but feels that the delivery of those themes is less effective and causes confusion about the main purpose of the novel.

Overall, this analysis shows that while readers appreciated many elements of Yellowface they also had personal criticisms and interpretations that modified their acceptance of the message conveyed by the novel. This is the essence of Stuart Hall's negotiated reading, where readers do not fully accept or reject the message, but rather form their own interpretations based on interactions with the text.

### 3. Oppositional reader reception

The last way that audiences do in decoding media messages is through opposition, which occurs when critical audiences replace or change the messages or codes conveyed by the media with alternative messages or codes. Audiences reject the intended or preferred meaning of the message and replace it with their own way of thinking about the topic conveyed by the media (Ghassani & Nugroho, 2019). In this case, there are 4 reader responses that fall into the category of reader negotiation of the novel *Yellowface*:

| No | User Name   | Reviews   |
|----|---|---|
| 1. | Lau (semi-hiatus) ♡<br>436 reviews, 454 followers | <i>Here is a reason why I usually skip hyped books. No, there is nothing wrong about Yellowface but I was expecting to be in awe of the author's commentary around the publishing industry and all the other themes portrayed here, so I was surprised how little everything surprised me. While I appreciate the boldness needed to write this book and say the things the author said, there was nothing new for me; nothing I haven't discussed with friends at some point. I guess it's my fault for thinking I was going to learn from it or discover an unprecedented opinion towards the matter. I liked the ending (no pun intended, it was a good arc!) but I was bored during a big part in the middle. I think I had too many expectations so now I feel disappointed about a book that wasn't really bad, just not earth-shattering. over all its good bu, I know it takes courage to write a book with such complex issues. However, seriously? This book is very ambiguous and racist towards white people.</i>   |
| 2. | Bkwmllee<br>434 reviews, 357 followers            | <i>Overall, in terms of literary merit, I feel that this book is definitely worth reading (and to some extent, it's actually a necessary read from the social commentary aspect), but like I said earlier, what the reading experience is going to be like will depend on how close you are to the subject matter. Given my background, reading this book was obviously not a pleasant experience for me (hence why I rated this the way I did), but that does not mean others will feel the same way. With that said, I do think that, with this book in particular, given so many triggering elements to it, the best course of action might be to check out as many reviews as possible (both positive and negative) before making the decision whether to pick it up. I had heard that this book is actually a departure from R.F. Kuang's usual style and while I can't comment on that, I will say that the unpleasant experience with this one hasn't discouraged me from wanting to read her previous works. I have both Babel and The Poppy Wars trilogy on my shelves and I do intend to read both at some point down the line.</i> |

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| 3. | Greekchoir<br>307 reviews, 520 followers | <p><i>It's also...unsavory...that a lot of this discourse is leveled at Athena (the previously-mentioned deceased Asian woman) through June's racist perspective. Which isn't an issue in and of itself, but the allegations reflect real-life criticisms that RF Kuang has received, here flattened as subjective hearsay borne out of jealousy and prejudice. A lot of people have talked about how Athena isn't really a stand-in for Kuang, but like, lol. Lmao, even. Athena is presented as a flawed character - which is another genuinely interesting part of this story - but the fact remains that she went to the same school as Kuang and had the same career trajectory as Kuang and faced the same criticisms as Kuang and has the same favorite whiskey as Kuang and even has the same beautiful professional braless headshot as Kuang (yes, really, oh my god, but also...slay?). RFK was questioned in real life about her depiction of Taiwan in The Poppy War and...that same critique is pointed towards Athena in Yellowface, among many others. If Athena is not meant to be some sort of reflection of Kuang, positive or negative, it stands to ask why all these extremely specific similarities were added into the story. Authors do things with intention. What was the intention here?</i></p> <p><i>The upshot of this is a lot of discourse kind of feels like Kuang is winning arguments with herself in the shower. Which could even be another interesting discussion, if it didn't take up so much of this book which is not really about that. It's also just kind of cringe. Kuang is an extremely intelligent and extremely successful author, and to basically respond to criticism from Goodreads like this is beneath her.</i></p> <p><i>There's a part near the end of the book where a character tells June that Athena didn't really have a say in the kind of success she was given. She was picked up and put on a pedestal by Big Publishing in order to fend off accusations of racism, while also used as an excuse to reject other Asian authors. And I just couldn't help but feel like that's where the real meat of this story should be. Not that we necessarily want to see a book that depicts injustices happening to people, but that's where I feel the real indictment of the publishing industry lies. There's little discussion of the class disparities that publishing holds over hopeful authors, or the money that goes into the foundation to support a racist system, or the ways that authors of color are made to fit a certain niche, or the immense privilege that is necessary to enter a creative field (and how that too is the product of a racist system). The choices from publishing that lead to June's literal yellowface are not presented as decisions upholding a broken system, but as moves made by individual, flatly-characterized actors that the targets of this kind of criticism are easily able to detach themselves from. I don't feel like I've learned anything new about publishing at all.</i></p> |
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| 4. | Thushara<br>356 reviews, 94<br>followers | <i>I am sorry to say that I didn't find any merit in Yellowface by RFK other than the fact that it's compulsively readable. The absolute lack of nuance and subtlety disappointed me from the get go. RFK HATES her character June and she makes sure that you know it too! Readers are spoonfed to the max on how to perceive Juniper Hayward. She is the stereotypical racist White lady without much nuance nor complexity to her. The execution of her character was so heavy handed almost all times. While it was fun for quite a bit, it started to wear me down after a while. RFK shouldn't have made June's character too racist as a white person because the complexity of the issue isn't much.</i> |
|----|--|--|

Based on the data table of opposing readers' reviews, the first reader was disappointed that the book was "not surprising" and did not meet her expectations of novelty and in-depth perspectives on the publishing industry and other themes raised. Hall emphasizes that readers' expectations and hopes for a work can shape their perceptions of the book (Durham & Kellner, 2009). The readers, appreciate the courage in writing about complex issues. However, Yellowface does not provide new insights or thoughts that have not been discussed before. Then, readers criticizing the book as ambiguous and racist towards white people also emerged, highlighting how racial perceptions are processed in literary works and their impact on the reading experience. Next, a second reader evaluates Yellowface in terms of its literary value and impact as social commentary. Hall will highlight that the literary value of a work lies not only in its aesthetic beauty, but also in how it provides a critical view of social reality. The reader recognizes the importance of reading this book from the standpoint of social commentary, although the reading experience may differ depending on the reader's familiarity with the novel's content. This reflects Hall's approach which recognizes the role of personal experience and background in the interpretation of a work.

Then, in the third excerpt, the reader criticizes the narrative in Yellowface that focuses on the character of Athena through the racial perspective of Juniper Hayward. Readers point out that the critique of Athena's characterization reflects a real critique of RF Kuang himself, highlighting the complexity of the relationship between fictional narratives and social reality. Furthermore, in the fourth excerpt, the reader is disappointed that Yellowface does not address racial and power discourses in publishing in depth. The reader finds the critique too superficial and focused on the individual. This shows that readers are critical and seek a more systemic analysis of the publishing industry. Readers play an important role in giving meaning to literary works. Judging from the fact that one person to another in responding

to literary works will be different.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research and discussion of readers' reception of the novel *Yellowface* by Rf Kuang, it can be concluded that the novel *Yellowface* has been read by many people and has become popular because Goodreads readers' reviews are critical reviews of the issues in the novel. Goodreads is also a platform that is very influential in the assessment and popularity of literary work. In this case, the readers' comments on Goodreads are comments from readers with dominant meaning, negotiation meaning, and opposition meaning. Dominant comments are seen in the comments of readers who like the author's story. The reader reveals that the story is very relevant to the social situation about the issue of racism that occurs. Negotiation comments are seen from reader reviews that express criticism or input to the author regarding the content in the novel, but negotiation readers still like *Yellowface* Vovel. Then, in opposition comments, it can be seen that some readers do not like the issue of the story in *Yellowface* Novel because it is too discriminatory. In this analysis, readers play an important role in giving meaning to literary works from the fact that each reader, in responding to literary works, will be different.

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