

## CATEGORY OF TIME AND SOCIAL SETTING IN THE WORK “A TIME TO KILL” BY JOHN GRISHAM

Niyazov Ravshan Turakulovich

Docent of “TIAME” National Research University

docravshanniyazov@gmail.com

Umedova Mumina Kenja qizi

Bukhara state university Student of master degree

### INTRODUCTION

“A time to kill” is a 1989 legal detective novel written by American author John Grisham. It is a work that describes social life reflection on XX century in the America United States during the Civil war. The writer tells a story about racist actions by white people who fought against Afro-Americans living in Clanton a city in Madison County, Mississippi, The USA. And also, the economy and social life condition of American society in that period. Grisham mostly pays attention to social criticism as the center of the work.

As Wilson pointed out social criticism is an assessment or consideration of everything about society, everything in the form of norms, ethics, morals, culture, politics, and other aspects of community life.<sup>1</sup>

Since John Grisham worked as a legal lawyer, he created the character who represents himself in this novel and named him as Jake Brigance. In the notes about the work Grisham says, “There’s a lot of autobiography in this book. I no longer practice law, but for ten years I did so in a very similar manner to Jake Brigance” (Grisham, 1992).<sup>2</sup>

### MAIN BODY

John Grisham’s novel “A time to kill” is a perfect work which is accurately linked in three parts or categories. They are setting of place, setting of time and setting of environment/ social setting.

#### Interpretation of the time setting

In the novel “A time to kill”, the setting of time has its own perfect mechanism. John Grisham tells the story of a lawyer investigating his client’s case when everyone is sleeping. In this novel, general crimes mostly occur at night. The writer always describes Clan members’ terrorism, kidnap and other crimes as a special feature of the work which is happening at night.

“Moments later, Deputy Marshall Prather turned down Adams and instantly saw the blazing cross in Jake’s front yard. He turned into the driveway and parked behind the Saab. He punched the doorbell and stood on the porch watching the flames. It was almost three-thirty. He punched it again. Adams was dark and silent except for the glow of the cross and the snapping and crackling of the wood burning fifty feet away. Finally, Jake stumbled through the front door

<sup>1</sup> Fredickson , M. Goerge . (1996). Black Liberation: A Comparative History Of Black Ideologies In The United States And South Africa. Oxford: University Press paperback

<sup>2</sup> John Grisham. A time to kill. 1992

and froze, wild-eyed and stunned, next to the deputy. The two stood side by side on the porch, mesmerized not only by the burning cross, but by its purpose” (Grisham, 1992: 181).

As you see, one of the crimes committed by Ku Klux Klan is being described by this quote. This group aims to eradicate Afro-Americans and other minorities such as Roman Catholics the Jews, and Asians. The blazing cross in Jake’s front yard was the first sign of the appearance of the clans. Jake’s house was almost blown up by the Ku Klux Klan organization (KKK).

The daily routine of people in general is displayed in the morning, such as getting up, taking a shower, having a breakfast and going to work and others like these actions. You can analyze it by the following situation:

“Jake pondered these things in the shower. He took quick showers, and he shaved and dressed quickly. He had to be at the Coffee Shop at 6:00 A.M.-another rule. He turned on lights and slammed and banged drawers and closet doors in an effort to arouse Carla. This was the morning ritual during the summer when she was not teaching school” (Grisham, 1992: 19).

By this quote mentioned above, we can easily realize the events of the novel “A time to kill” occur during the summer.

### **The category of social setting or setting of environment in the work**

All stories in this work are based on events in social environment which the writer witnesses. Because John Grisham himself is a lawyer. He saw so many kinds of court intrigues, verbal abuses and murders. Social problems can be come across at every step of society. It may be in politics, culture, life style of people and other sides of country system. The following situation can be proof of this word:

“Well, he’s been getting political chums throughout the district to call Noose and suggest that the trial be held in Ford County. Some have been real blunt with Noose. Like, move the trial, and we’ll get you in the next election. Leave it in Clanton, and we’ll help you get reelected. He’s had some threats. Not political threats, but death threats. I hear he’s scared to death. Got the police over there guarding his house. Carries a gun now” (Grisham, 1992: 289-290).

The political interference is explained by this quote. Noose didn’t have the courage to change the location of Carl Lee’s trial. If Noose had done it, he would not have got the position of a judge in the next election. Renita Pausi Ardila states in the novel, there are many vigilante cases and everyone wants to get the best position. A social situation where people in a position can manipulate financial data for personal gain.<sup>3</sup>

The social life in “A Time to Kill” depicts the social conditions caused by racism. The author describes social criticism, racist by combining with other aspects such as law and economics. The conditions of social life and unjustified situation experienced by Carl Lee Hailey in this novel “A time to kill” can be found in reality, particularly in a court law.

### **CONCLUSION**

John Grisham’s novel “A time to kill” gives detailed information about crime, court process, characters, places and even each exact time that the events are happening. The writer skillfully

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<sup>3</sup> Renita Pausi Ardila. Social Criticism in John Grisham’s A time to kill. Thesis

describes the consistent relationship between the categories of place, time and environment in the work.

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