

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1. Ku Klux Klan

KKK or Ku Klux Klan is a racial organization that is famous in the United States. This organization attacks people based on their skin colour, worse it tries to vanish black people from the land because of their personal belief which involves religion of Christianity in their action. It is clear, that the members of the organization are white people.

The original Ku Klux Klan was created after the end of the American Civil War on December 24, 1865, by six educated, middle-class Confederate veterans who were bored with postwar Pulaski, Tennessee. They called themselves the Ku Klux Klan, merging the Greek for circle (*kyklos*) with “clan.” The founding members envisioned the group as a secret fraternity replete with ridiculous names, costumes, and an elaborate initiation ceremony consisted of blindfolding the candidate, subjecting him to lengthy oaths, and bringing him before a “royal altar” (a mirror) where he was to be invested with the “royal crown” (two large donkey ears). From 1866 to 1867, the Klan began breaking up black prayer meetings and invading black homes at night to

steal firearms. Some of these activities may have been modeled on previous Tennessee vigilante groups such as the Yellow Jackets and Redcaps.²⁴

In the past the Klan wanted to control the political and social status of the freed slaves. Particularly, it attempted to rule black education, economic advancement, voting rights, and the right to bear arms. However, the Klan's focus was not limited to African Americans; white Republicans also became the target of brutal intimidation tactics. Grisham pictures the efforts of the member to show that the organization still exists and also still has a big influence to the society;

They could march during the day around the courthouse in their white robes and pointed, hooded masks. They could make speeches to a captive audience and parade in front of the cameras. The press would love it – hate them, but love the attractions, the disruptions. And at night they could intimidate with burning crosses and threatening phone calls. The target would be easy and unsuspecting. Violence would be unavoidable. They knew how to provoke it. They fully appreciating what the sight of marching white robes did to cowards of angry niggers.²⁵

KKK uses this kind of concept and creates their identity of superiority. This fake superiority image is created only because they want to hide their incapability, weakness, and intimidation - back to the main idea of struggling. Searching for members who have similar thought for being white means above all race. KKK keeps marching their campaign although the organization has been determinate nowadays. The members try many ways to

²⁴ From <http://www.answers.com/topic/ku-klux-klan-regalia-and-insignia>. *Ku Klux Klan regalia and insignia*

²⁵ Grisham, John., *A Time to Kill*, London: Arrow Books Limited, 1989 P. 142

keep the organization exists, one of the mechanisms is including the media of internet. Here is the quotation on how their represent themselves to promote their vision and mission for the society:

“We, the Brotherhood of Klans are a fraternal, patriotic organization promoting the ideas and ideals of Western Christian Civilization. We are a duly incorporated, not for profit, legally recognized institution, working to rebuild a collapsing society on the principals of honor, honesty, duty, courage, brotherhood, and patriotism. We shall strive to work in unity and cooperation with other Klan groups that share our same philosophies, disciplines, and traditional values in order to preserve and promote our race, heritage, and faith. We seek for membership only those individuals who display the qualities of loyalty, dedication, and the unselfish desire to secure the existence of our race and a future for White children.”²⁶

It is clear that from the actions, KKK uses the basic idea of religion in this case more to Christianity. They called themselves the patriotic organization which present the White Christian of their mission to rebuild a “collapsing society” or more specific the society who has changed not only the point of views but also the beliefs, where there are no standard status of human race; black have same priorities and duties in this world. People have already changed their basic thought of differences or discrimination or even racism since the beginning of revolution era. That is probably what makes a few little group of person who actually still share similar thought, feel afraid and threatened of the condition. Grisham pictures the situation where KKK tries to seek their existence in the society;

²⁶ (<http://www.ku-klux-klan.org/mainpage.html>)

They had time to organize and call in comrades from other states. What Kluxer would miss this golden moment? And new recruits? Why, this case could fuel the fire of racism and bring nigger haters out of the wood and onto the streets. Membership was down.²⁷

John Grisham also reveals what the Klan actually thinks about the problem of the society in the novel.

Who else would march and stand up for white people. All the laws favor the niggers, and the liberal nigger loving politicians keep making more laws against white people. Somebody's got to stand up for them. That's why he called the Klan.²⁸

The Klan likes to describe the nigger or black society here as a threat for them. It leads directly to the question who they are struggling from? Why black become the main object to eliminate? Why the Klan feels aware of black existences?

One of the characters in the story that the writer marked is Freddie Cobb. He is the antagonist character of the story. The writer chooses this character as the person who re-activates the KKK.

Freddie is the brother of one of the rappers who was killed by Carl Lee Hailey; Tonya's father – the girl who is being raped – during the court of the case. The death of his brother becomes the motive of Freddie to avenge Carl Lee, which is coincidentally Negro. He tries to figure the way to revenge his brother's death, but at that time discrimination no longer put into actions.

²⁷Grisham, John., *A Time to Kill*, London: Arrow Books Limited, 1989. p. 142

²⁸ Ibid. p.141

The men talked about niggers in general, and chewed Red Man and slipped whiskey, and reminisced about the other ways when niggers knew their place. Now they were just pampered and protected by the government and courts. And there was nothing white people could do.²⁹

Desperate from his lack of power, Freddie got help from his cousin who know about the Ku Klux Klan. He convinces Freddie to join and regenerate the activation of KKK, this is what Lomba calls as

The process of 'forming a community' in the new land necessarily meant *unforming* or re-forming the communities that existed already, and involved a wide range of practice including trade, plunder, negotiation, warfare, genocide, enslavement and rebellions.³⁰

In this story the main propose is to declare the rules of superiority where white race is the highest race among others. The story describes Cobb's efforts to re-activate the Klan.

One cousin knew a friend or someone who used to be active in Klan, and he might give him a call. Cobb's grandfather had been in the Klan long before his death, the cousin explained, and he and Bill Ray were kids the old man would tell stories about hanging niggers in Ford and Tyler counties. What they should do was the same thing the nigger had done, but there were no volunteers. Maybe the Klan would be interested.³¹

Freddie's proposal – in this case to revenge his brother's death – as the main reason and chance for KKK to re-emerge in the society. The situation shows when KKK is waiting for the right moment to fight for, where they can

²⁹ Grisham, John., *A Time to Kill*, London: Arrow Books Limited, 1989. P.90
³⁰ Lomba, Ania., *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, London:Routledge, 1998. p.2
³¹ Grisham, John., *A Time to Kill*, London: Arrow Books Limited, 1989. P.91

seduce other whites to rethink about the organization. It involves the perception of ideology that unconsciously exists in the society, which the writer captures from the novel;

He seized the moment and spouted national statistic on crime and arrest and convictions and summed it all up by declaring that the criminal justice system was controlled by white people who unfairly persecuted black people.³²

The ideology which according to Fanon “There is a fact: White men consider themselves superior to black men.”³³

Freddie’s proposal that directly re-activate the organisation is actually to seek the feeling of comfort and safe toward people who have the same vision or ideas like him. He looks for one society or group or institution that can help him ending his misery feeling toward his brother’s death. Sneja Gunew in her analysis also explains about the process of making an ideal institution.

...recruitment creates the very ego ideal of the institution, what it imagines as the ideal that working ‘at’ the institution means working towards or even what it imagines expresses its ‘character’. As scholars in critical management studies have shown us, organizations tend to recruit in their own image (Singh, 2002). The ‘hey you’ is not just addressed to anybody: some bodies more than others are recruited, those that can inherit the ‘character’ of the organization, by returning its image with a reflection that reflects back that image, what we could call a ‘good likeness’.³⁴

³² Grisham, John., *A Time to Kill*, London: Arrow Books Limited, 1989. p.232

³³ Fanon, Frantz., *Black Skin White Mask*, New York: Grove Press, 1967

³⁴ Gunew, Sneja. *Rethinking Whiteness*. London; SAGE Publications, 2007

It is clear that KKK is actually powerless. Each members of the Klan are afraid of the black independency that would remove the ideology of colonized. As a solution, they try to dominate the society by intimidating the black and also white people who they marked as the 'nigger lover'; showing their pseudo images of superiority, much worse is the Klan intimidates with violence.

4.2. The Truth Behind The Organization Act

Following the analysis above, it is obvious that KKK is an organization which is created to legitimize the imperialism thought of the colonizer and colonized; who is the ruler and the ruled people, try to back to the point were "Whiteman burden". In order to analyze KKK's action and the truth about them all, the writer tries to be closer to their point of view of their belief.

Violence, intimidation, provocation are the way to legitimate the world of whiteness. White rules over the world, while the "others" are unconsciously forced to accept the idea of whiteness imagery. It can also be seen in the novel. KKK uses violence to declare its superiority, the members even not afraid to use physical violence to somebody regardless of gender or race. It happened to one female character of the story that protects Carl Lee, Ellen Roark.

“They yanked it and cut it with a dull knife, she said. They also cut her clothes off, and at one time threatened to bullwhip her. The head injuries are self-inflicted. She thought they would either kill her or rape her, or both. So she banged her brains out against the pole she was tied to. Must have scared them.”³⁵

Other examples of what KKK does to threaten the society are by burning crosses or houses.

“It’s a warnin’. Means stop what you’re doin’, or the next time we’ll do more than burn a little wood. They used these things for years to intimidate whites who were sympathetic to niggers and all that civil rights crap. If the whites didn’t stop their nigger lovin’, then violence followed. Bombs, dynamite, beatings, even murder.”³⁶

KKK target is not only to black society, it also targets white who defends black. And its act legalized death penalty. It is clear that what they do influence more brutal threat to the society. The society may feel insecure and afraid to KKK, but many of the people at that time still stand in what they believe and tend not to feel terrified with KKK acts.

“You know I’m scared. I’m terrified. If they can burn a cross in our front yard, what’s to stop them from burning the house? It’s not worth it, Jake. I want you to be happy and successful and all that wonderful stuff, but not at the expense of our safety. No case is worth this.”³⁷

This phenomenon directly describes how weak KKK is. The members use violence to threat people, and in their activities they often use mask to hide their faces. “They could march during the day around the courthouse in their

³⁵ Grisham, John., *A Time to Kill*, London: Arrow Books Limited, 1989.p. 459

³⁶ Ibid 183

³⁷ Ibid p.184

white ropes and pointed, hooded masks.”³⁸ It leads to the question why they use mask if they are proud of what they are or ‘being white’?

The writer named KKK’s act as the solution of weaknesses. They are afraid to what black can do to the society but they cannot do much to handle it, and on the other hand their belief in ‘Whiteman burden’ encourages them to performing violence in order to proclaim to the public about racial status or who rules whom. “He talked about the glory days when they were feared in Mississippi and had clout. Those days must return, and it was up to this very group of dedicated men to take a stand for white people.”³⁹

Montag paradoxes the whiteness “*To be white is to be human and to be human is to be white.*” The psychological idea of identity in humans is related to self image, namely a person’s view or mental model of him or herself. People create something big such an organization and legalize their activities because of their thought of class differences. It also connects to ideology, like what Althusser says:

...ideology ‘acts’ or ‘functions’ in such a way that it ‘recruits’ subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), or ‘transforms’ the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all)...⁴⁰

The novel also shows that KKK member marks the black people as ‘lesser’ like what Boehmer says. ““Shut up, you wild niggers!” Stump

³⁸ Ibid p.142

³⁹ Ibid p.336

⁴⁰ Althusser, Louis. *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster. London: New Left Books. 1971. P.163, emphasis in original

shrieked back. “Shut up, you animals!”⁴¹ It is all because of the ideology, the descriptions of colonizer though which Dennis Walder said “the usual arguments were advanced by churchmen, historians and philosophers (like Hume) to establish the inherent inferiority of the black race.”⁴² This is what Fanon’s mark as ‘black soul is a white man’s artefact’; “In the collective unconscious, black represents ugliness, sin, darkness, immorality. In other words, he is Negro who is immoral”⁴³

He didn’t mind the racism; it wasn’t as bad as it once was and he was accustomed to it. It would say be there, but gradually becoming less visible. The whites still owned and controlled everything, and that in itself was not unbearable. It was not about to change. What he found intolerable was the ignorance and stark poverty of many blacks; the dilapidated, shotgun houses, the high infant morality rate, the hopelessly unemployed, the unwed mothers and their unfed babies.⁴⁴

Back to the question why black becomes the main object to be eliminated; Why the Klan feels terrified of black existences; sometimes people could feel afraid of something because they are not confident of themselves. The fact is that they are conscious of their weakness or lack of power. That is why each of them personally tries to convince that they can do it with the help of friends by reforming group or colony or community or organization. Many people gain a positive sense of self-esteem from their identity groups, which further a sense of community and belonging.

⁴¹ Grisham, John., *A Time to Kill*, London: Arrow Books Limited, 1989 p.338

⁴² Walder, Dennis., *Post-colonial literature in English*, Oxford; Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1999 p.34

⁴³ Fanon, Frantz., *Black Skin White Mask*, New York: Grove Press, 1967 p. 14

⁴⁴ Grisham, John., *A Time to Kill*, London: Arrow Books Limited, 1989 p. 211

He was proud of his men, and told them so. It was the biggest meeting of its kind in years, he said. He admired them and their sacrifices in being there. He knew they had jobs and families, but this was important. He talked about the glory days when they were feared in Mississippi and had clout. Those days must return, and it was up to this very group of dedicated men to take a stand for white people. The march could be very dangerous, he explained. Niggers could march and demonstrate all day long and no one cared. But let white folks try and march and it was dangerous. The city had issued a permit, and the nigger sheriff promised order, but most Klan marches nowadays were disrupted by roving bands of young wild nigger punks.⁴⁵

It leads to the question why people do discrimination? Henri Tajfel and John C. Turner's social identity theory, which mainly focuses in the main upon the role of self-categorization, and attempts to show how a sense of mere distinctiveness can lead people to act in a discriminating way. It is actually performed by the standard of ideology they have. Lomba underlines Gramsci's views on how ideologies animate social relations 'or organize human masses, and create the terrain on which men move, acquire consciousness of their position, struggle, etc'.⁴⁶

In the novel, Grisham describes how the Klan comes up from the idea of incapability to revenge the brother's death. Grisham reviews the process KKK rebirth by exploring from one main problem - the killing of the brother by a nigger – to another situation which trigger Klan's re-activation. He also describes what the Klan could do to reclaim their existences.

The endeavor of Klan's act to improve the society about how huge and powerful they are, ironically show their weakness. They like to show up in the

⁴⁵ Grisham, John., *A Time to Kill*, London: Arrow Books Limited, 1989 p. 336

⁴⁶ Lomba, Ania., *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, London: Routledge, 1998. p 30

public but in an attempt to cover their action, they use mask to cover their face. It means they are afraid to show who they really are.

The sight of Klansmen, in full regalia, their cowardly faces hidden behind the ominous masks, gave him sick feeling. The white hood, for decades a symbol of hatred and violence in South, was back.⁴⁷

It is clear that KKK is actually powerless, they are afraid of the black independence. The novel takes the set of time around 1980s. At that time society has already changed. People's thoughts are more complex and simple. No longer discrimination and racism no longer exist in the public. There are no longer differentiation between white and black. The perception has already changed, and black has already aware of their well being.

...the intention to promote, even celebrate the 'new literatures' which have emerged over the century from the former colonial territories; and on the other, it asserts the need to analyse and resist continuing colonial attitudes.⁴⁸

John Grisham also describes how the society's view had changed by deliberating one of black character Ozzie Walls, Sheriff of the County;

He missed football, but enjoyed being the high sheriff, especially at the 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 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 punks. The white politicians supported him because, since he became the sheriff, the Justice Department stayed out of Ford County.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Grisham, John., *A Time to Kill*, London: Arrow Books Limited, 1989. P.337

⁴⁸ Walder, Dennis., *Post-colonial literature in English*, Oxford; Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1999 p.6

⁴⁹ Grisham, John., *A Time to Kill*, London: Arrow Books Limited, 1989.p. 9

Ku Klux Klan ideology of White Supremacy makes each member in the organization believe that the land is supposed to be ruled by the whites. Black has no power to avoid the concept of white men burden. “Blacks had an excuse for being worthless, but for whites in a white world, there were no excuses.”⁵⁰ Back to the point of the Otherness, Kambyzellis responds the idea of the ruler and the ruled.

In either case, the issue of colonization touches upon more than just the struggle of native people to adjust to a new culture. A more serious obstacle needs to be faced: the suppression, and oftentimes overt annihilation, of the native people's former lives and culture that comes with the new presence of an Other, an Other who believes - knows, he'll even tell you, deep in his heart - his culture is superior. This other, neither a typical enemy nor a traditional invader, does not share similar traditions or warfare. He does not seem aware that he stands on a land that is not his own, but on a land belonging to dead ancestors. Rather, this colonizer - a foreign force - holds that idea that the land he has come to conquer truly can be owned and furthermore, that it can be owned by him. He holds an unfaltering belief that his culture is superior to the one he has come to suppress.⁵¹

Grisham also pictures the moment of “Otherness” using black people point of view and describes how they feel about it.

“I’m concerned about your acquittal. The black community is concerned. If you were white, you would most likely go to trial, and most likely be acquitted. The rape of a child is horrible crime, and who’s to blame a father for rectifying the wrong? A white father. That is. A black father evokes the same sympathy among blacks, but there’s one problem: the jury will be white. So black father and white father would not have equal chances with jury. Do you follow me?”⁵²

⁵⁰ Grisham, John., *A Time to Kill*, London: Arrow Books Limited, 1989.p. 211

⁵¹ <http://www.thecore.nus.edu.sg/post/poldiscourse/kz1.html>. Zandra Kambyzellis. *Post-colonialism: The Unconscious Changing of a Culture*. '01, English 27, Autumn 1997

⁵² Grisham, John., *A Time to Kill*, London: Arrow Books Limited, 1989.p. p. 208

Colonization affects the world. Colonialism creates the concept of thought, it is not an identical process in different parts of the world but everywhere it locks the original inhabitants and the newcomers into the most complex and traumatic relationships in human history. White people who have this concept in their mind, forms a group, community or organization to struggle.

Colonization brought a huge effect of thought towards the places that have been colonized by the colonizer. Colonization affected the change of ideology or what Gramsci calls as the “common sense”; a highly contradictory body of belief that combines elements from the Stone Age and principles of a more advance science, prejudices from all past phases of history at the local level and institutions of a future philosophy which will be that of the human race united the world over’.⁵³ Ania Lomba marks Gramsci’s argumentation about human classes:

...the ruling classes achieve domination not by force or coercion alone, but also by creating subjects who ‘willingly’ submit to being ruled. Ideology is crucial in creating consent, it is the medium through which certain ideas are transmitted and more important, held to be true. Hegemony is achieved not only by direct manipulation or indoctrination, but playing upon the common sense of people, upon what Raymond Williams calls their ‘lived system of meanings and values’.⁵⁴

Point of colonization also interests the writer to underlines Grisham’s idea of the discrimination that still happens in the society of the novel;

⁵³ Lomba, Ania., *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, London:Routledge p.29

⁵⁴ Ibid

This was Mississippi, where for years whites shot blacks for any reason or no reason and no one cared; where whites raped blacks and it was considered sport; where blacks were hanged for fighting back. And now a black father had killed two white men who raped his daughter, and faced the gas chamber for something that thirty years earlier would have gone unnoticed had he been white.⁵⁵

This is what makes people unconscious about their well being. The causes that makes an idea of human racism, classification, the highest and worthy amongst others or what Foucauld highlights as the power which internalized by those, it disempowers through ideology, discourse and language. So it directly answers the question of Klan's awareness of Black.

Boehmer quoted;

The colonized made up the subordinate term in relation to which European individuality is defined. Always with reference to the superiority of an expanding Europe, colonized peoples were represented as lesser: less human, less civilized, as a child or savage, wild man, animal, or headless mass.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Grisham, John., *A Time to Kill*, London: Arrow Books Limited, 1989.p. 261

⁵⁶ Boehmer, Ellke. *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1995. p.79