

1: Theme

How would you feel if suddenly, most of your rights as a citizen if not even that, were stripped away from you. Things like your freedom to vote, not even being able to use the same things as those more powerful than you, all because of a trait you were born with, you can't do anything about it either, after all you only are a second class citizen. Such was common in from the 1880's to the 1960's with the prevalence of Jim Crow laws in the south, and the violence towards African Americans and those who helped them in their fight for civil rights. As Roy T. Bennett said, "We are all different. Don't judge, understand instead." As this describes how you shouldn't treat people poorly because they are different from you, it fits the mindset of so called freedom righters and the fight for civil rights in the 1960's. This just so happens to be what the book *Revolution* by Deborah Wiles is about, which is the freedom righters and their reception in a town in Mississippi.

Now a little more background on the civil rights movement, Mississippi, along with other southern states (Arkansas, South Carolina, Alabama, exc.) had very violent opinions against the Civil Rights movement and similar thoughts for other minorities, often for varying reasons. So it would make sense that those fighting for civil rights would also be large targets for attacking as well. Often the civil righters are referred to as enemies as explained from the book itself, "My big mouth jumps into action. 'Are you agitators? You could say that,' says Vera. William scratches his elbow and looks uncomfortable. 'Are you invaders?' 'We've been called that,' says

Jo Ellen, 'but we don't see it that way.'" (Wiles, 2014, p.160) In the story Jo Ellen and Vera are civil righters who are referred to as agitators and invaders, often very violent terms except when you realise it's kind of the other way around, as explained on page 113, " Pap interrupt "White folks drive by the Freedom House with paper bags over they license plates so you can't know 'em. They got whip antennas on they cars so they can talk to each other on the two-way.' ' They bombed the last Freedom House,' says Ma'am. 'Threw bottle bombs through the front windows.'" (Wiles, 2014, p.133) This shows that the people acting against the "agitators" are actually really violent, bombing their gathering spots in an attempt to do harm. It just goes to show the large contrast between those against the civil rights movement and what is said in the quote, Sunny (the main character) being the only white character in the story that fully understands the freedom righters and what they are saying.

While freedom righters were the victim of a lot of hate, the main focus was the African Americans who at the time were segregated along with facing a lot of violence. These were the main people that freedom righters were trying to help. The amount of violence against African Americans at the time goes to show how much people didn't understand the situation African Americans were in (which contrasts from the quote), and things like this really happened. As said in the text, "Run, Raymond, Run! No time to think. Watch for cops. Don't let 'em see a colored boy running, ever, 'specially not at night.'" (Wiles, 2014, p.54) This text can explain how at the time black people were assumed to be doing a crime of some kind if they were simply running at night as said in the example. This could go to show that at the time African Americans could be assumed to do more crime. Police brutality is nothing new either, as it was also heavily

used during the civil rights era to silence opposition. On page 20 there is an image that brings up some more subjects about the situation in the civil rights era. (image to the left)

The Klu Klux Klan or KKK was a group that went after minorities such as blacks and Jews at the time when people tried to help them and they were also highly violent as a group.

They were part of the reason Mississippi was so bad to be in during the civil rights era. The fact that this was ordinary and nobody went against it goes to show the true contrast of the time period of Revolution and the quote.



In the end, the main problems of the civil rights era were could have been caused by people not understanding or not wanting to understand the situation of those less powerful than them or simply not wanting change. The earlier cause is in direct contrast with the quote from Bennett however, which is how the theme of Revolution connects to the quote. Yet, it was the same thought process these people went through who made the Jim Crow laws that these people then made about 95 years later. But regardless, everybody had their own reasons for supporting or not supporting the civil rights act. whether it be because they already think the blacks have enough to have a happy life, or it be fighting police brutality and bias, the civil rights era had a large cultural impact and yet we only see one side of that battle. It would be nice if everybody understood each other, wouldn't it?