



Literature

Elixir Literature 137 (2019) 53936-53937

Elixir
ISSN: 2229-712X

Violence: A Social Barrier in John Grisham's *A Time to Kill*

N.R.Gowrishankar

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: 4 October 2019;

Received in revised form:

30 November 2019;

Accepted: 12 December 2019;

Keywords

ATK – *A Time to Kill*

ABSTRACT

This paper describes the sexual violence in John Grisham's novel *A Time to Kill*. The Sexual Violence in America is because of racial Discrimination, and in India is Rich and Poor. Money makes many thing in Indian constitution.

© 2019 Elixir All rights reserved.

Introduction

Violence is 1.the intentional use of physical force or power, threatening oneself or another person against a community or group.2. intense or severe force; severe or injurious treatment or action; an unfair exercise of power or force; an act of violence; an inordinate vehemence of expression or feeling; a distortion or misrepresentation of content, meaning or intent, 3.behavior which harms or damages sb/sth physically or great force or energy.

Violence results in injury, deprivation, psychological harm, death or mal-development. Violent acts can be in any form such as physical, sexual, psychological or emotional. Violence has lifelong consequences, like as physical and mental health. Violence also attributes to suicide, interpersonal and war. Gun violence of any country is a threat to the public health. It can slow the economic and social development of a nation. Jiddu Krishnamurthy has rightly pointed out in *Reflection on the Self* the kinds of violence as:

Violence is not merely killing another. It is violence when we use a sharp word, when we make a gesture to brush away a person, when we obey because there is fear. So violence isn't merely organized butchery in the name of God, in the name of society or country. Violence is much more subtle much deeper, and we are inquiring into the very depths of Violence.(94)

Self-directed violence, Interpersonal violence and Collective violence are three broad categories of violence. Violence sometimes can be either instrumental or reactive, suicidal behavior and self-abuse are a part of self-directed violence. Suicidal behavior includes suicidal thoughts, attempting suicides or Para suicide. A study conducted by World Health Organization says, 1.23 million people are dead because of the violence in 2013, which is up from 1.13 million in 1990. Among women aged 15 – 49 years, are reported to have had experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner and the society in ten mainly developing countries.

Sexual violence is not only inflicted by an intimate partner, but is also done by strangers. The sexual violence is most often identified in the place where the working class

people and untouchables are racially discriminated. Any sexual act directed against a person's sexuality using coercion, such as unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic or attempt to obtain a sexual act. Sexual violence includes rape, which has serious short and long term consequences on physical, mental, sexual and reproductive health for victims.

Violence in *A Time to Kill*

Grisham, in his first novel, *A Time to Kill*, speaks about sexual violence. A ten-year old little Black girl has been kidnapped by two White men, raped several times and was thrown away. The rape of a black girl by two White men, not only speaks about sexual violence, it also points out the racial violence in America, where Black people are not given equal rights like the whites. The little girl's father wants justice for the rape of his daughter. He just shoots the two assailants in the courtroom, which he feels that the murder of the two White men would alone be the right punishment for the rape. But, as per the law, a person taking law on his own hand is a social violence.

Grisham indicates the sexual violence, racial violence and social violence in *A Time to Kill*. The rape of a young girl, Tonya, is a sexual violence. It is well known that, there is racial discrimination in America, where the Black people are not given proper rights and they are treated as slaves. They work hard, earn money, never depend on others, but they are treated badly by the Whites. Tonya, a Black girl, being raped by two White men, refers to practice of the racial violence.

Sexual Violence

Billy Ray Cobb and Pete Willard are friends. They kidnap a ten-year old little Black girl, named Tonya, and rape her. Billy Ray Cobb, the younger of the two rednecks, twenty three years old. He has been a three-year veteran of the State prison. After his release from the prison, his narcotics business has been elevated. He becomes a businessman, with employees, deals, obligations and everything without taxes. Cobb pays sixteen thousand to buy a yellow colour pickup truck. Cobb steals a rebel flag from a drunken fraternity boy and hangs across the rear window.

Pete Willard, another young redneck, four years older than Cobb, generally is harmless. He has got an injury at his back while working on an offshore rig in the Gulf. The company paid him a nice settlement, but his ex-wife cleans him out. Now, he is a part-time employee of Billy Ray Cobb, who is more liberal with dope. Tonya, a little black girl, is the only daughter and fourth child of Carl Lee Hailey and Gwen Hailey. Gwen usually sends one of the three boys to the store, but since their father had assigned them the job of weeding the garden as a punishment. Tonya had gone to the store. Gwen sends the boys to find out, where Tonya is. But they were not able to find their young sister. Tonya had been kidnapped by the two White men Billy Ray Cobb and Pete Willard.

The two White men tie the legs of the little girl and rape her several times and beat her hard. The girl bleeds and swells. The blood runs through the face and the legs of the little girl. Her one eye bulged and closed and the other eye half open. She looks at one man sitting on the truck, but she does not see the man on top of her, breathing hard, sweating, cursing and hurting her. He slaps the girl and laughs. Then, both the men scream, laugh hard and roll in the grass like crazy men.

The little girl turns away and cries softly and quietly, because the two men had slapped her when she cried before. They promised the girl that they would kill her if she does not keep quiet. Cobb takes a cool beer and hands it to Willard. Willard sips the beer while Cobb takes half of the beer and throws the beer bottle at the girl. The bottle hits the stomach of the little girl and white foam splashes on her. Both Cobb and Willard start to target the little girl with the beer bottles. Willard misses the hit but Cobb hits the girl accurately. The beer mixes with the blood and run through the little girl's face, head and neck. The two men hurt the girl a lot that the girl unable to move on her own. The Black people work harder and they are always stronger. They often used to fight among themselves. They have no unity among them, that's why they suffer a lot under the White community people, "They were always killing each other, and they always used a weapon of some sort. Those who were just beaten and raped never died. Some of the whites were beaten and raped, and some of them died. But none of the niggers. Their heads were harder (ATK 4)."

Willard is frightened whether the little girl is dead, as she could not move after the two men hit her hard with the bottles. But, Cobb, the crazy man, who lived with a bunch of niggers in the prison, says that the Black people will not die by beating and raping. They often use some sort of weapon and they kill each other. Their heads are stronger. Only the Whites will die by raping and beating. Willard seems satisfied by Cobb's words.

Willard asks Cobb about the further plans. Now, they want to dispose the little girl, who is tired. The little girl cries and looks through the woods and she gets an illusion that her father is coming to help her, "a man running wildly through the vines and underbrush. It was her daddy, yelling and pointing at her and coming desperately to save her, she cried for him, and he disappeared. She fell asleep (ATK 04)."

The little girl tries to escape, but she is not able to move further, as her foot is tied to the tree. Her legs and arms are almost dead and they refuse to move. Willard grabs the left

ankle of the little girl and cuts the rope tied to the tree. The girl curls into a fetal position. The two men throw the girl into the pickup. Cobb slaps and threatens to kill the little girl, if she does quietly lie there. Cobb also insists that, if she stays quiet, they will send her back home. They start the pickup to search a safe place where they could dispose the little girl. They plan to throw near any one of the bridges, but wherever they go, the bridges are occupied by the niggers, who are fishing with the cane poles and hat.

The two men take the truck to a roadside where there were no people around, and they feel that the place would be safe to dispose the little girl's body. The two White men lower the tailgate of the pickup, drag the little girl and throw her in a small ravine, lined with kudzu. A few niggers fishing down, sees the little girl Tonya lying in the middle of the road. The girl is not able to speak anything, and she just says a single name, Carl Lee, her father. The niggers cover the girl and take her home. Carl Lee admits the little girl in the hospital, as the two men have hurt the little girl really bad, as her Carl Lee insists, "Not too good. She's in surgery and most likely will be there for a while. She's got broken bones and a bad concussion. She's beat up real bad. There's rope burns on her neck like they tried to hang her (ATK 15)."

Conclusion

Passing sexual comment against someone, or touching someone with sexual intention itself is violence. Here, the two White men rape a little black girl, is not only sexual a violence, but it is also the racial violence, where the black men are treated as slaves by the Whites and not given equal freedom in the United States. In America, if a Black is raped by a White, it will not be taken as a serious issue. But, if a Black rapes a White girl, it will be taken as much serious. It is because of a racial discrimination. In the Indian context, the punishment for sexual violence is not substantial. The rule and law is not much effective against the sexual violence. In Indian society, the law differs from place to place and person to person. For instance, when a bishop was involved in sexual harassment against a woman pastor in Kerala on the month of September 2018, the Kerala government arrested the bishop after many women stood against the harassment. But in Tamilnadu, when a bus driver of a private school was involved in sexual harassment on September 2018, no such punishment was served. The reason for such harassment and violence is because of our constitution and the people of our society. When the punishment gets stronger for the sexual violence, there would be a fear for those who are thinking of involving in sexual harassment.

Works Cited

- Grisham, John. *A Time to Kill*. London: Arrow Books, 1992. Print.
- "Violence." *New Webster's Dictionary of the English Language*. 11th Indian Reprint, 2012. Print.
- "Violence." *Oxford English – English – Tamil Dictionary*. 4th Impression, Oct 2010. Print.
- The Holy Bible: New King James Version*. Tennessee: Holmen, 2015. Print.