



ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL LIFE IN GRISHAM'S WORK "A TIME TO KILL"

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Annotation. This article discusses the novel "A Time to Kill" which was written by John Grisham. It also analyses social and legal criticism in Grisham's work.

Key words: social, criticism, habit, legal, novel, civil, tradition.

The racial problem in the United States has become difficult for Americans to leave. This is like a tradition that continues to be passed on to new generations, this is a past habit. An act of discrimination will be carried out against their minority are Afro-American people. But over time, the views of some Americans in voicing racial equality have moved. The racial issue continues to be suppressed, which has led to civil rights movements.

In A Time to Kill, the depiction of the character Sheriff Ozzi Walls, the first Afro-American who won the election for an Afro-American, is described in the following quote:

"Ozzie Walls was the only black sheriff in Mississippi. There had been a few others in recent history, but for the moment he was the only one. He took great pride in that fact, since Ford County was seventy-four percent white and the other black sheriffs had been from much blacker counties. Not since Reconstruction had a black sheriff been elected in a white county in Mississippi. He was raised in Ford County, and he was kin to most of the blacks and a few of the whites. After desegregation in the late sixties, he was a member of the first mixed graduating class at Clanton High School. He wanted to play football nearby at Ole Miss, but there were already two blacks on the team. He starred instead at Alcorn State, and was a defensive tackle for the Rams when a knee injury sent him back to Clanton. He missed football, but enjoyed being the high sheriff, especially at election time when he received more white votes than his white opponents. The white kids loved him because he was a hero, a football star who had played on TV and had his picture in magazines. Their parents respected him and voted for him because he was a tough cop who did not discriminate between black punks and white" (Grisham, 1992: 9).





The quotation above, describe the first Afro-American after desegregation in the late sixties to succeed in the post of sheriff. Ozzie was chosen from the more white Clanton people. Here, Grisham illustrates that Afro-Americans have had positions of government.

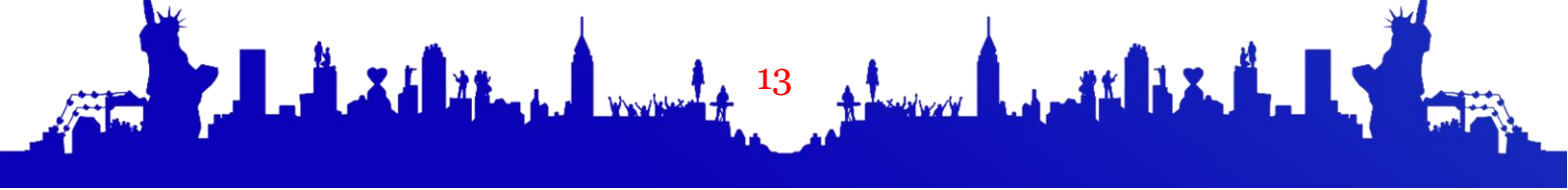
However, discrimination did not stop even after the National Association for the Advancement of People of Color (NAACP), American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and groups or other rights activists. Other civilians continue to speak out for equality. In *A Time to Kill*, it tells the story of the NAACP's participation in winning politics and court cases for Afro-Americans.

"He answered questions. How much money would be raised? At least fifty thousand, they hoped. It would be expensive to defend Carl Lee Hailey and fifty thousand may not be enough, but they would raise whatever it took. But time was running short. Where would the money go? Legal fees and litigation expenses. A battery of lawyers and doctors would be needed. Would NAACP lawyers be used? Of course. The legal staff in Washington was already at work on the case. The capital defense unit would handle all aspects of the trial. Carl Lee Hailey had become their top priority and all available resources would be devoted to his defense" (Grisham, 1992: 232).

The NAACP aims to ensure equal political, educational, social, and economic rights of all people and to eliminate racial hatred and racial discrimination. However, Grisham did not highlight the strength of the association. If you look at the history of the NAACP, it has a record of success in handling cases that have attracted public attention. In 1923, the NAACP won the premeditated murder case of 122 AfroAmericans for murdering three whites killed. However, Grisham brings strength from residents in handling cases in their respective regions.

Besides that, discrimination will continue, the symbol of racism will return to life with only minor incidents, let alone vice versa. That's how Grisham described it through *A Time to Kill*. Discrimination still occurs against some Afro-Americans and racial issues will explode whenever the trigger arises, as Grisham intends to convey through the character of Pastor Isaiah Street, a retired NAACP member who used to take part in the 69 desegregation movement with Martin Luther King, following with this quote:

"Your acquittal by a white jury for the killings of two white men will do more for the black folk of Mississippi than any event since we integrated the schools. And it's not just Mississippi; it's black folk everywhere. Yours is a most famous case,





and it's being watched carefully by many people." "I just did what I had to do." "Precisely. You did what you thought was right. It was right; although it was brutal and ugly, it was right. And most folks, black and white, believe that. But will you be treated as though you were white? That's the question." "And if I'm convicted?" 61 "Your conviction would be another slap at us; a symbol of deep-seated racism; of old prejudices, old hatreds. It would be a disaster. You must not be convicted" (Grisham, 1992: 208-209).

In the quotation above, Pastor Isaiah Street who no longer appears in public after suffering a stroke comes to see Carl Lee in prison. His arrival was to remind Carl Lee's actions to fire Jake Brigance as a lawyer replaced by Dr. King Marsharfsky. Isaiah knew him and also knew that Noose would make it easier for the verdict or make it difficult for the outside attorney who came to the Clanton court. Carl Lee will be in trouble because he's not white people moreover he's on a white jury. Isaiah reminded him of their position, a position for Afro-Americans.

Besides, Grisham also criticized the regulations that have been passed by the American Congress, namely the abolition of the Civil Rights Act on the separation of public facilities for whites and Afro-Americans in 1964. Grisham displays white discrimination against Afro-Americans even though assimilation has been allowed, explained in the following quote:

"Clanton had three coffee shops-two for the whites and one for the blacks, and all three were on the square. It was not illegal or uncommon for whites to eat at Claude's, the black cafe on the west side. And it was safe for the blacks to eat at the Tea Shoppe, on the south side, or the Coffee Shop on Washington Street. They didn't, however, since they were told they could back in the seventies" (Grisham, 1992: 22).

There are three coffee shops in Clanton but separated according to skin color. Jake Brigance is the liberal whites who often eat between the three coffee shops but for them, Afro-Americans, can't be as comfortable as visiting the white coffee shop. 62 They received threats as written Grisham "however since they were told they could back in the seventies".

The acts of racism can also be seen through speech or racism in verbal form. This is very clear, Grisham tries to remind us that acts of racism are not only in a physical or emotional form but also include how we calling them, insults, ridicule, intimidation, homophobic or racist remarks, and verbal harassment. Even though the assimilation has taken place, their Afro-American or white children can go to school together but American society is still shrouded in





resentment or some kind of unwillingness to accept the new regulations. The verbal form of racism that the researcher mean in this novel is the following quote:

"I voted guilty yesterday in the first vote, and I'll vote guilty next time. I don't see how anybody could vote not guilty, and I want just one of you to explain to me how you could vote in favor of this nigger!" "Don't say that word again!" yelled Wanda Womack. "I'll say 'nigger' if I wanna say 'nigger,' and there ain't a damned thing you can do," replied Rita Mae. "Please don't use that word," said Frances McGowan. "I find it personally offensive," said Wanda Womack. "Nigger, Nigger, Nigger, Nigger, Nigger, Nigger," Rita Mae yelled across the table. "Come on," said Clyde Sisco. "Oh boy," said the foreman. "Look, Miss Plunk, let's be honest, okay. Most of us use that word, from time to time. I'm sure some of us use it more than others. But it's offensive to many people, and I think it'd be a good idea not to use it during our deliberations. We've got enough to worry about as it is. Can we all agree not to use that word?" Everyone nodded but Rita Mae" (Grisham, 1992: 492).

The quote explains how the jury was fighting in making a decision. They are not only under pressure from each other but also from the masse of Afro-Americans and whites outside the courthouse who are muttering hate speech. The jurors were unable to make a unanimous decision some of them wanted Carl Lee to be executed and some pity but the law had to be enforced. In the end, they tried to make a strong decision that Carl Lee was innocent after criticizing each other. One of them was when Wanda Womack criticized Rita Mae for calling Afro-American people a "nigger" which was later agreed by another jury that the word should not appear in a juries meeting.

The social life in Grisham's "A Time to Kill" describes the social conditions caused by racism. Where people are in a larger group, male group, or exclude a minor group. In this study, the researcher found social life that is still awakened by racism although slavery has passed, many civilian activists are voicing equality, and even though in 1964 the Civil Rights Act on the separation of public facilities for whites and Afro-Americans was abolished. However, Grisham displays the social conditions that still exist such as there are still canteens of different skin colors, churches, as well as the honky-tonk, a name for a place to play gambling, drinking, prostitution, and others. The researcher concluded that the problem could not just because of the abolition of laws and even though civilian activists continued to advocate for equality. The researcher also found the social criticisms that Grisham described through his work. A Time to





Killnovel takes the theme of racist, but Grisham also combines with other aspects such as law and economics. In the legal aspect, the researchers found the injustice of the convictions of whites and Afro-American as the source in A Time to Kill, "Parchman's prison has been overcrowded by negroes". The skin was 70 privileged and the verdict was sometimes based "because he was a nigger". This can also be seen by the state of the Afro-American's economy, which mostly cannot afford a lawyer. Besides, the researcher also found social criticism that was sometimes done by the community verbally. This is sometimes done by calling certain Afro-Americans as "niggers, negroes, black people" in that sentence, which unconsciously insulting Afro-Americans by referring to their skin color. We suggest that "A Time to Kill" is a novel by John Grisham published in 1992. In the novel A Time to Kill, there are many interesting aspects to be analyzed. One of which is examining the character more deeply or comparing A Time to Kill with other John Grisham's work because Grisham often raised racial and legal issues. In this thesis, the researcher only focuses on the aspects of social criticism by using genetical structuralism. Therefore, the researcher suggests further research to analyze other aspects such as in Politic or economy of A Time to Kill.

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