

Research Article

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Black Power Movement as Depicted in *Blakkasman* (2018) Movie

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Abstract

America is a pluralistic country that often faces issues of racism and discrimination. This issue is often faced by African-Americans as one of the ethnic minorities. In this undergraduate thesis, I would like to analyze the Black Power Movement as depicted in the *Blackklansman* movie using the sociology of literature approach by Abrams. Moreover, I also use an exponential approach to analyze the intrinsic elements in the movie. The result of the analysis shows that the Black Power movement occurs due to the white supremacy acts from the Ku Klux Klan members towards Blacks. As the result, the black community fought back by moving the masses of black people to carry out a revolutionary movement.

Keywords: Blackklansman; black power; discrimination; Ku Klux Klan; revolutionary movement

1. Background of the Study

The Black power movement is a revolutionary movement with the slogan black power which was popularized by Stockley Carmichael when he refused the U.S government to send American troops to Vietnam [1]. This movement is carried out by the Black community in America which is based on forms of resistance to racial acts, discrimination, and unequal laws in America. This movement also occurred because of the white supremacy movement in America which triggers a racial conflict between Whites and Blacks in America.

White supremacy is considered as a social movement carried out by the Whites in America who believe that they are superior to Blacks and should dominate them. This movement was always masterminded by a radical organization called The Klux Ku Klan, an extremist organization that emerged in the United States in 1895, the era of the American Civil War [2]. The emergence of this organization also triggered a resistance group from Blacks in America called the Black Panther Party.

Racial conflict is a social phenomenon that is faced by many minorities in the United States. It is an omnipresent phenomenon that penetrates any remnant of our reality [3]. Racial conflict happens when there are differences in society such as skin color, race, ethnicity, religion, and even thoughts. In other terms, racial conflict occurs because it is triggered by acts of racism, discrimination, and prejudice from some groups in society.

As an oppressed minority group in the United States, Blacks tried to fight against the white supremacy of the Ku Klux Klan. Because of this issue, I will analyze how the black power movement occurred and how racism leads to the Black power movement in the United States as seen in the movie. Furthermore, I also analyze the intrinsic aspects in the movie which consists of themes, characters, and settings.

Based on the background of the study, there are two research questions in this research which are formulated as follows:

1. How does black power movement occur in the movie?
2. How does white supremacy trigger the Black power movement?

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Intrinsic Elements

2.1.1 Theme

The theme is the essence that represents the meaning of the movie may be clear and implied [4].

2.1.2 Character

The character, along with the body, has characteristics: personality, abilities, actions, desires, psychological impulses, and any other characteristics that differentiate him or her from others [4].

2.1.3 Setting

Setting consists of setting of time, setting of place, and setting of social environment [5]. It explains an incident in a film.

2.3 Extrinsic Elements

2.3.1 Black Power

Black Power is a term for African-American activists who oppose the tyranny of some white people. In the stigma of American society and the world, Black power is often given a negative stigma by American society. The term *Black Power* was popularized by Stokely Carmichael or known as Kwame Ture. Conversely, Black Power was seen as a violent movement that ignited white resistance and urban clash [1]

The first wave of the Black Power movement in history was seen in the United States in 1966-1975 [1]. The famous Black activists at that time were Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. This movement was first inspired by the Malcolm X movement, which proclaimed the struggle of Blacks to demand equal rights for every religion and race. This movement was first ridden by the *Notion of Islam* organization or known as *Black Nationalist* in 1930.

2.3.2 White Supremacy

White Supremacy is a belief that white people are Aryans and superior to other races or nations. This belief seems to have been estimated in the 17th century, the time when the Netherlands colonized South Africa [6].

2.3.3 The Ku Klux Klan in Colorado

The Ku Klux Klan or known as a white supremacist radical organization was established in 1866 [7]. The existence of this neo-Nazi organization because it is influenced by a belief that the white race is superior, there is a name for this belief, namely white supremacy. White supremacy has three pillars: anti-Black racism, genocide/colonialism, and Orientalism [8].

The development of this neo-Nazi organization developed in various areas in the United States such as Colorado which reached its peak in 1920, many clan members were in various sectors of government which at that time was led by Dr. Garen John Locke [7].

3. Method of the Study

In this research, I use library research in collecting data. Library research is one of the research methods used to gather information from a variety of reliable sources in writing papers, or completing a project. Library research is a form of research with a specific tool, guidelines, and code [9]. In collecting data, I take some procedures such as; watching the movie and identifying the movie, reading books, journals, and articles that related to my study.

For the literature approach, I use the sociology of literature approach by Meyer H. Abram to describe and analyze the Black power movement in the movie. The social condition of society in literary works is a reflection of society in real life [10].

Aside from those, I also use an exponential approach to analyze the intrinsic elements in the movie such as theme, characters, and setting. The exponential approach is used to limit the idea, whether it should exist or not [5]

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Intrinsic Elements

4.1.1 Theme

From what I found, there are two themes in the movie. The first theme is about racism. Racism is the root of the emergence of the Black power movement in the United States as seen in the movie. We can see this from the statement of the character namely Dr. Kennebrew Beauregard at the beginning of the movie. Take a look at the following character statement below:

Kennebrew: Do you really want your precious white child going to school with Negroes? They're lying, dirty monkeys, stopping at nothing to gain equality with white men (*Blackklansman*, 00:03:02).

The statement, "*Do you really want your precious white child going to school with Negroes*" shows that Kennebrew does not like the presence of Black people in the United States and he is considered as a lowly race and backward. Kennebrew also includes the word, "*dirty monkey*" which indicates that he is so racist towards Blacks. The second theme in this movie is about the Black power movement, this movement was initially only by gathering the masses from among the Colorado College Black Student Union, with the slogan, "*All power to all the people*".

4.1.2 Character

4.1.2.1 Ron Stallworth

As the main character in the movie, Ron Stallworth is a young African-American man who has an important role as a Colorado policeman who is on an undercover mission to spy on the Ku Klux Klan in Colorado

4.1.2.2 Flip Zimmerman

Flip Zimmerman is a Jewish-American and one of the important figures of this movie who has a role.

4.1.2.3 Patrice Dumas

Patrice has an important figure in the Black Power movement in Colorado Springs. Patrice also serves as chairman of the Black Student Union in Colorado. As an important figure there, Patrice is also involved in various things to fight for the rights of Blacks.

4.1.2.4 Kwame Ture

Kwame Ture is a former Black Panther Party, a black movement party. In the movie, Kwame Ture appears when he is giving an encouraging speech to the Black Students Union against the actions of the Whites. As a result of his speech, many people were influenced to carry out a revolution it can be seen from the act of the audience who shout, "*Yes, fuck the police*" while giving applause to Kwame Ture (min 00:20:02).

4.1.3 Setting

This movie takes place in the Colorado Springs area, almost all areas where the events in the movie enter the Colorado Springs area, starting from the Black Power movement, and the conflict between Blacks and Whites in the movie.

The setting of time in this movie is taken from the true story of a police detective named Ron Stallworth who conducted an investigation into the Ku Klux Klan in the 1970s. Not only that, the director of this movie, Spike Lee also provided a transition at the end of the movie by providing news footage about the Black Lives Matter and White Lives Matter movements in the United States in 2017.

The social conditions seen in this movie are based on the 1970s setting in the United States. The political conditions in the movie are also very badly illustrated, this can be seen in where the Ku Klux Klan can freely advertise membership information in the newspaper, as a radical organization, of course, it cannot be separated from the role of the governments who are powerless toward the Ku Klux Klan.

4.2 Extrinsic Elements

4.2.1 Black Power Movement

Black power movement is a social revolutionary movement that is synonymous with its slogan *Black Power* with the raised fist logo. This movement is often seen as a political movement aimed at changing the social order of society from a political and economic perspective.

In this movie, black power movement emerged because of the treatment of injustice in social society. An example can be seen from the following dialog:

Flip : He has been a bad cop for a long time

Ron : How do you know?

Flip : A year ago he shot a black kid, he said he had a gun but it wasn't.

Ron : Why do you guys tolerate this?

Flip : We are family.

Creek : Right or wrong we stick together.

From the above dialogue section, it can be said that the political conditions there were so blunt that the police could not be brought to justice for the murder of an innocent black child. This is made clear by Flipp's statement he says, "*He has been a bad cop for a long time*", and "*we are family*". Also, this revolutionary movement emerged as a result of the government's depravity that did not try to stem the Ku Klux Klan organization movement which was active freely in the midst of society, even the KKK's contact info was displayed in the newspapers.

The beginning of this movement appeared in the movie when Kwame Ture came to Colorado based on the Black campuses in the United States. This social movement also emerged because there was a neo-Nazi organization called the Ku Klux Klan of an

organization with the Understanding White Supremacy who considered that the Anglo-Saxon Protestant was a selected race.

4.2.2 White Supremacy Triggers the Black Power Movement

As a radical belief, white supremacy can be said to be behavior that looks down on people who are not whites. This behavior also leads to racist acts against people of different beliefs, ethnicities, and skin colors. In this movie, it is seen how Landers' behavior as a dirty white supremacy policeman commits discrimination acts against black activists.

As a result of white supremacy, there are resistance acts from the Blacks community to speak out against white supremacy. This resistance from black people is called the black power movement, a social movement that often demonstrates on the streets demanding the annihilation of white supremacy from the government. This movement also often triggers conflicts from both sides, both Whites and Blacks.

4. Conclusion

The *Blackkkklansman* movie is the story about the resistance of the African-American community in the United States as the victims of racial discrimination against The Ku Klux Klan in the 1970s. In this research, I analyze the Black power movement that can be found in the *Blackkkklansman* movie. The portrayal of the Black power movement in the movie can be seen through the acts of the Blacks who moved and voiced their voice to demand justice. The Black Power movement is a social revolutionary movement aimed at the authorities. This movement has a clear vision and mission and is ridden by a structured organization such as the Black Panther Party.

The causes of this movement emerged due to external factors from the society, such as acts of racism and discrimination against Blacks. In this movie, the movement arises as a result of experiencing pressure from the white supremacy organization namely Ku Klux Klan, which considers that black people are an uncivilized race and must be exterminated. As a result, this has sparked the spirit of black people to fight against acts of racism in society.

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