

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA  
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH  
UNIVERSITY OF MOHAMED BOUDIAF - M'SILA

FACULTY OF LETTERS AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

N° :.....



DOMAIN: FOREIGN LANGUAGES  
STREAM: ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
OPTION: LITERATURE & CIVILIZATION

**Racial Preconception in Harper Lee's  
*To Kill a Mockingbird***

**Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master's Degree**

**Candidates:**

- Latifa Marhoune
- Halima Gasmi

**Supervisor:**

**Miss. Sabah Farrah**

**Academic Year: 2016 / 2017**

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Mr. Bachir Sahed	University of M'sila	Chairperson
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**Academic Year: 2016 / 2017**

## DECLARATION

We hereby declare that this dissertation is a representation of our own work and effort, and that it has not been submitted before for any institution, university, or degree. Whenever contributions of others are involved, they have been clearly indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

The work was done under the guidance of Mrs. Sabah Farrah, at the University of M'sila-Algeria.

**DEDICATION**

**To the dearest people to our hearts; the ones who gave birth, hope, strength, and meaning to our lives:**

**To our beloved PARENTS who have brought nothing, but joy to our souls;**

**To our helpful brothers and lovely sisters who have been constant sources of support and encouragements;**

**To all our honorable families and intimate friends, we are truly thankful for having you all in our lives;**

**To all those who have encouraged, supported, and prayed for us;**

**We gratefully dedicate this work to you.**

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Last but not least, we would like to thank in advance the juries for accepting to read and examine this work.

## ABSTRACT

The present research examines the Whites' racial preconception that grew up strongly against the African-Americans in the county of Maycomb, the state of Alabama, during the Great Depression, through Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. In effect, this thesis endeavors at shedding light on the victimization of the mockingbirds that are innocent and harmless characters but they receive an unfair treatment in the prejudiced society of Maycomb. Actually, this society is full of wrong assumptions and gossip opinions that turn eventually to be the truth that everyone believes in. The dissertation, therefore aims at portraying the atmosphere of living in Maycomb community during the Great Depression; depicting the Whites' preconceived treatment and victimization of the Blacks; insisting on the awfulness of killing mockingbirds and destroying their innocence; delving into the main causes of racial preconception and shedding light on their effects on the main characters; pointing out the basic morals and ethical lessons learnt from the novel. Besides, this research raises the following questions: who are the mockingbirds in the novel and why are they considered so? What are racial preconception aspects in the novel? What are the causes of racial preconception and their impact on the characters? To what extent did the novelist Harper Lee contribute in shaping the American reality in Alabama, the state of America, during the Great Depression through her novel? And, what are the models of moral and ethical behaviors in the novel? In addition, in this research the Critical Race Theory and Marxist Theory will be adopted. This study is divided into two main chapters. The first chapter tends to put the novel into its socio-historical and literary contexts, as well as, providing a theoretical background for the theories will be applied in the next chapter. The second chapter puts the novel into practice.

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## General Introduction

Throughout history, racial preconception has brought enormous sufferings for minority groups who are often victimized; thus, it is important to understand how it works. Racial preconception is a negative attitude toward a group of people who have some characteristics in common that are not shared by all people. In fact, racial preconception was a critical problem in the early twentieth century. It has occurred in different countries around the world and particularly in America as a melting pot society with different multicultural dimensions. During the American Civil War (1861-1865), the president Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation formally put an end to slavery, but not to racial segregation, particularly in the deep Southern county of Maycomb, the state of Alabama. Jim Crow laws, Black Codes, and the Ku Klux Klan intensified the legal segregation between Blacks and Whites in all public spheres in the 1930s. As a social issue, racial preconception has a correlation with literature which is considered as a mirror of the society. One of the literary works that depict the reality of racial preconception is a novel entitled *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee.

*To Kill a Mockingbird* is an interesting novel; it has an attractive and vague title that stimulates readers' attention about its meaning, wondering if it is literal or figurative? And is the novel really about a bird or this bird is just a symbol? Indeed, the title has a little literal relation to the story. Although the novel's title is *To Kill a Mockingbird*, it does not tell about a bird; as the mockingbird represents the idea of innocence, true goodness, and purity that Whites of Maycomb County exterminated in the 1930s. Thus, to kill a mockingbird means to hurt an innocent.

One of the biggest issues that the novel discusses is the racial preconception nature of

the people of Maycomb in the United States which is the setting of the book. The related literature on this topic focuses on racial preconception as a root problem that may lead to a tragic fate of innocent “mockingbirds” in the society. So, in order to make this research valid, it is necessary to add some relevant supports.

In his article “*The Case against to Kill a Mockingbird*”, Isaac Saney asserts that “the Mockingbird” is a metaphor for all the Blacks who are victimized illegally. He criticizes the novelist Harper Lee for her portrayal to the Blacks as disable characters. According to him, the Blacks are shown as passive victims of racial discrimination, they have neither voice nor power, and they do nothing to liberate themselves. He considers that Harper Lee ignores the Blacks’ movement for liberation and justice and depicts them as “somnolent, awaiting someone from outside to take up and fight for the cause of justice” (4). Actually, Saney sees that such picture creates an unforgettable impression about the paralysis of the entire Black community and disregards the task of the African Americans, especially in the North, who confronted and organized marches and protests against the prevailing racism. Thus, Saney argues that Despite the fact that the African Americans started their movement for liberation and justice before the novel’s publication, Harper Lee does not depict the Blacks standing up for their rights.

On the other hand, Patrick Chura in his article “*Prolepsis and Anachronism: Emmett Till and the Historicity of To Kill a Mockingbird*”, makes a close resemble between the events that Harper Lee focuses on in her novel and the tensions that took place in the 1950s, the time of the Civil Rights Movement. He considers that:

racial events and ideology of the 1950s \_ the period concurrent with the novel’s production\_ leach into the depiction of Lee’s 1930s history, orienting large sections the text not to the Depression era but to the social conditions of the civil rights era. The mid-1950s early civil rights era is, therefore, the context from which the novel is best understood... (Chura 1, 2).

Although it seems exotic to think that *To Kill a Mockingbird* criticizes the society of the 1950s while the setting of the book is in the 1930s. Actually, Patrick Chura assumes that “Because the text’s 1930s history is superficial, the novel is best understood as an amalgam or cross-historical montage, its ‘historical present’ diluted by the influence of events and ideology concurrent with the period of its production” (Chura 1). Thus, according to him, it is necessary to consider the historical context that surrounds the novel’s publication in 1960 and that the climate of the novel and its social conditions are more typical to the 1950s, the era of the Civil Rights Movement, than the time of the Great Depression (Chura 2).

One of the scholars who wrote about Harper Lee’s literary excellence and her use of symbols and techniques is R. A. Dave in his article entitled “*To Kill a Mockingbird: Harper Lee’s Tragic Vision*”. In fact, Dave provides one perspective, in which to see a Mockingbird by pointing out the use of this word as a symbol for characters that are associated with innocence, beauty, and purity. Dave’s examination of the symbolic mockingbird suggests that Lee’s use of this motif makes the characters alive in her novel in order to demonstrate the moral significance, and to take out the subculture of the race. Furthermore, Dave looks at Harper Lee’s use of words, commenting that she “has a remarkable gift of story-telling”, with this gift; she revealed the preconceived society of Maycomb and wanted to change it into a harmonious one. Dave confirms that despite being a regional novel created in the small world of Maycomb, *To Kill a Mockingbird* effectively addresses a moral theme in a fictional work.

In her book “*Understanding to Kill a Mockingbird: A Student Casebook, Issues, Sources and Historic Documents*”, Claudia Durst Johnson considers that Harper Lee through her novel attempts to break barriers between races and social classes. The barriers

between races begin to break with children's respect toward Calpurnia, the Finches' Black housekeeper, and social barriers begin to recede when Walter Cunningham, Scout's classmate who is descended from a poor farming family joins Finches for lunch (Johnson 7). In addition, Johnson provides extensive parallels between the Scottsboro trials and Tom Robinson's trial, claiming that both, the historical and the fictional trials took place in Alabama in the 1930s at the time of the Great Depression in America. Also, in both trials, accusers are Black men who are charged with raping White women, and both attorneys, the novel's Atticus Finch and the real life judge, James E Horton are Whites and both of whom agree to defend Blacks, exposing themselves to the disapproval of their communities (15-19). Due to such parallels and other similarities between the novel and Harper Lee's life, it can be believed that this novel is probably an autobiography, because of the common characteristics that combine Lee's personal experiences and the novel's events.

With the regard to the background of the study, this research will probe into the following questions: Who are the mockingbirds in the novel and why are they considered so? What are racial preconception aspects in the novel? What are the causes of racial preconception and their impact on the characters? To what extent did the novelist Harper Lee contribute in shaping the American reality in Alabama, the state of America, during the Great Depression through her novel? And, what are the models of moral and ethical behaviors in the novel?

Related to the Research Questions above, the Research Objectives are fivefold: To identify the mockingbirds in the novel and why they are considered so; to examine the racial preconception aspects in the novel; to explore the causes behind the racial preconceptions; to shed light on Harper Lee's contribution in shaping American Reality in Alabama the State of America during the Great Depression; to indicate the models of moral and ethical behaviors in the novel.

In fact, the nature of this work requires a resort to an Eclectic Theoretical Approach. Critical Race Theory will be dominant. Indeed, this theory is practical to the study; it analyzes the way in which Racial Preconception to Blacks in *To Kill a Mockingbird* had influenced the mind side of Maycomb people during the Great Depression, and how Whites mistreated and dehumanized the Blacks. This can be done through depicting the gloomy images of everyday racism that led to depriving Blacks of their privileges as American citizens, and so to have a dual identity.

Besides, the research will equally employ the Marxist Theory which is necessary to approach the social life in Maycomb, Alabama, during the Great Depression. This theory is based on Karl Marx's ideas that relate literary works with their socioeconomic context. In doing so, this approach tries to reveal the different social classes reflected in the novel, class conflicts, as well as, the critique of ideology.

Indeed, this dissertation is divided into two main chapters. The first chapter is entitled "Socio-historical, Literary, and Theoretical Background". It starts with putting *To Kill a Mockingbird* into its socio-historical context, in which it elucidates how the American Great Depression of the 1930s affected fiercely every group of Americans, and especially African-Americans, though they had not enjoyed the boom of the twenties. This chapter also sheds light on how Blacks suffered from legitimization of racism in the 1930s. Moreover, it brings to light the American criminal system of justice, through providing the context of Scottsboro trials, one of the most famous court cases in the American history in the 1930s, and which is served as a seed for the trial that stands at the heart of Lee's novel. In addition, it deals with the novel's literary background; it tackles the American Postmodernist movement, in which Harper Lee wrote her only published novel, then, providing a profile for the novelist. Finally, this chapter ends with providing background for Critical Race Theory and Marxist Theory

that will be applied in the second chapter.

The second chapter is entitled “Practical Part: Racial Preconception and Social Injustice”. This chapter concerns with putting *To Kill a Mockingbird* into practice, through applying the Critical Race Theory that is important to analyze the way in which Whites’ supremacy and racial preconception worsened Blacks’ life, banned them from their rights as human beings, and deprived them of their privileges as American citizens, the fact that led the Blacks to double consciousness. Then, applying the Marxist Theory that is equally important to the study in order to approach social life in Maycomb community in the 1930s, as well as, to show how social injustice and the Whites’ ideologies raised social conflicts between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

In fact, Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird* is considered as a purposeful novel, it tackles a crucial phenomenon that is still very real in this world today, it is racial preconception. Thus, hopefully, this research will be a noble message for the readers against racial preconception, providing them with precious moral and ethical lessons about how to live in harmony with people of other races. Also, as preconception can happen to anybody everywhere and every time. This research holds a valuable advice to the readers to avoid preconception because nobody is created similar, the difference will always be in human's life, so there is a need to tolerate and to respect each other regardless of socio-economic status or race. In addition, this study is expected to be a significant reference to readers who want to know more about racial preconception in Alabama, the state of America during the Depression time.

# Chapter One: Socio-Historical, Literary, and Theoretical Background

## 1. The Great Depression and the African-American Status

During the 1920s, the United States economy had boomed, it had plenty of raw materials and plenty of factories. There was a mass of production in manufacturing, telecommunication, movie and chemical sectors. The increasing of factory business in cities created more job opportunities, and the American people began to flock from rural farm areas to large urban locations. In the 1920s, the stock market was booming, and like other things in the United States, one could buy stocks on credit, thus, many people lent money from banks to buy stocks on the margin. That is, they had to pay only part of the stock's price when they bought and the rest when they sold it. By the fall of 1929, the profits were made by many American companies had decreased, and stocks prices too, thus, stock buyers began to sell their shares. In fact, an alarm began as the decrease became faster. On October 24<sup>th</sup>, 1929- Black Thursday- 13 million stocks were sold, then, on October 29<sup>th</sup> – The Terrifying Tuesday- another 16.5 million were sold. By the end of the year, all stocks were dropped sharply by 40.000 million. The investors were shocked by the sudden decline; they found themselves burdened by heavy debts and ruins. This was what came to be known as the Wall Street Crash that marked the end of the 1920s prosperity, as well as, it signaled the beginning of the Great Depression (O' Callaghan 97).

However, the Stock Market Crash was not the sole factor for the Great Depression, it was accompanied by other staggering factors, and among them was banks' bankruptcy. During the 1920s, many small banks overstrained credits for farmers who did not share in the twenties' boom, and so, they failed to repay loans, while big banks had foolishly made great

loans for foreign countries that defaulted on their loans. In addition, farm failure also contributed to the outbreak of US Great Depression, simply because American farmers produced too many crops, while prices of farm products were too low. Moreover, other experts pointed finger at the 1920s' excesses such as, excessive production of commodities, building and excessive financial speculations, while others accused Hoover's administration that did nothing to get the United States economy recovered (Wiegand 262).

In fact, the Great Depression affected every group of Americans, and especially African-Americans, despite the fact that most of whom had never shared in the prosperity of the 1920s. Even though, slavery was abolished, Blacks were not secure from segregation and inequality in the 1930s, Whites' hatred of Blacks was stronger than ever, while causes of such negative preconception and discrimination still unreasonable and inconclusive.

### **1.1- The American Economic Downturn of the 1930s.**

In fact, the Great Depression was a severe worldwide economic downturn of the twentieth century. It was the longest, the deepest and the most widespread recession that had never experienced before by the industrialized Western world. That is, unlike prior economic depressions, when economy would recover after few years of decline, the one that unfolded in the 1930s was the longest, it lasted almost ten years from 1929 to 1939, it was the largest, although it was originated in the United States, the Great Depression caused severe declines in almost every country in the world either rich or poor, it engulfed the whole of the global economy, with unemployment rate reached 25% in the United States and Britain, and 40% in Germany, as well as, it was greater in volume, a 25% - 50% decrease in total production. By the mid-1930s, some economies had begun to recover, however, in many countries the devastating effects of the Great Depression lasted till the outbreak of the Second World War (Matziorinis1).

In America, life was changed fiercely by the negative consequences of the Great Depression that affected everyone from the very young to the old. During this period, many people were jobless, the unemployment rose from less than one million in 1929 to more than twelve million by 1932. Many Americans lost their homes and took up dwelling in shantytowns made up of tents and the hulks of old cars, they were called “Hooverilles”. (Wiegand 263).

Due to the lack of money, many communities were forced to close their schools, the reason why many children had been deprived of education. Children suffered from diseases because of malnutrition as an adequate food such as milk, fruit, and fresh vegetables could not be bought with the families’ low income, thus, the children's death rate increased. Moreover, during the 1930s, unemployed fathers were suffered seeing their children hired for sub-standard wages, 2.5 million boys and girls determined to work in factories and farms in order to support their families, instead of going to schools.

In fact, the Great Depression increased the crimes rate as many unemployed workers resorted for theft to put food on the table. Alcoholism increased with Americans sought outlets to escape, while others chose suicide as a solution to put an end to their suffrage. Moreover, beggars have roamed the streets and hospitals were full of people who passed out because of hanger.

## **1.2- African-American Life in the South during the 1930s.**

Since the colonial and slave era, discrimination and racial preconception against African-Americans had been a major issue. Exclusive privileges in matters of citizenship, education, voting rights and land acquisition, were granted to Whites, while Blacks were

banned even from the right of life. Although the American President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 made slavery illegal, racial discrimination was still going on. African-Americans were lived in a deep panic; they were subjected to verbal discrimination and brutal attacks on streets, railroads, parks, libraries, and other public places. Simply, just a trivial charge of a White person could put an African-American in danger.

In fact, the American Economic Downturn of the 1930s was a hard hit for African-Americans who had never partaken in the boom of the 1920s, their jobless shot up over than 50% more than twice the rate of Whites. Even though Blacks lived in poverty most of their lives, the Great Depression worsened their conditions. Most of Blacks were lived in Southern rural areas, where they worked as sharecroppers on farms owned by White landowners, however, due to the Great Depression, farmers they worked for lost their lands. Even life for African-Americans in urban areas was hard, some of them tended to manual labor, or worked foundries, steel mills, and coal mines for long hours and for little pay as their health deteriorated from the hazardous conditions, while, others tended to work as domestic servants for Whites, or as vendors or peddler

In the 1930s, racial preconception was woven into every aspect of life. Blacks and Whites were separately lived, worked and socialized, there was a widespread belief amongst Whites that African-Americans were second-class citizens and treated them that way. They believed that Blacks lacked ambition and likely to commit crimes. Moreover, Whites saw African-Americans as sexual predators and as a threat to White women. So, during the 1930s, African Americans experienced racial inequality in employment, law, religion, housing and a wide range of other social domains, as well as, they suffered from the Whites' negative preconceptions that were based on inadequate facts such as skin color and social

class.

## **2- The Whites' Racial Preconception against African Americans in the 1930s:**

Despite the fact that all peoples around the world belong to one race which is the human race; races are separated from one another because of biological appearance. Characteristics such as hair and skin color, shape and size of the body and facial organs drive some people to divide other people into racial and ethnic classifications. These classifications make a particular group inferior to others, because of the dominance and the supremacy of other groups. The division of human races led some individuals to create their own beliefs and assumptions toward other people, in most cases, these beliefs and assumptions are basically irrational because they are based solely on preconceived opinions and prejudgments without direct knowledge or experiences, this negative attitude is known as “racial preconception” marginalizes and persecutes certain groups or individuals.

Preconception is a human phenomenon that is often accompanied by irrational suspicion or hatred formed towards a particular race, religion, or group. This unfavourable behavior does not depend on sufficient evidence or relevant facts, but on a beforehand knowledge without actual experience, thought, and reason. Racial preconception is a cruel and an unfair generalization that is done by certain people toward other people without knowing clearly about them. In this phenomenon, certain individuals are disliked or despised because of their distinctive characteristics such as race, religion, language, social class, gender, or cultural orientation. Often, minority groups are the basic target and the victims of this unjust treatment.

In fact, racial preconception is a harmful moral and social sickness; some people in

the society tend to categorize other individuals, because of their different characteristics that are not shared by the whole community. This unfair judgment can be manifested through showing hatred or distrust, fear, intolerance, or segregation. Nevertheless, the prominent cause of racial preconception is ignorance because people's preconceptions are based on false information about the person's real character and personality rather than reason or experience.

Indeed, the phenomenon of racial preconception is not a new issue; it is as old as mankind. Throughout history, it shapes societies as time began, and influences people's mindsets all over the world. This attitude occurs when individuals assume that certain people have bad characteristics. These assumptions arise when they do not have a direct contact with them or they are afraid of them because of being a different minority.

## **2.1- The Legitimization of Racism against Blacks: Jim Crow Laws and Scottsboro Trial**

The term "racism" is often used to describe the antagonistic behavior or the negative feelings of one ethnic group or people against another. According to David Wellman, racism is "a system of advantage based on race" (7). In the light of this definition, he argues that the advantage of the dominated racial group is demonstrated through the access to better schools, housing, jobs, or to social, cultural, and economic resources.

In fact, racism is a form of oppression; it is usually described by educators and consultants as "preconception plus power". That is, when racial preconception is combined with social power, racist practices and policies may result (Tatun 8).

Racism is, indeed, a greater horror that destroys the sense of humanity; it referred to "any attitude, action or institutional structure which subordinates a person or group because

of their color ... Racism is not just a matter of attitudes: actions and institutional structures can also be a form of racism” (Downs 5). Therefore, color, as a visible characteristic, may keep the position or the status of persons inferior by means of attitudes or actions. In fact, when the racist group dominates and controls the different social, political, economic, and cultural institutions; they enforce their cultural norms and values, in addition to their dominance in decision-making.

Racism in America has been a major issue since the colonial and slave era, it was chiefly spread in the mid of twentieth century with the huge influx of immigrants from different countries. Indians, Mexicans, Africans, Puerto Ricans, Chinese, Japanese, and other minority groups in the American society suffered a lot from a severe deprivation and an unfair treatment. Racism, as a negative attitude, had injurious effects on the members of minority groups; it worsened their lives and eliminated any attempts of equal opportunities.

The African minority was one of the most miserable minorities that was subjected, ignored, and oppressed by the Whites. Throughout the slave era, the Blacks were victims of the Whites’ persecution; they were bought and sold as goods, and suffered from inhumane living and working conditions. In addition to that, they were forced to work from sunrise to sunset without any right to rest or complain. However, after the Abolitionism Movement and the end of slavery, the Blacks got their freedom, yet this freedom was just an illusion for them because, after the end of slavery, the Blacks faced another form of slavery which is racism. Consequently, the Blacks’ freedom and equality with the Whites was just a mirage. Although the Blacks could achieve their dream which was the abolition of slavery, the nightmare of racism still exists.

Racism was hotly debated for more than 300 years; it was a major part of the American life especially in the south. During these years, many “racist laws, social

institutions, behavior patterns, living conditions, distributions of political power, figures of forms of speech, cultural viewpoints and habits, and even thought patterns continually forced colored Americans into inferiority and subordination” (Downs 7). Moreover, these discriminatory laws, practices, and institutions were strengthened by the creation of what is known by Jim Crow Laws.

Even though slavery was abolished formally in 1865, it was not totally removed from the American society. Soon after its eradication, the Whites implemented another version of laws and practices that effectively replaced slavery. These laws and practices formed the institution of Jim Crow Laws. This institution refers to the legislative enactments that passed by the United States Supreme Court between 1874 and 1975 to separate the White and Black races in the American South. Theoretically, they were established to create “separate but equal” treatment, but practically these laws deepened the system of discrimination and segregation against the Blacks in order to keep them in an inferior position.

The Jim Crow Laws intensified the sufferings of the African Americans because it expanded racial discrimination towards the Blacks in different facilities such as schools, hotels, restaurants. Under this increased racism, the African Americans were banned from voting, attending public hospitals, as well as prohibiting them from testifying against the Whites.

The practices of Jim Crow Laws made racial segregation and degradation against the African Americans legal. The significance of this system is associated with the separation of Blacks and Whites within the framework of the American society. As a result, the operations of these laws were based on inequality in the social system which led to the discrimination and the oppression of the Blacks (Symthe 45, 46). Indeed, during the era of Jim Crow Laws racial discrimination was a key feature that characterized the American Society, particularly

the Southern states which were connected directly with the White's racial practices.

Jim Crow Laws were determined to keep the "Negroes as a subordinate entity and the Whites as a superordinate factor" (Symthe 46). In other words, these laws were designed to keep the Blacks in an inferior position; this was done through restricting the Blacks' activity and preventing them from voting or giving evidence against the Whites. In fact, Jim Crow, as an entire way of life, aimed at keeping the superiority of Whites over the Blacks. Despite the fact that this system of laws was found in the Northeast, the Midwest, as well as the West, the Southern and border states witnessed the most severe, illegal, and immoral methods. The Blacks were reduced to second-class citizenship and they were treated as subhuman, this led to the extension of racial discrimination that can be demonstrated in a set of rules that governed the social interaction of Blacks and Whites. For example, in terms of speaking with each other, touching each other, eating with each other, and even driving on the same roads, as a result, the notions of Black inferiority and White superiority were reinforced.

The enactment of such laws mirrored an extremely preconceived treatment toward the Blacks in America, especially in the South. In effect, these racial laws opened the way for an unfair passage of discriminatory practices that deprived, illegally, the Blacks from their right. So, throughout the era of Jim Crow Laws, the African Americans were intimidated, murdered, and violated. This horrible fact reflected the dehumanization of Blacks as a central characteristic of Jim Crow mindset.

During the 1930s, the American criminal justice institution was a race-based institution where Blacks were a direct target for oppression and aggressive punishment more than the Whites. Scottsboro trial is one of the examples that portrayed the preconceived criminal system that victimized wrongly nine Black youths for assaulting and raping two White women. This case started when nine African American young men and boys went

from Scottsboro, Alabama to railway train in Memphis, Southern Tennessee in search of work. When the train was passing through Northern Alabama, a fight broke up between the Black young men and a group of White youths, after an exchange of angry words and quarrels, armed men met the train at Part Rock, Alabama Station. Meanwhile, the White youths accused the Blacks of assaulting them; the nine Black youths were immediately taken to jail by the armed men (Bellamy 27). In addition to that, on the train, there were two young women (Victoria Price 21 year old, and the minor Ruby Bates 17 years old) who claimed that they were searching for a new job too. Because of Victoria Price's fear from being accused of taking a minor across state lines for the purpose of prostitution which was a federal crime, the two girls agreed to charge the Black prisoners with rape and assault (Bellamy 28).

Such cases in Southern America during the 1930s were racially preconceived when "Niggers" are part of the trial. During that time, when a Black man is charged with raping a White woman, he will be executed as a White Southerner said "if a White woman is prepared to swear that a Negro either raped her or attempted to rape her, we see to it that the negro is executed" (qtd.in Klarman 382). Under this racial norm, the White jurors were not permitted to believe the word of a Black man over the word of a White woman because most of the Whites believed that the honor of a White woman is more important than the life of a Black man.

After hastily arranged trials, all the Scottsboro boys<sup>1</sup> received death penalty except the youngest Roy Wright (he was 13 years old) who was sentenced to 75 years in jail (Klarman 379, 385). Although this case passed through trials, convictions, and appeals in the United State Supreme Court, it is widely believed that this case was fueled by

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<sup>1</sup> **Scottsboro boys:** the youngest were Eugene Williams and Roy Wright (13 year olds), Ozie Powell (16 year old), Olen Montgomery and Willie Roberson ( 17 year olds), Haywood Patterson (18 year old), Andy Wright (Roy's brother 19 year old), and Charlie Weems (19 year old).

preconceptions, racism, and regional stereotypes. In fact, the Blacks' accusation was unproven especially after the medical examination of the two girls which confirmed that there was nothing to indicate any violence of rape on the girls. However, the significance of this testimony was not clarified in the trial; this may indicate that the trial is maybe covered by doubts, manipulations, and even lies.

The false accusation of Scottsboro boys cost them their life, the youths' right to counsel had been infringed because of racial preconception, oppression, and persecution of the Blacks. In her article entitled "*How Scottsboro Happened*" Mary Heaton Vorse wrote "the Scottsboro case is not simply one of race hatred. It arose from the life that was followed by accusers and accused, girls and boys, White and Black. If it was intolerance and race preconceived which convicted Haywood Patterson, it was poverty and ignorance which wrongly accused him".

## **2.2- The Terrorist Secret Society: Ku Klux Klan**

Following the civil war, specifically in May 1866, six young ex-confederate officers in the town of Pulaski, Tennessee formed a "hilarious social club" that would be a fun lovely group (Horn 9). Though in the later years, this group became one of the largest and most feared terrorist groups that aimed at torturing and harassing people outside the White race. In fact, for more than a century, this terrorist organization used fear and violence as instruments to frighten and kill minorities especially the African American minority. Actually, its members were sustained by racism and preconception, they dressed White sheets and wore hoods to hide their faces and rode by night through the Southern countryside to threaten, frighten, beat, and kill any Blacks who attempted to improve their position in the American society. A burning wooden cross was their sign; they put it outside the homes of their intended victims (O' Callaghan 56).

This hate group believed in the White supremacy and opposed any extension of citizenship and voting rights among the African Americans which fueled intolerance for them. The Ku Klux Klan members justified their intimidation and terrifying acts under the guise of Christianity. In fact, this criminal group fostered suspicion and preconception toward the Blacks; it was built upon race hatred and religious hatred, and it represented a threat to other communities. Indeed, this hatred was demonstrated in their murders, terrible outrages, and cruelty particularly against the Negroes (Berger 1, 2).

By 1925, this organization extended its influence after the membership of more than 2.5 million Americans most of them were Southerners, for example, from Alabama; more than 115,000 members had joined. This made it one of the largest membership organizations in American history (Hebert 2012). The hatred of African Americans was the main reason that led many people to join such terrorist trend.

The Ku Klux Klan, as a White racist group, did not accept Blacks as equals, especially in the deep South, they subjected them through a wave of criminal acts. Actually, Black Americans had struggled from the hostile practices of this movement which believed in the innate inferiority of Black people. Their racial hatred and preconceptions led them to use violence and terror to maintain control over them. This secret terrorist organization continued during the Great Depression and the Second World War but it was disbanded in 1944. Despite its dissolution, it remains the historic symbol of racist terrorism.

### **3- Literary Background**

Literature has been a rich field of various movements that emerged to evaluate, interpret, and analyze literary text. Each literary movement has its own time of emergence, characteristics, and way of analyzing literature.

### **3.1- Literary Movement: Postmodernism**

As the world changes every time, so does the way that people see it, as well as, their styles to express their visions. One way that people use to declare their reflections is a literature that evolves to mirror social, political, cultural, and economic conditions. So, at each time people's visions change, new literary movements emerge. From its beginnings in the early 1600s, American literature was a fruitful field for the development of several literary movements that were either responsive reactions to their predecessors or harmonious continuation to them.

In point of fact, Postmodernism came about as a reaction to the principles and the practices already established by the previous Modernist movement (1900 - 1945), which itself was a reaction to the championed tenets of the nineteenth century and before. As the name indicates, Postmodernism affords a close relationship to Modernism. Most of its definitions are based on a comparison between the Modernist aesthetic techniques and those of Postmodernism. Thus, for more understanding, it is quite important to distinguish between the two movements. Firstly, the terms "Modern" "Modernism" "Modernity" can imply similar meanings on the general level, they can mean novelty or innovation in contrast to the old traditions and beliefs. More specifically, the term Modernity implies the broad characteristic of the Modern period which includes a wide range of interrelated historical and cultural phenomena. In fact, this concept refers to the period that is marked by questioning and rejecting the old traditions, giving priority to the subjective experiences, as well as, rationalization. The term Modernism, in its turn, refers to a state of mind that questioned the different artistic, social, and moral conventions, and rebelled against them.

Moreover, Modernism marked a shift from realism and optimism to an experimental form and pessimism. In literature, the term Modernism, according to The Concise Oxford

Definition of Literary Term is “a general term applied retrospectively to the wide range of experimental and avant-garde trends in the literature (and other arts) of the early 20th century”. Modernist literature was the movement that reflected the disorder seen in the urban society, glorified passion over reason, and doubts the traditional moralities.

On the other hand, the literal meaning of the term Postmodernism is “after Modernism”, it was first used around the 1800s, by John Watkins Chapman who suggested a postmodern style of painting as a way to depart from French Impressionism. In fact, the exact date for the establishment of Postmodernism is elusive, but it may be said to have applied to the literature and art after World War II, and it has continued on into the present. Despite the fact that defining Postmodernism would be against its principles since its main belief tends to be everything is meaningless, many scholars studied this phenomenon and tried to provide an appropriate understanding to it.

Actually, Postmodernism is considered to be as “a complex of anti-modernist artistic strategies which emerged in the 1950s and developed momentum in the course of the 1960s” (Bertens 3). Postmodernism can be described as a specific type of thought that coincides with the emergence of new traits and types of social, cultural, and economic life. In effect, Postmodernist writings are strongly influenced by the scientific and technological advances of the Twentieth century; this influence can be seen in the themes and genres that the authors reflect in their narratives. This new tendency led the former Modern conventions to be “as a set of dead classics” (Jameson 4). In this sense, Modernist practices became no longer applicable to the contemporary time. Thereby, studying postmodern literature can lead to a more comprehension to the contemporary world (Nicol 11).

Generally speaking, the Modernist movement focused on the portrayal of subjective experience and consciousness while Postmodernism concentrates on the fictionality, the state

of being fictional. Modernity is driven by mechanization, urbanization, and industrialization while Postmodernity is occupied by technology. Nicol puts the two movements in general statements as he says “Modernism favors bricolage or pastiche to the original production, the mixing of styles and genres, and the juxtaposition of ‘low’ with high culture. Where modernism is sincere or earnest, postmodernism is playful and ironic” (2). In addition, what sets postmodernism apart from modernism is the rejection of the dominance of reason, the belief in the perfectibility of man, and the ability to create a better, if not a perfect society (Vilavinal John 2).

Furthermore, there are various features of Postmodernist literature that help to determine a literary work. According to Sim, these traits are the temporal disorder, fragmentation, paranoia, the loose association of ideas, in addition to other features that are still present in contemporary literature (123). Moreover, Sim believes that “Postmodernism is, of course, only part of the total landscape, but like a mountain-range, it looms over everything else, and plodding over its peaks and valleys is no easy task” (122). That is, it is not necessary to find all of the features of Postmodernism in every contemporary literary work. Sim adds that “the postmodernist writer distrusts the wholeness and completion associated with traditional stories, and prefers to deal with other ways of structuring narrative” (126). It is considered that fragmentation “as a plot is pounded into small slabs of event and circumstance” (126) is one of the ways that provide the reader with plenty of viewpoints. Actually, postmodern literature tends to create complexity in the story to make the reader involved through the different perspectives and leads him to create his own judgment about the story as well.

According to Postmodernists, no absolute truth is affirmed; truth and error are synonymous because what is fact today can be false tomorrow. They believe that the notion

of truth is a devised illusion, misused by people and interest groups to get power over others. In this context, Harold Pinter (1930-2008) says, “there is no hard distinctions between what is real and what is unreal or between what is true and what is false. A thing is not necessary either true or false; it can be both true and false” (Art, Truth and Politics: the Noble Lecture). That is, for postmodernists, everything is skeptical and relative, what may be true to one person, may not be true to another. Moreover, after World War II, people were pessimistic, they believed that God was dead and life has no meaning.

The prominent representative postmodernists include Donald Barthelme, John Simons Barth, Toni Morrison, and Nelle Harper Lee. Donald Barthelme (1931- 1989) is considered as an avant-garde or postmodernist short story writer. His fundamental skepticism and irony distanced him from the modernist’s belief in the power of art to reconstruct society and leading many critics to class him as a postmodernist writer. He is known for his playful, postmodernist style of short fiction. His thoughts and works were largely the results of the twentieth-century angst. Barthelme’s stories typically avoid traditional plot structures, relying instead on a steady accumulation of seemingly unrelated detail. His publications include *The King* (1990), *City Life* (1970), and *Overnight to Many Distant Cities* (1983).

The American novelist, John Simons Barth (1930) is another prominent postmodernist writer who rejected the Modernist principles. He is known as a self-reflexive writer, because he is often a character in his own fiction, acting within it and commenting upon it in a critical way. The themes he dealt with included the fragmentation of life, loss of reasons for living, and emotional paralysis. His popular novels include, *The Floating Opera* (1956), and *The End of the Road* (1958), as well as, he published a number of short stories including, *Lost in the Fun House* (1968).

The Pulitzer prize-winning African-American novelist, Toni Morrison is also a significant postmodernist writer. Her works deal with the Blacks' epic experience and celebrate the Black community, as well as, treat the complex identities of Black people in a universal manner. She has written a number of popular novels, plays, and non-fictional essays, including *The Bluest Eye* (1969), *Beloved* (1987), and *Sula* (1973).

Nelle Harper Lee is also considered as a prominent postmodernist novelist, who is well-known for her only published novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* that won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1961. This novel contains the method of autobiographical parallel which is used by the Postmodernist writers. In fact, the narrator of the novel Scout Finch shares many similarities with the author Harper Lee who said once, "a writer should write about what he knows and write truthfully". In reality, Lee has followed her own advice and wrote about what she knew. Furthermore, Harper Lee, as most of the writers of the 1950s, dealt with the African Americans' plight of identity, especially in the segregated South. As an example, Lee illustrated the issue of double consciousness, as a trait of postmodern literature, through some characters. Although this theme was treated before, postmodern authors treated it more systematically. That is, they discussed this issue, as well as, its strive for legitimization in a racist society.

### **3.2-Harper Lee: A Profile**

Nelle Harper Lee was born on April 28, 1926, in Monroeville, Alabama. She was the youngest child among four children of Frances Cunningham (Finch) and Amasa Coleman Lee. Her mother was a homemaker, while her father was a former newspaper editor, proprietor, lawyer, and served in the Alabama State Legislature, he parallels Atticus Finch, the hero of *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Haggerty11, 13).

Lee spent most of her childhood in Alabama, she was a tomboy with her close friend Truman Capote who provided the basis for the character Dill in her novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Haggerty 11), Later on, he became a prominent literary figure too. In contrast to girls of her age, Harper Lee was as rigid and strong as boys, she had never interested in girls' stuff. Instead, she was a precocious reader and an exceptional student with a great interest in literature and writing.

When Lee was six years old, the trial of the Scottsboro boys was taking place on April 1931, in the small town of Scottsboro in Alabama. Nine young Black men were charged with raping two White women (Flachmann et al 3); despite the medical testimony which confirmed that the women had not been raped, the White jury accused the nine boys of the crime. Consequently, they were all sentenced to death except the youngest boy. This case impressed the young Lee and left a great impact on her. Later on, Harper Lee used the events of this trial as a base for her novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

At first, Lee studied at Huntington College in Montgomery, Alabama from 1944 to 1945, and then she studied law at the University of Alabama from 1945 to 1949. In addition to that, Lee went abroad at Oxford University for a year as an exchange student. However, she dropped out of her third year of law studies to move to New York City where she worked as an airline reservationist until the 1950s

During her time in New York, Lee realized that her career must be in writing not in law, she was reunited with her childhood friend Truman Capote who became a famous writer, and she assisted him in writing his masterpiece "*In Cold Blood*" in 1959. Nelle Harper Lee became an American novelist and one of the foremost postmodernists of the twentieth century, she wrote several long stories, then, in November 1956 she got an agent. While working at Michael brows, Lee received a year worth of wages and was told to take a

year off to write whatever she pleases.

Inspired by racial tensions that heated up the Southerners during the depression time that she observed as a child in her hometown, Harper Lee wrote her famous novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* won the Pulitzer prize for fiction in 1961 despite mixed critical reviews , it is ranked by Guinness book of records as the top international selling novel of the time, selling more than fifteen million copies, it has become a classic of modern American literature, as well as, in 1999, it was voted “Best Novel of the Century” in a poll by Library Journal. In June 1966, President Lyndon B. Johnson named Lee to the National Council of Arts, since then she has received numerous honorary doctorates. At the White House Ceremony of 2007, Harper Lee was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by George. W Bush for her contribution to literature, George. W Bush stated that: “To Kill a Mockingbird has influenced the character of our country for the better. It has been a gift to the entire world. As a model of good writing and humane sensibility, this book will be read and studied forever. And so all of us are filled with admiration for a great American and a lovely lady named Harper Lee” (Flachmann et al 3).

Lee’s only published novel was adopted into an unprecedented popular White and Black film in 1962. In Academic Award of 1962, winning screenplay adaptation of *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Horton Foote, Harper Lee said: “I think it is one of the best translations of a book to film ever made”. Despite of the success of her first novel, Lee did not continue her literary career, except few essays, Lee has made no other publications, as well as, no interviews or public appearances.

In fact, through her novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Harper Lee had contributed in shaping American reality by depicting the real life in Alabama during the Depression time. Even though she was a White woman, Harper Lee succeeded in depicting Whites’ strong

hatred of Blacks, as well as, how Whites' sin of racial preconception grew to include even Whites who dared to defend Blacks. Harper Lee died on February 19, 2016, at age of 89 in Monroeville, Alabama.

#### **4/ Theoretical Background**

In fact, Literary Theory is a practical reading of literature; it attempts to understand the countless ways of how different people read texts. Everyone interprets a book, a poem or even a song in a different way, thus, a literary theory emerged to give the readers an opportunity to look at a literary work with the so called different set of lenses. Instead of urgent that one view is the best or correct, literary theory aims to appreciate all views that are based on a careful study of literature.

The different literary theories provide different ways to explore literary texts, each of which has its specific principles and "lenses" through which we can see, understand, and interpret a text. Indeed, applying theories on literary works lead to a more adequate and actual understanding of the work, since they represent a framework for a critical discussion. Actually, contemporary criticism and theory interpretation have focused on the close relationship between literary theory and literary practice, that is, the practice of interpretation (Bertens 10).

#### **1-Critical Race Theory**

“As many Americans of all colors know, however, racism has not disappeared; it has just gone underground” (Tyson 367). That is, in the United States, people of color are still suffering from the Whites' sickness of superiority and inequality in a crafty way, because

though racism has grown up thoroughly, only its victims can be apprehended.

Even though the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and the 1960s intended to guarantee the racial equality, most of the Blacks were still deprived of justice, so this movement ceased to be a political or a social force. As result, group of lawyers, activists, and legal scholars realized that new theory was needed to combat all forms of racism. Thus, initiated by the work of Derrick A. Bell Jr. and others such as Alan Freeman and Richard Delgado, the Critical Race Theory emerged in the 1970s.

According to **Richard Delgado** and **Jean Stefancic**, “Critical Race Theory movement is a collection of activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism, and power” (25). That is, this movement concerns with every issue that is relevant to race, it focuses on investigating the interactions from a race perspective, as well as, it delves into how these interactions affect the everyday well-fare of colored people. In this context **Tyson** affirms that, “Critical race theory examines the ways in which details of our everyday lives are related to race, though we may not realize it, and studies the complex beliefs that underlie what seem to be our simple, commonplace assumptions about race in order to show us where and how racism still thrives in its “undercover” existence” (368-369).

In fact, Critical Race Theory started as a critique of constitutional law which is based on the constitution, and which the laws of individual states are not supposed to violate, then, it has spread to almost every discipline, including the humanities. It began to challenge racial oppression as centre to the law and the policy of the United States, and it also dared to look beyond the popular belief that getting rid of racism simply means getting rid of ignorance.

#### 4.1.2- Basic Tenets of Critical Race Theory

In their book *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*, Richard Delgado, and Jean Stefancic identify six basic tenets of Critical Race Theory. Not all theorists of this discipline agree on these tenets, but an understanding of these six points will be helpful to introduce and to apply this theory.

First, *Everyday Racism* is an ordinary and common experience for people of color in the United States. In fact, many White Americans see that word racism is related only to physical or verbal attacks against people of color; they pretend that racism does not exist at all, and they accuse people of color of being oversensitive about ethnic jokes and ridicule in front of others. According to Lois Tyson, one of the gloomiest forms of racism is the Whites' denial that racism exists or has occurred in a particular instance.

Second, *Interest Convergence* or *Material Determinism*, Derrick Bell, the father of Critical Race Theory uses this term to shed light on how racism converges with interests of a White individual or group. For example, racism exists in the financial interests of upper-class Whites who care only for profits; they exploit Black laborers who find it difficult to get a job by paying them less than their White counterparts for the same or even harder job. Racism also exists in the psychological interests of working class Whites; their own experience of being underpaid or exploited by wealthy Whites makes them need to feel superior to someone else.

Third, *The Social Construction of Race*, this tenet holds that race is a product of social thought and relations, it has no biological or genetic origins; rather, races are categories that the society invents according to current beliefs about race at different times.

Fourth, *Differential Racialization*, it refers to the fact that the dominant Whites

determine racial features of different minority groups in different ways at different times, in response to its deceitful necessities. As an example, before the Civil War, White plantation owners depicted African-Americans as simple minded, this was to ensure their availability as a labor force, as well as, lest they revert to their barbarian ways. However, whenever Whites found themselves in competition with Blacks for jobs, they stereotyped them as lazy and prone to violence.

Fifth, *Intersectionality*, no person has an easily stated identity based on race alone. Race intersects with class, sex, sexual orientation, political orientation, and even personal history.

Sixth, *Voice of Color*, this tenet holds that minority writers and thinkers could better speak and write about race and racism because they experience racism directly.

Besides these six tenets, there are also few representative examples of racial issues that continue to engage many critical race theorists, among them: *White Privilege* that **Richard Delgado** and **Jean Stefancic** defined as: “the myriad of social advantages, benefits, and courtesies that come with being a member of the dominant race” (78). That is, White people are superior to people of color; they enjoy social advantages that non-Whites have no right to experience. There is also a *Cultural Hegemony* which means the dominance of White Americans. *Eurocentric Universalism* is another racial issue holds that literary work would be recognized as universal and great art, as well as, acceptable to include in the European canon, only if it reflects European experience and literary traditions. Moreover, people of color have also suffered from what came to be called *Internalized racism* that results from psychological programming by which a racist society prompts people of color to believe in the Whites’ supremacy. In fact, internalized racism arises *inter-racial racism* which refers to inequity among the Black community against those with darker skin and more African

features. In addition, *Double Consciousness* or *Double Vision* which refers to the awareness of belonging to two conflicting cultures: the African culture which was transformed to the American soil and the European culture imposed by White America (Tyson).

#### **4.2- The Marxist Theory**

“All history is characterized by (...) unequal class arrangements, and one result is that all history is characterized by class struggle, the conflict between those who own and those who labor” (Ryan 52). That is, throughout history, class conflicts between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat created discontent in the society. The different social and economic problems arose due to the dominance of one class which grows richer at the expense of the proletariat class which is exploited and pushed to the brink of poverty.

In the 1920s, theories of economy, politics, and class division formed the foundation of the Marxist Literary Criticism. In fact, there was an acknowledgment of the fact that literature is a product of history and the surrounding social and material conditions. Thus, this theory highlights the thought of socio-economic conditions as the basis of literature.

As the name indicates, the Marxist theory started with Karl Marx (1818-1883) the German theorist, philosopher, ideologist, and the most influential socialist thinker of the nineteenth century. He is known for his criticism against the capitalist system of economics because, according to him, this system is built upon injustice and oppression since it allowed the bourgeoisie to benefit at the expense of the working class. Marx declared that capitalists, or the bourgeoisie, had successfully enslaved the working class, or the proletariat through economic policies and the control of the means of production. Marx's beliefs were supported by his fellow Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) the German philosopher, writer, and social critic (Dobie 80).

According to Karl Marx, conflicts appear in the society because of the efforts of the lower class to gain power and the attempts of the upper class to keep what they had already had. In effect, group of leaders control the money and tries to keep its power at the expense of the lower class who is intimidated to accept the upper class' policies (Tyson 53). In addition, Tyson argues that, according to Marxist thought, "Getting and keeping economic power is the motive behind all social and political activities, including education, philosophy, religion, government, the arts, science, technology, the media, and so on" (53, 54). That is, the social, political, and ideological institutions are built purely upon economic base. Therefore, the economy is the basic of social power, that's why Marxists refer to the class structure as a socioeconomic class rather than economic class. Moreover, Marxists view that the socioeconomic differences divide people into classes, this division is drawn by lines that separate the "haves" or the bourgeoisie who control the economic, natural, and human resources, and the "have nots" or the proletariat who live in an inferior position.

During the economic depression of the 1930s, the Marxist thought became part of the American literary scene in which writers and critics started to use the Marxist principles to interpret and evaluate society in their works. This new social and literary analysis seeks to understand the reality of life through exploring the different ideologies and belief systems which are the products of social condition. In addition, it aims at identifying hidden political and social means of oppression through interpreting it in textual clues and symbols. Furthermore, the Marxist perspective is based on fundamental principles and tenets that are crucial for a better understanding of the issues of power, class, and money in a given literary work.

In the Marxist criticism, literature is not considered as a separate art of its social, ideological, and cultural surroundings, but rather, it is a product of them. Marxists see

literature “not as works created in accordance with timeless artistic criteria, but as ‘products’ of the economic and ideological determinants specific to that era” (Abrams 149). So literary texts reflect the social institutions because literature itself is a social institution too that reflects social and ideological backgrounds of the author, materialism, and class struggles.

#### **4.2.2- Basic Tenets of Marxist Theory**

In fact, the Marxist theory focuses mainly on the class constructs demonstrated in a particular work. It tries to investigate how the conflicts between the different classes influenced literary texts and how literature can function in relation to other aspects of a superstructure. Thus, the principles of Marxist Literary Criticism were designed to understand social, economic, and political ideas through interpreting a literary work. These ideas are considered as a source of class conflict. Actually, the Marxist theory has revolutionized the way of understanding literary works (Dobie 79). Indeed, when reading a text from a Marxist perspective, it is quite important to see how the characters interact because the Marxist theory relies on the relationship between them. In fact, this can be accomplished in accordance with the following principles:

Firstly, the *class system* principle is considered a major tenet in the Marxist criticism; it classifies people according to their socioeconomic lifestyle. In other words, it refers to the level of luxury that each person has and how much they have to work. The bourgeoisie, for example, own many material possessions and employ several workers, thus, their profits or outcomes are higher than the proletariat who, on the other hand, are poor with a restricted access to educational or career opportunities, and this led them to keep struggling in order to help their families and to avoid the nightmare of homelessness (Tyson 55). Indeed, this line clearly separates classes within the same society in terms of financial earnings, the quality of homes, cars, education, and luxury items. The upper class enjoys the luxurious lifestyle and the finest privileges while the lower class suffers from the economic

oppression and the social deprivation due to its limited earnings and chances to improve their conditions. Generally speaking, this principle tries to reveal how the class relations between the oppressed and the oppressor actually are in the work, how the lower class reacts against the wealthy, their struggles to survive...etc.

Secondly, Marxist perspective considers the concept of *ideology* as “a belief system, and all belief systems are products of cultural conditioning” (Tyson 56). In effect, ideologies such as capitalism, communism, humanism, patriotism, religion...etc. are constructed according to the prevailing socioeconomic conditions. These ideologies can be positive when they lead to the improvement of the world for all people regardless of their social class. On the other hand, ideologies can be negative when they serve an oppressive system, yet, this ideology can manipulate and deceive people because it can appear as a positive ideology and can convince people to see it in a favorable way as the appropriate thing to be, so people do not question or protest against it (Dobie 86). However, the Marxist theory tries to detect these repressive ideologies that control people in order to understand how people are controlled and programmed to see things differently and to think or behave in a particular way.

Thirdly, *patriotism* as an ideology aims at making the proletariat fight against another proletariat group from other countries while the rich is the beneficial (Tyson55). In fact, this ideology manipulates the poor by leading them to see themselves as members of the oppressed class. Before the poor were forgotten but in a need time, the upper class comes back to them in order to get benefits by convincing them to fight another poor class.

In addition, *religion*, according to **Karl Marx** is: “the opiate of the people”. This saying reflects Marx’ belief in the use of religion as a tool used by the bourgeoisie to repress and manipulate, consciously or unconsciously, less powerful groups. By doing so, people are

prevented from trying to change their oppressive economic conditions. Tyson believes that this ideology keeps the poor tolerant and satisfied with their life, he adds that Karl Marx' main focus is on "what human beings do in God's name (55).

Furthermore, the ideology of *rugged individualism* focuses on the individual's pursuit of achieving his goal which is often accompanied with risks and difficulties. In fact, this ideology is a fundamental principle in the American Dream (Tyson 60). However, rugged individualism can be a repressive ideology because it serves the personal benefits at any price and at the expense of others.

Marxists consider *consumerism* as a repressive ideology that deceives people to consume many products in order to be like the wealthy. In addition, cultural productions like literature, theater, religion, education, music, television programs...etc. can subvert the socioeconomic system and manipulate people to accept this ideological programming (Tyson 60).

Besides, these six tenets, it is worthy to mention that Karl Marx criticized the capitalist economy because it damages the human values and psychology (Tyson 62). *Capitalism* as a material force creates commodification that makes people have the desire for more possessions not for the innate usefulness but for the social value. In other words, it makes people obsessed with consuming material objects in order to display them as a common way to show off their wealth.

In sum, the discussion above represents the basic principles and the main ideas that are needed when reading a literary work from a Marxist perspective. In fact, applying these principles does not aim at revealing the aesthetic realm of the literary work, but rather, it aims at shedding light on the material and ideological conditions that reflect the socioeconomic atmosphere of the work.

## Chapter Two: Racial Preconception and Social Injustice

### 1- Whites' Inhumanity to Blacks

#### 1.1-The Gloomy Images of Racial Preconception

In fact, racial preconception has always been a prevalent problem in a society, and unfortunately, it will never disappear. Every time and everywhere, racial groups are under the pressure of being judged by the master race in the society. During the 1930s in the small county of Maycomb, most of the people were racist and discriminatory. People of color and especially, African-Americans were frequently exposed to the verbal and physical attacks from the Whites, they could not walk down the street without hearing rude comments about their race, as well as, they lived under the threat and the fear of the terrorist group of Ku Klux Klan that beat, burnt, and killed any Blacks who tried to improve their positions. Their rights as human beings were ignored, their services and efforts were unnoticed, and they were most of the time treated unfairly. Just as the Negro population was mistreated and judged in the real life during the Depression time, so were the Blacks in *to kill a Mockingbird*.

Through her novel, Harper Lee draws the gloomy images of racial preconception that Black people suffer from in their everyday life during the 1930s. She symbolizes the Negroes by mockingbirds which "...don't do one thing but make music for us to enjoy. They don't eat up people's gardens, don't nest in corncribs, they don't do one thing but sing their hearts out for us" (Lee 93). That is, even though, they serve Whites, and they are even kind to all the people, Blacks are segregated and mistreated by White people.

In fact, most the White people cannot accept Blacks in their life, they hate them for unclear reasons, as well as, they consider them aliens with negative attitudes and immoral lifestyle. This fact can be noticed through Harper Lee's novel, she sheds light on the racist mentality of White people in Maycomb by using the character of Aunt Alexandra, who freely expresses her superiority over the Blacks. She refuses to let Jem and Scout visit Calpurnia's home, the Finches' Black cook because she believes that it would be inappropriate for Whites to get along with Blacks,

You all were coming back from Calpurnia's church that Sunday?"

Jem said, "Yessum, she took us."

I remembered something. "Yessum, and she promised me I could come out to her house some afternoon. Atticus. I'll go next Sunday if it's all right, can I? Cal said she'd come get me if you were off in the car."

"You may not." Aunt Alexandra said it ( Lee 137).

So, Alexandra's disagreement illustrates clearly the Whites' racist belief that it would be wrong and a kind of shame for the Whites to associate with their inferiors.

Furthermore, in her next conversation with Atticus, Aunt Alexandra tries to convince Atticus to dismiss Calpurnia just because she is a Black.

"...you've got to do something about her," Aunty was saying.

"You've let things go on too long, Atticus, too long."

"I don't see any harm in letting her go out there. Cal'd look after her there as well as she does here."

... "Atticus, it's all right to be soft-hearted, you're an easy man, but you have a daughter to think of. A daughter who's growing

up.”

“That’s what I am thinking of.”

“And don’t try to get around it. You’ve got to face it sooner or later and it might as well be tonight. We don’t need her now.”

(Lee 137,138).

That is, regardless of her valuable services for the Finches’ family, Aunt Alexandra tries to make Calpurnia go out, arguing that as a Negro; Calpurnia would negatively affect Scout who is in a growing age. Indeed, Alexandra’s decision asserts the fact that she is not color blind, as well as, it shows up the Blacks’ position in Maycomb county.

Likewise, Harper Lee draws the gloomy image of racial superiority that has been used as a kind of instrument to oppress the Blacks. After being accused of rape, Tom Robinson becomes an evil beast in the eyes of most of the Whites; they consider him so, even before he is sentenced because for them, it is typical of Black man to be a criminal and a sexual predator. One night before the trial, a White mob went to the prison, they wanted to kill Tom Robinson out of rage and hatred because he is a Black man.

“In ones and twos, men got out of the cars. Shadows became substance as lights revealed solid shapes moving toward the jail door. Atticus remained where he was. The men hid him from view.

“He in there, Mr. Finch?” a man said.

“He is,” we heard Atticus answer, “and he’s asleep. Don’t wake him up.”

...“You know what we want,” another man said. “Get aside from the door, Mr. Finch” (Lee 152,153).

Thereby, the Whites' lynch against Tom Robinson without trial insists the fact that Whites use any chance to segregate Blacks.

In addition, through her novel, Lee demonstrates the fact that the supremacist race stereotypes the Blacks in different ways, at different times, and in response to their deceitful necessities. During the trial, while Bob Ewell testifies, he points out his finger at Tom Robinson and says: "—I seen that black nigger yonder ruttin' on my Mayella!" (Lee 175).

Indeed, it is an offensive way to call Black people a "nigger". Bob Ewell uses this term instead of calling Tom Robinson by his name; in order to make him seem less human and less worthy. Bob did so because he believes that it is unworthy to mention Tom's name, since he is inferior to him. Furthermore, to add more humiliation to the accused, Bob Ewell uses the term "rutting", that means the procedure by which two animals are made to mate. So, he also curses Tom as an animal that torments and violates the innocent Mayella.

On the other hand, since Bob Ewell is a poor man, he is inferior to the upper class in Maycomb county. So, being in an inferior position to the wealthy Whites, makes Bob Ewell need to feel superior to someone else beneath him, thus, Bob accuses Tom Robinson of raping his daughter in order to feel superior, as well as, to be seen in the eyes of the Whites as a hero who saves the White women from a dangerous Black man.

Moreover, as Tom's wife, Helen gets to share in the town's persecution of her husband. After his arrest, Helen finds difficulty to get a job, because people of Maycomb negatively generalize that Tom's family has the same character, so they should be treated in the same way. This is Calpurina's explanation to answer Scout's question:

Cal, I know Tom Robinson's in jail an' he's done somethin' awful, but why won't folks hire Helen?" I asked.

Calpurnia, in her navy voile dress and tub of a hat, walked between Jem and me. “It’s because of what folks say Tom’s done,” she said. “Folks aren’t anxious to—to have anything to do with any of his family. (Lee 125).

So, according to Calpurnia, Helen is a form of discrimination. Folks do not want to hire her because her husband is charged with raping a White woman. Indeed, this image shows how the Whites’ racial preconception in the 1930s was widespread to include even the closed person of the accused.

In fact, Harper Lee draws the gloomy image of racial injustice. Even though there is a sufficient amount of proof which asserts Tom’s innocence, the White jury condemns him because he is a Black man. Scout mentions, “Judge Taylor was polling the jury: “Guilty...guilty... guilty... guilty...” (Lee 215). After Tom is convicted, he tries to escape but was stopped by the guards who used more than excessive force to seize him. They all shot out of hate and privilege to kill him. Atticus says: “Seventeen bullet holes in him. They didn’t have to shoot him that much” (Lee 239). Indeed, Tom Robinson is considered as one of the novel’s mockingbirds, whom unfortunately his kindness and respect to a White lady led to his tragic death, “I told him what I thought, but I couldn’t in truth say that we had more than a good chance. I guess Tom was tired of white men’s chances and preferred to take his own” (Lee 239).

Even after Tom was dead, his family still suffers from persecution. Bob Ewell harasses Helen in her way to work for Mr. Deas who provides a job for Helen, though he did not need her. Helen says that Bob “chunked at her” the first time she tried to use the public road” (Lee 252). After Tom’s trial, Helen wants to attract less attention for her as possible, thus, she does not tell her boss Mr. Deas about Bob’s harassment, instead, she prefers to “ to walk nearly a mile out of her way to avoid the Ewells” (Lee 252). This tragic image

illustrates clearly how racism in Alabama during the 1930s was a big problem that affected everyone's life.

Furthermore, most of the town was not bothered by Tom's death; instead, they seemed happy, because for them it is typical of a Negro to act badly. Scout mentions, "To Maycomb, Tom's death was typical. Typical of a nigger to cut and run. Typical of a nigger's mentality to have no plan, no thought for the future, just run blind first chance he saw" (Lee 244). So, such Whites' racial preconception asserts that Tom is disabled because of his race. If Tom was a White man, the conviction of the jury, as well as, people of Maycomb's preconceptions would be different.

Indeed, African-Americans have been segregated anywhere, even in the courtroom; Blacks have to wait for Whites to enter the courtroom before they go up the stairs. "The Negroes, having waited for the White people to go upstairs, began to come in" (Lee 165). As well as, they cannot sit down on the same balcony with Whites. Blacks sit in the colored balcony, "The Colored balcony ran along three walls of the courtroom like a second-story veranda, and from it could see everything" (Lee 166), and Whites sit in the floor level because they are superior.

Besides, even religion does not secure from the Whites' sickness of racism. For worshipping the same God, Blacks and Whites have separate churches, because Negroes are not welcomed in the Whites' church since they are not considered equivalent to be in the same church with Whites. Moreover, as a form of segregation, humiliation, and disrespectful, the Whites use the Blacks' church as a gambling place. Scout says, "Negroes worshiped in it on Sundays and white men gambled in it on weekdays" (Lee 119).

Unfortunately, the Whites' racial preconception is not restricted only to people of color, it even includes the Whites who defend or have any relation with Blacks. During the

1930s, it was considered a shame to take a side with Blacks, thus, when the lawyer, Atticus Finch, decides to defend a Black man, Tom Robinson, he exposes his family and himself to the anger of the White community. He is labeled by his society a “nigger lover”( Lee 85), just because he is a color blind who supports human rights, as well as, he believes that regardless of race, everyone has a right to a fair trial and a complete defense.

Even when Tom Robinson has been passed away, Atticus and his family do not secure from the Whites’ preconceptions and hatred. Bob Ewell insults and threatens Atticus to take revenge. Mrs. Stephanie says, “...this morning Mr. Bob Ewell stopped Atticus on the post office corner, spat in his face, and told him he’d get him if it took the rest of his life”( Lee 221).

On the other hand, Dolphus Raymond is a White wealthy plantation owner who is welcomed neither in his White community nor in the Black community, because he lives with his Black mistress, and he has several mixed children. Jem says, “They don’t belong anywhere. Colored folks won’t have ‘em because they’re half white; white folks won’t have ‘em cause they’re colored, so they’re just in-betweens, don’t belong anywhere” (Lee 163). Indeed, racial preconception was a way of life for the people of Maycomb during the Great Depression. The Whites’ belief of being a supremacist race made life tough for African-Americans who experienced all types of segregation every day and everywhere just because of their race.

### **1.2- Blacks’ Dual Identity:**

Since the beginning of people’s communication, racial preconception has existed among groups of people because of differences in biological appearances such as skin color, and Whites have introduced themselves as superior to the people of colored skin. Thus,

throughout history, living among the Whites have caused many problems for the Blacks, and especially African-Americans who have a dual identity, because they are African in their roots, and American in their life. So, being in such situation, living among Blacks and Whites, and facing a unified identity is the case that Du Bois refers to as Double Consciousness (Rezazade, Zohdi, and Faghfori1, 3).

In her novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Harper Lee introduces the Blacks' double consciousness through the life of a minor character named Calpurnia, a Black woman who lives with a White family and has a role of a mother for the White children. Indeed, Calpurnia brings up the Finches' children, Jem and Scout, since they have lost their mother from an early age, "She had been with us ever since Jem was born" (Lee 6). She trains them kindly and even fights with them when they do something wrong, in addition, although she is a Black housemaid, she is treated as equal as a White woman in the Finches' house. Scout says: "our battles were epic and one-sided, Calpurnia always won, mainly because Atticus always took her side" (Lee 6). On the other hand, after doing her job as a White maid, Calpurnia goes to her house in the Negroes' settlement which is segregated by the Whites' society. So, her living between two opposite races, Blacks and Whites, brings her a sense of a double consciousness.

Calpurnia's double consciousness can be noticed clearly in chapter twelve when she decides to take Jem and Scout with her to the First Purchase Church, Maycomb's colored church. In that Sunday, Calpurnia carefully bathes children, and dresses them their best clothes, and when Jem asks her, "what's all this for, Cal?", [she answers] "I don't want anybody sayin I don't look after my children" (Lee 119). In fact, Calpurnia's answer shows how she considers herself as a mother for the White children, and as a member of the White community.

Going to church with Calpurnia, Scout and Jem get a whole new look at her. Scout mentions “that Calpurnia led a modest double life never dawned on me. The idea that she had a separate existence outside our household was a novel one, to say nothing of having command of two languages” (Lee 127). So, Calpurnia speaks two languages, and according to Tyson, “...double consciousness sometimes involves speaking two languages” (362). In the church, Calpurnia speaks like the rest of the colored people, in their language and tone, however, in the Finches’ house, she speaks as the Whites, Scout says: “she was furious, and when she was furious Calpurnia’s grammar became erratic. When in tranquility her grammar was as good as anybody’s in Maycomb” (Lee 24). Indeed, Calpurnia has grown up among the Whites since her childhood, but she was still a Negro who lives with them, that is why when she is angry, she comes back to her real identity of being a Black, thus, her grammar becomes erratic.

As an African- American who lives a dual life, Calpurnia is aware of what is acceptable to the both communities she belongs to, she has to change her mind, her behavior, and her language to fit her life among the Blacks, as well as among the Whites, thus, when Jem asks her, why she does not speak in a better language with the Negroes, she replies, “Suppose you and Scout talked colored-folks’ talk at home it’d be out of place, wouldn’t it? Now, what if I talked white-folks’ talk at church, and with my neighbors? They’d think I was puttin’ on airs to beat Moses” (Lee 127). Indeed, since Calpurnia is a Negro, she does not have the privilege of being the same person anywhere; instead, she has to live with a dual identity and to perform the necessary changes that fit the community where she is, because what is right for the Whites may be wrong for the Blacks. Calpurnia says:

It’s not necessary to tell all you know. It’s not ladylike- in the second place, folks don’t like to have somebody around knowin’ more than they do. It aggravates ‘em. You’re not gonna change any of them by talkin’ right, they’ve got to want

to learn themselves, and when they don't want to learn there's nothing you can do but keep your mouth shut or talk their language (Lee 127).

In the 1930s, the Blacks were deprived of education; there was a lack of educational facilities because of the Jim Crow Laws, so most of them were illiterate. In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, all the Blacks are illiterate, except four persons, and Calpurnia is one of them. She learned literacy from the Whites, and then taught it to her son Zeebo. Indeed, Calpurnia's tendency toward education and speaking in the Whites' language, as well as, her teaching of reading to her son shows her efforts to be equal to the Whites, as well as, to obtain a true self-consciousness. Such simulation for the Whites brings Calpurnia a sense of double consciousness.

Consequently, living with the Finches since her infancy leads Calpurnia to emulate the Whites' attitudes and to act like them, on the other hand, being a Negro in blood, as well as, being among their communities impels her to act like the Negroes when she is with them. So, being an American in her meetings with the Whites, and an African in the Negroes' gatherings lead Calpurnia to Double Consciousness (Rezazade, Zohdi and Faghfori 4).

### **1.3- Master Race Privileges and Superiority:**

Throughout history, people of color, and especially African-Americans were segregated in the Whites' communities due to the Whites' belief in their supremacy. Regardless of their incontrovertible role in keeping the wheels of the Whites' industry turning, Blacks were always treated as nonhuman, uncivilized, and rude creatures, born to serve Whites (Rezazade, Zohdi 47-53 ).

Indeed, African-Americans were seen as savages and lowbrow in the eyes of the Whites. They were unfairly treated as a second class, thus, while the American Whites enjoyed a wide range of social privileges, the non-Whites were deprived of their rights as

human beings. They were prevented from voting, going to school, owning lands, getting jobs, serving juries, and even from giving evidence in courts against the Whites. Simply, the American Whites enjoy what is Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic named *the White Privilege*, which non-Whites have no right to experience.

In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Harper Lee shapes the American reality, through depicting a segregated society that is marked by cultural, social, political, economic, and racial superiority of Whites over Blacks. Lee illustrates clearly how skin color places African-Americans at the bottom of the social hierarchy, as well as, depriving them of the privileges and the courtesies that even the poor Whites enjoy.

In the 1930s, there was a prevalent belief among the Whites that the Black men were criminals, sexual predators, and a threat to the White women. It was acceptable for White men to live with Black Women, but it was forbidden and scandalous for Black men to live with White Women. And this is one of the privileges that White men enjoy. The story of *To Kill a Mockingbird* revolves around Tom Robinson's trial, a Negro who is charged with raping a White girl named Mayella Ewell. Indeed, Lee sheds light on racial bias and Whites' privileges in the courtroom of Maycomb, as well as, on the fact that Blacks have no voice against Whites. In this context, Atticus says "In our courts, when it's a white man's word against a black man's, the white man always wins. They're ugly, but those are the facts of life" (Lee 224).

Although the Ewells are the lowest class among the Whites in Maycomb, they are poor, illiterate, and they have no breeding, the single thing that elevates them at any level in the community is the fact that they are Whites, and superior to Blacks. When Mayella Ewell accuses Tom Robinson, a Black man of raping her, she accesses the privilege of a White woman. Scout mentions, "Atticus had used every tool available to free men to save Tom

Robinson, but in the secret courts of men's hearts, Atticus had no case. Tom was a dead man the minute Mayella Ewell opened her mouth and screamed" (Lee 245). That is, despite the significant evidence that are proven by the lawyer Atticus Finch, pointing to Tom Robinson's innocence and making it clear for the White jury that Mayella's father is the one who beats her up, racial norms influence jurors' decision, Tom Robinson never stands a chance, because the White man's word against the Black man's is enough for jury, thus, Tom is determined to be guilty.

However, the court is a place where people get advocacy and fairness, the Blacks were deprived of justice treatment; they have no chance to be free when they are not guilty like Tom Robinson. The reason is clear because the juries who hold an important role in court are from the White community; no one is from Blacks; that is why the White persons are never punished upon the Black people no matter what their fault. In the courtroom, Jem tells Mr. Reverend Sykes, "don't fret, we've won it," ... "Don't see how any jury could convict on what we heard—" [Mr. Sykes replies] "Now don't you be so confident, Mr. Jem, I ain't ever seen any jury decide in favor of a colored man over a white man..." (Lee 212). Indeed Reverend's words illustrate clearly that there is no chance for Tom to be free, because Mayella is a White woman who is in a privileged position, and the jury could not see beyond the color of Tom's skin.

Moreover, in his conversation with Jem, Atticus demonstrates obviously that the Whites accessed, access, and will access the privilege of justice because the court is not blind to the color of man's skin.

Atticus—" said Jem bleakly.

He turned in the doorway. "What, son?"

"How could they do it, how could they?"

“I don’t know, but they did it. They’ve done it before and they did it tonight and they’ll do it again and when they do it—seems that only children weep. Good night (Lee 216).

Another feature that Harper Lee highlights to show the Whites’ privileges and superiority over the Blacks is the fact that they are banned from the right to live in the same environment with the Whites. According to Maycomb’s master race, Negroes cannot be their neighbors because they are poor, trash, and inferior to them. Atticus describes Blacks’ place of living as, “... little settlement beyond the town dump” (Lee 77). Indeed, such description shows the Blacks’ miserable life in Maycomb during the Depression time.

Indeed, Even poor Whites such as the Ewells live there, Jem says, “Maycomb’s Ewells lived behind the town garbage dump in what was once a Negro cabin” (Lee 172). However, the White Ewells live there because they choose to, the Blacks live there because they have to. So, while the Ewells get the privilege to live wherever they want, the Blacks are separated physically and psychologically from the Whites just because of their colored skin.

Furthermore, since racial segregation is a way of life in Maycomb, Blacks and Whites do not have equal rights and opportunities to access the public facilities. While, all of the Whites go to school, and it is even compulsory for them, most of the Black people are illiterate; they are deprived of the privilege of education because of their skin color. The conversation between Calpurnia and the children in the Blacks’ church illustrates clearly that most of the Black people are illiterate:

Calpurnia laughed. “Wouldn’t do any good,” she said. “They can’t read.”

“Can’t read?” I asked. “All those folks?”

“That’s right,” Calpurnia nodded. “Can’t but about four folks in

First Purchase read...I'm one of 'em."

"Where'd you go to school, Cal?" asked Jem.

"Nowhere. Let's see now, who taught me my letters? It was Miss Maudie Atkinson's aunt, old Miss Buford— (Lee 125,126).

Indeed, all the Blacks in *To Kill a Mockingbird* are uneducated except four of them, Calpurnia and her son are two of these four. Calpurnia can read because the Finch family provides her with an education, then, she teaches her son Zeebo, because the Blacks are deprived of educational facilities. Calpurnia says, "There wasn't a school even when he was a boy. I made him learn, though" (Lee 126).

Likewise, the Blacks are deprived of the privilege of getting a decent job, they have no prominent positions in the Whites' supremacist society, they do not get jobs except as employees in Maycomb community: Calpurnia works as the Finches' housemaid; her son Zeebo as a garbage collector and music superintendent for the Black church; the Reverend Sykes ministers in the Black church; Jessie works as Mrs. Dubose nurse; and Tom Robinson is a local field hand. So, the Blacks cannot occupy public positions such as governor, sheriff and so on, because most of White Maycomb citizens perceive the role of the African-Americans as servants rather than equals, they are inferior and passive victims of racial preconception, while the Whites are in a privileged position to get such jobs because of their skin color.

Indeed, through her novel, Harper Lee shows how racial preconception against Negroes have speeded into the minds of the White people, she reinforces the Whites' belief of being born White is an honor and privilege, and treating a Negro as an equal is not only wrong, but also a direct insult and threat to the White race.

## **2- The Socio-economic Atmosphere in Maycomb Community**

## 2.1- To Kill a Mockingbird Social Class division

“There’s four kinds of folks in the world. There’s the ordinary kind like us and the neighbors, there’s the kind like the Cunninghams out in the woods, the kind like the Ewells down at the dump, and the Negroes” (Lee 230).

Throughout the novel, the social status of the characters has a crucial role in the development and the support of the story’s events. In fact, *to kill a Mockingbird* has different class divisions in which people are separated and classified into different social classes mainly because of their skin color and occupation.

Harper Lee depicts the social hierarchy of Maycomb, state of Alabama, to indicate the issues of racism, inequality and oppression. As Best discusses in his article entitled *“Panopticism and the use of “the other” in To Kill a Mockingbird”*, class divisions and economic structures in the county of Maycomb are characterized by rigid class boundaries in which people’s social classes and the status of their ancestry families reflect their behaviors and even their destinies. In fact, there are some strict rules that control and define the way of dealing between the different social classes, one of the important rules is that the high class, whose members are Whites, should be treated in a very hospitable way and the other lower classes, particularly the Blacks, should show kindness and respect to them.

The novel has various social classes. Firstly, the upper class in which a group of people is at the top of the social hierarchy, and its members may enjoy great power and respect in their community. This social class is represented in the novel by Aunt Alexandra who is a dominant figure known as the most prestigious woman in the South. She refuses to let Walter Cunningham be Scout’s friend, she says to Scout that the Cunninghams “...’re not our kind of folks” (Lee 227). Likewise, she reminds Jem and Scout that they “are not from

run of the mill people, that ... [they] are the product of several generations' gentle breeding" (Lee 134). Furthermore, Mr. Dolphus Raymond belongs to the same high class, because "he owns all one side of the riverbank down there, and he's from a real old family to boot" (Lee 163). In fact, Mr. Dolphus is a rich White man from an ancient family that is known by its company of the Blacks, and he prefers to live apart from the White community.

The upper middle class is represented by the Finches who are a respected White family in the society of Maycomb. Atticus Finch, for example, is part of this social class because, firstly, he is White, and this was a crucial factor at that time to determine those who can belong to this class, secondly, because he is a lawyer who "derived a reasonable income from the law" (Lee 5), this makes him a respected person in his community. Another person who belongs to this class is Miss Maudie Atkinson who is an old friend to the Finches and their neighbor.

The next social class position is the proletariat class which refers to the Cunninghams who are hardworking, respectful, but poor people. Even though they find difficulty to manage their life, they try to improve their life conditions by borrowing money and paying them back with items from their farm. Unfortunately, the Cunninghams reflect the miserable conditions of the Great Depression as Scout asks her father "why does he pay you like that? [Atticus replies], "Because that's the only way he can pay me. He has no money". [Jem asks] are we as poor as the Cunninghams? [Atticus says] "Not exactly, the Cunninghams are country folks, farmers, but the crash hit them the hardest" (Lee 21).

Moreover, there are the outcasts who are clearly exemplified by the Ewells or the so-called the poor White trash. In fact, the members of this family are poor, drunks, rude, and use people to get their benefits. In addition, "Maycomb's Ewells lived behind the town garbage dump in what was once a Negro cabin" (Lee 172). This quote reflects that whoever

had a good income of money in Maycomb lived in the town or elsewhere in clean and social area, whereas the poor did not even own a dirty house in the town. Indeed, the dump was their only place to live in. This circumstance reflects the destitution that harshly affected the social life during the depression time. However, the Ewells received special permissions by the law as they are poor and ignorant, like what Atticus says:

the Ewells were members of an exclusive society made up of Ewells. In certain circumstances the common folk judiciously allowed them certain privileges by the simple method of becoming blind to some of the Ewells' activities. They didn't have to go to school, for one thing. Another thing, Mr. Bob Ewell, Burris's father, was permitted to hunt and trap out of season (Lee 31).

In the meanwhile, the poor were separated from the other social classes despite of being members of the same place. One of the examples that reflect clearly this idea in the novel is when Scout asks Aunt Alexandria "But I want to play with Walter, Aunty, why can't I?" (...). I'll tell you why [Alexandria says] "Because—he—is—trash, that's why you can't play with him" (Lee 228), this shows another kind of racism which is not about race, but about social class. Therefore, people of Maycomb were not separated by skin color only, but by their social classes too. The poor people lived together, and the people of the middle class or the rich were with their groups.

The last social class is the Black community which is introduced through two major figures who are Calpurnia, the Finches' servant, and Tom Robinson an innocent man who is charged with raping a "White trash girl" Mayella Ewell. Throughout the novel, the Blacks are presented as admirable and innocent "mockingbirds", however, preconception against them makes their life worse. Actually, the Blacks are treated as second class citizens and they are often accused of unexplained crimes.

In the novel, Harper Lee demonstrates the segregated life between Blacks and Whites, and shows how people of Maycomb formulate negative judgments and

generalizations against the Black community as Atticus says: “The evil assumption—that all Negroes lie, that all Negroes are basically immoral beings, that all Negro men are not to be trusted around our women, an assumption one associates with minds of their caliber” (Lee 208).

Unfortunately, the African Americans are victims of the evil attitude of racial preconception. Most people in Maycomb were blind by the sickness of prejudice towards the Blacks because of irrational reasons. In fact, the Blacks are clearly prejudiced in the novel because of their skin color, on the other hand, the Whites believed in the inferior position of the African Americans and they often refer to them with negative images.

However, in the novel, there are few enlightened characters who treat the Blacks in a respected manner such as Dolphus Raymond, Miss Maudie, and especially Atticus Finch who refuses to follow the public stereotypes and the Whites’ unjustified prejudices against the Blacks. Indeed, Atticus wants the people of Maycomb to question their assumptions; he calls them to be rational and conscious about their preconceptions as he says: “The truth is this: some Negroes lie, some Negroes are immoral, some Negro men are not to be trusted around women—black or white. But this is a truth that applies to the human race and to no particular race of men” (Lee 208).

In short, the discussion above represents the different social classes of Maycomb society which are reflected in the novel of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. These social classes are largely separated; the Finches are well-off to some extent. The farmers like the Cunninghams are below them, while “the White trash” Ewells are under them, however, they are still in a higher position than the Blacks since they are Whites. In fact, the way White people behave toward each other contributes greatly to the separation of the social classes within the White community. The Black community, on the other hand, is in the lowest position even under

the outcasts Ewells. These harsh social divisions are devastating and irrational. Harper Lee uses children to criticize the unpleasant division of Maycomb society which is ultimately prejudiced.

## **2.2- The Social Conflict of Maycomb Community**

As in real life, the characters of a novel have problems too; these problems will lead to conflicts. In literature, conflicts are the basis of every story, the characters' impediments, difficulties, and challenges make the readers more engaged with the events of the story and more curious about its conclusion. However, according to the Marxist thought, conflicts can be manifested within the structure of the society in relation to the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. In addition to that, power struggle is a significant aspect to look at the novel from Marxist lenses. Just as the novel reflects, the Whites can strongly identify themselves in the society of Maycomb by contrast to the Blacks. Thus, the Whites are more powerful and the most dominant in the society of Maycomb.

An application of the Marxist Criticism to the novel reveals a strong correlation between class and race in the society of Maycomb. This correlation is reflected in the fact that all of the while the Blacks in the novel are poor and oppressed characters. In the novel, Atticus Finch defends an innocent Black man who is Tom Robinson. In spite of the fact that the proofs were strong enough to confirm Tom's innocence, the decision of the White juries was irrational, they determined him guilty and sentenced him to death. Unfortunately, the White juries did not believe his words over the White girl Mayella Ewell. As a result, Tom Robinson is a victim of his skin color; he lost his life simply because he is a Black man. Indeed, even in the institutions of law, racial identity has a dominant and a destructive force that determines people's destiny. Clearly, racial preconception against the Black community overwhelms the ideas of justice and fairness.

In fact, Stephen's article entitled "*The Law and the code in Harper Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird*" reveals a substantial conflict between two different forces in the novel. The first force is embodied in the democratic ideals contained in the legal system and the laws that people are expected to follow, whereas the second force is the code which people actually follow. Stephen argues that Tom Robinson's trial illustrates a law vs. code conflict; this means that Tom Robinson should be judged according to the term of law, yet, because of his race as being a Black man in Maycomb society, the White juries will judge him according to the code of that society. Therefore, Tom Robinson is judged by irrational "societal codes".

Moreover, Johnson's article "*The secret courts of men's hearts: Code and Law in Harper Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird*" mentions the same conflict but with another example. According to him, the most apparent conflict in the novel is illustrated through Atticus Finch. In the novel, Atticus is appointed as a lawyer to defend Tom Robinson, but at the same time he is criticized for doing so. Due to defending a Black man, Atticus and his children Jem and Scout face obstacles in their society, they receive improper words and bad treatment from their environment. In effect, Tom Robinson is prejudiced because of the color of his skin; his trial is a concrete example of injustice because of racial preconception. In addition, Johnson examines the conflict between "societal codes" and "legal codes" in Maycomb community, and discusses how the Black race is victimized because of the dominance of the societal codes over the legal codes. This dominance leads to the emergence of conflicts in the society. Therefore, the author Harper Lee portrays the conflict between the White race and the Black race through Tom's trial, and shows how the social classes are influenced by racism too.

Indeed, the character of Tom Robinson demonstrates the impact of racism on the

social classes. Tom is a labor worker like the Cunninghams, yet, the people of Maycomb regard the Conninghams as people of a higher class in comparison to the Blacks, and this classification is made because of preconception that makes the White people believe in the inferior position of the African Americans. Tom Robinson is accused unjustly by Mayella's father Bob Ewell who wants to hide his daughter's action since it is shameful to a White woman. Bob uses his privilege as being a "trash" White man to win the trial, Atticus describes Bob's behavior as, "There's nothing more sickening to me than low-grade white man who'll take advantage of Negro's ignorance. Don't fool yourselves—it's all adding up and one of these days we're going to pay the bill for it" (Lee 224). That is, Bob Ewell attempts to use the preconception of Maycomb people against the Blacks in order to win the trial. Eventually, Bob Ewell has the advantage of getting financial backup from the government even though he just misuses them. On the other hand, Tom Robinson does not get any support from the government even though he works with his injured hands.

An analysis to the novel from Marxist lenses reveals the financial struggle of many characters. In fact, the author Harper Lee uses them to depict the depression era in which people suffer from a severe poverty and an unprecedented employment. This fact is exemplified in the novel through the Cunninghams who are heavily affected by the economic downturn. Actually, this family reflects the economic sufferings of the working class during the Great Depression. In the novel, the Cunninghams are financially paralyzed; they depend only on loans to live, however, they are not able to pay back their credits in cash, but rather in goods from their farms, this action reflects the characteristic of Capitalism<sup>2</sup>. That is, the Cunnighams use their crops or "capital goods" in exchange with services and profits. By doing so, they can pay back their debts, as Atticus says to Scout: "As the Cunninghams had no money to pay a lawyer, they simply paid us with what they had" (Lee 21). The

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<sup>2</sup> Capitalism: a socio-economic system based on private property rights, including the private ownership of resources or capital goods, with economic decisions made largely through the operation of a market.

Cunninghams' financial hardship goes to the worst, when they were not able to plant and sell their crops because of the negative consequences of the Dust Bowl<sup>3</sup>.

Atticus Finch belongs to the upper middle class; his position reflects the importance of education and occupation in one's social status. In fact, the middle class is characterized by well-educated professionals who have an adequate personal income. Even though the Great Depression hit almost everyone in Maycomb town, the character of Atticus Finch is not directly affected by this economic decline since he is a lawyer who depends only on the labors around him rather than his physical work like the Cunninghams who have to farm in order to live and enrich their family. Scout speaks about what Atticus does saying that "Our father didn't do anything. He worked in an office, not in a drugstore. Atticus did not drive a dump truck for the county, he was not the sheriff, he did not farm, work in a garage, or do anything that could possibly arouse the admiration of anyone." (Lee 92). This shows that Atticus is economically in a comfortable position than the other poor Whites; he does not labor as most people in Maycomb do, but rather he does his job in a different way. Therefore, the upper middle class is not affected by the economic struggle as much as the other social classes because this class is economically more advantageous.

### **2.3- The Mockingbirds' Victimization through Collective Ideologies**

"...Remember it's a sin to kill a mockingbird" (Lee 93).

In the context of literary criticism, ideology is a typical principle of the Marxist theory; it is regarded as a belief system that emerged from the surrounding conditions or circumstances. In fact, First of all, Marxism focuses on the repressive ideologies that make people blind or "programmed" to think or behave in a particular way. In other words, people

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<sup>3</sup> Dust Bowl: a geographical region of the American Midwest, extending into Canada, which experienced severe dust storms causing major ecological and agricultural damage in the 1930s.

do not recognize these belief systems as ideologies; rather, they accept them as natural ways to see the world and people.

Throughout the novel, Harper Lee provides some situations and examples of ideologies that repressed and victimized some “mockingbirds”. Lee reflects the prejudiced and the discriminated life of people in Maycomb county and shows how people in her community are blinded by the negative stereotypes against each other. In addition, she questions the typical beliefs that people follow mindlessly without rational reasons.

Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird* explores deeply some repressive ideologies that characterize the people of Maycomb during the 1930s. One of the prominent repressive ideologies that Lee depicts in her novel is the ideology of preconception. In fact, the issue of preconception characterizes the atmosphere of Maycomb county, people in this town formulate negative judgments against others before a clear understanding of the person or the fact. In the novel, this attitude is not experienced by Black people only, but also by the Whites. The story of the Radleys is an important example of preconception against a White family.

In fact, the novel starts with the Radley family which has different customs, the reason why most people in Maycomb form assumptions and prejudgments about them, they did not accept the Radleys and they considered them as intruders and foreigners in Maycomb county.

Inside the house lived a malevolent phantom. People said he existed, but Jem and I had never seen him. People said he went out at night when the moon was down, and peeped in windows. When people’s azaleas froze in a cold snap, it was because he had breathed on them. Any stealthy small crimes committed in Maycomb were his work. Once the town was terrorized by a series of morbid nocturnal events: people’s chickens and household pets were found mutilated; although the culprit was Crazy Addie, who eventually drowned himself in Barker’s Eddy, people still looked at the Radley Place, unwilling to discard their initial suspicions. (Lee 9).

This passage reflects the people's preconception towards the Radley family that is considered aliens in Maycomb county, especially Arthur Boo Radley who is labelled by many people as a dangerous man just because "people said". Moreover, people in Maycomb accuse Boo Radley of all the criminal works that happen in the county. In addition, even though people have known the doer of the crimes in Maycomb, they cannot erase their doubts against Boo Radly. In this case, preconception exceeds prejudgment in the sense that a prejudiced person is not able to think logically and does not accept to change his prejudiced attitudes even when there is "unassailable evidence" (Perry 157).

Preconception towards the Radleys is like a general truth that is believed by most of people in the society of Maycomb, their minds have been instilled with a negative thinking about the Radleys' place. In addition, this unfavourable stereotype makes people afraid of passing close the Radleys' home due to the opinions that have been formed if people walk near the Radleys' house, take or eat anything from them, they will threaten their life. Therefore, people of Maycomb believed this stereotype and consider the Radleys as dangerous people in the society.

The Radleys' story reflects the negative assumptions that have installed in the people's minds; they have developed this preconception and accept it as a truth without logical justification. Some people create fake stories about Boo Radley because he never goes out of his house. In fact, due to this strange custom in Maycomb society, most people prejudice against him without knowledge of what actually happens with the Radleys.

Furthermore, this prejudiced environment has a negative impact on the children who, in their turn, developed this stereotype against the Radley family. The children received much information from their neighbors. Miss Stephanie, for example, explains a wrong rumor to Jem about Boo, she says "As Mr. Radley passes by, Boo drove the scissors into his

parent's leg pulled them out, wiped them on his pants, and resumed his activities. Mrs. Radley ran screaming into the street that Arthur was killing them all" (Lee 11).

Indeed, the children treat Boo in a prejudiced manner as the people of their town do; they formulate specific characteristics about Boo without validation. Actually, Boo is regarded as a source of children's superstitions in the novel; they consider him as a mysterious ghost like what Jem says:

Boo was about six-and-a-half feet tall, judging from his tracks; he dined on raw squirrels and any cats he could catch, that's why his hands were bloodstained—if you ate an animal raw, you could never wash the blood off. There was a long jagged scar that ran across his face; what teeth he had were yellow and rotten; his eyes popped, and he drooled most of the time (Lee 13).

Hence, children's and people's assumptions about Boo victimized him, he is considered as a violent criminal but the truth is that he is a quiet and a harmless character who loves children.

Therefore, most of the people in Maycomb county were blind because of preconception towards the Radleys especially towards Boo. Indeed, the Radley family was oppressed by the public assumptions that judged the Radley's house and customs. Even though, most of the people have no idea about them, they believed this stereotype which emerged just because the Radley family has uncommon habits and they do not do what always done by the people of Maycomb. Thus, preconception towards the Radleys is a belief system that most people in Maycomb believed in because of the surrounding rumors and assumptions in the society of Maycomb.

In the novel, there is another kind of preconception which is racial preconception of White people against the Blacks. Although, the African Americans got their freedom after the abolishment of slavery, stereotypes of White people towards them had not changed. In the society of Maycomb during the Depression time, Blacks were blamed for any harm or

damage without trying to figure out what happened actually. Throughout the novel, there are various situations and actions that portray the Whites' racial preconception against the Blacks who experienced this attitude.

Tom Robinson is another mockingbird who is convicted of rape, despite of the clear proofs that confirm his innocence; all the White juries punished him by death. In fact, this character is stereotyped because of the color of his skin. Many people underestimate his position since he is Black, as Scout says "Well, Dill, after all he's just a Negro" (Lee 203). In addition, the novel portrays this negative attitude through several White characters that marginalize and victimize the Blacks. Aunt Alexandra, for example, shows her dislike to Black people when she refuses to let Jem and Scout visit Calpurnia's home. According to her, it is inappropriate for White people to interact with the Blacks since they are not in an equal position. Moreover, another example of victimizing the Blacks is revealed through Bob Ewell who accused Tom Robinson of raping his daughter illegally. In fact, there are various examples that reflect the general attitude against the Blacks during the depression era. Unfortunately, the society of Maycomb during that time created oppressed prejudices against certain people, often; these prejudices are accepted and followed by people blindly.

In the novel, the attitude of preconception is not experienced by Blacks only, but it extends even to the Whites who would defend Negroes. Consequently, they would be treated almost same like Negroes themselves. The character of Atticus Finch is another mockingbird that is prejudiced because of his defense to the Black Tom Robinson. While doing his job, Atticus receives a harsh criticism from the people of Maycomb county; in fact, he challenges the people of his community who are fuelled by bigotry and racial preconception.

Due to his defense to a Black man, Atticus and his children, Jem and Scout, face obstacles in their society, they receive improper words and bad treatment from their

environment as the following lines show Bob's intimidation to Atticus.

's matter?" I asked.

"Ain't you heard yet? It's all over town—" (...) Bob Ewell stopped Atticus on the post office corner, spat in his face, and told him he'd get him if it took the rest of his life (Lee 220,221).

Actually, the Finch family became in danger, Atticus and his children were terrorized, threatened, and worried because of the case, especially when Bob Ewell, Mayella's father tried to kill Jem and Scout in a Halloween night.

Throughout the novel, Atticus endured a difficult condition, and he got a huge resistance from the people of his county who labelled him as "nigger-lover". The consequences of doing his job influenced his children too. Certainly, racial preconception had influenced the mind side of Maycomb people, their social culture, and social condition.

However, despite of his experience to various evil situations and conversations, Atticus Finch does not react in a bad manner. Throughout the novel, he represents the moral voice of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, supports the human rights, and tries to educate his children in his own way. Actually, Atticus takes a moral responsibility of enlightening his children with moral lessons, kindness, and respect to other people without taking into consideration their race, socioeconomic status, or culture. His fundamental moral lesson is embodied in his attempts to make his children see things from others' perspectives as he says, "You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view...until you climb into his skin and walk around in it" (Lee 30).

In the novel, Mr. Dolphus Raymond is a good example of tolerance with the Blacks in the society of Maycomb. In fact, he is a White man who is clearly against racism.

Although he is rich landowner, and comes from a respectful family; Mr. Dolphus detests the rigid separation between the Blacks and the Whites and disagrees with the racial and social categories within his community. Moreover, Raymond chooses to live with a Black woman, with whom he has mixed race children, he wants to settle with the Black community, because as Jem tells Scout and Dill, “he likes ‘em better’n he likes us” (Lee 163).

Dolphus’ different thinking from the people of Maycomb causes him unpleasant gossip, just because he does not agree with the typical stereotype of hating Black people; the White community marginalizes him and prejudices towards him as he sadly says: “cry about the simple hell people give other people—without even thinking. Cry about the hell white people give colored folks, without even stopping to think that they’re people, too” (Lee 205).

In fact, Dolphus Raymond lives with two different identities; he pretends that he is drunk and thoughtless purposefully in public, whereas in private, he is a thoughtful and a respectful man. Mr. Dolphus reveals the truth to the children Jem, Scout, and Dill saying that all what he drinks is just a Coca-Cola as Scout asks “You mean all you drink in that sack’s Coca-Cola? “Just plain Coca-Cola?” ”Yes ma’am,”... “That’s all I drink, most of the time” (Lee 204).

In reality, Dolphus behaves in such a way to give an excuse for choosing the company of the Blacks over the Whites. In doing so, he would avoid the criticism of the Whites for marrying a Black woman because they would accept his behavior since he is a drunkard. In fact, Dolphus carries out this lie to give them a rational reason for his social behavior as the following passage indicates:

You mean why do I pretend? Well, it’s very simple,” he said. “Some folks don’t—like the way I live. (...) I try to give ‘em a reason, you see. It helps folks if they can latch onto a reason .When I come to town, which is seldom, if I weave

a little and drink out of this sack, folks can say Dolphus Raymond's in the clutches of whiskey—that's why he won't change his ways. He can't help himself, that's why he lives the way he does (Lee 204).

Dolphus prefers to live with a lie in order to satisfy his people about his lack of racism towards the Blacks. He obliges them to think that because of the whisky he does such things while in reality he drinks only Coca-Cola, he tells the children that “You see they could never, never understand that I live like I do because that's the way I want to live” (Lee 204).

Actually, Dolphus disgusts the injustices around him; he wants to act like a drunkard, so his people understand his doings. Although Dolphus does not show his views on the prejudices that most people in Maycomb practice, he is still affected by the influences of this attitude. Indeed, Dolphus does not follow the negative conditions that are directed at the Blacks, this can be demonstrated in his marriage with a Black woman that he has chosen as a wife for him and as a mother for his mixed race children.

Furthermore, Dolphus Raymond conveys a moral and ethical message to the people of Maycomb, as well as, to the readers. In fact, he shows a good evidence of the ability of different people to live together in a harmonious and peaceful world. Through this character, Harper Lee encourages her audience to start looking at each other in a different way without preconceptions. Besides, Dolphus Raymond represents a peaceful connection between two different worlds; the White community and the Black; he also reflects the ease that people can get along if they start to treat each other in a good manner regardless of their differences.

Thus, the discussion above aims to give some images that reflect the injustice that prevailed in Maycomb society during the 1930s. Many people in this community victimize some mockingbirds and hatefully they convicted them. Unfortunately, most people in

Maycomb “consciously or unconsciously” were programmed to follow some oppressed ideologies that destroyed the innocence of the mockingbirds.

## General Conclusion

Through her novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Harper Lee uses the symbolic term of “mockingbird” as a reference to pure, and innocent characters. Throughout the novel, Boo Radley, Tom Robinson, and Atticus Finch become clearly defined by Lee as human mockingbirds that live at the mercy of racist White community. Indeed, most of people in Maycomb community are racist and discriminatory, they build their own racial assumptions based on subjective and negative feelings against race, social class, or different customs, thus, their hatred and mistreatment are still unreasonable and inconclusive.

Furthermore, through her novel, Harper Lee illustrates clearly that African-Americans are segregated in every aspect of life. Blacks and Whites live in separate neighborhoods, because in the eyes of the Whites community, Negroes are poor, trash, and inferior to them. Indeed, African-Americans are segregated anywhere, even in courtroom, while Blacks sit in the colored balcony; Whites sit in the floor level because they are superior. In addition, even religion does not secure from Whites’ madness of racism. For worshipping the same God, Blacks and Whites have separate churches. Moreover, as a form of humiliation and disrespectful, Blacks’ church is used as a location for gambling by White men.

In addition, Blacks and Whites do not have equal rights and opportunities to access the public facilities. While education is compulsory for Whites, most of Blacks are illiterate. Moreover, Blacks are deprived of privilege of getting a decent job, they have no prominent positions in the Whites’ supremacist society, they do not get jobs except as employees in Maycomb community. Furthermore, African-Americans are deprived of the privilege of even being the same person anywhere. They have a dual identity, because they are African in their roots, and American in their life.

Through her novel, Harper Lee contributed in the depiction of the American reality during the 1930s. In doing so, she depended on her observations about racial, economic, and social issues that characterized the American South during that time. In effect, Lee's fictional novel is a vivid illustration to the problems of racism, oppression, preconception, and inequality that were severely intensified during a hard economic crisis that called the Great Depression. Thus, from the harsh realities of Lee's surrounding environment, the novel has emerged to portray the unjust and the oppression of the African Americans in the South, to reveal the wrong preconceptions that plague over the county of Maycomb, and to highlight the victimization of the mockingbirds in a hypocritical society. Therefore, Harper Lee's talent of narration visualizes the atmosphere of the Deep American South and its injustices.

Harper Lee's remarkable novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a valuable source for moral and ethical insights. It provides its readers with significant lessons about tolerance, justice, equality, and compassion through a multiple of moral voices. More often, the novel's moral themes show from the perspective of children; their education is mainly associated with the development of all of the novel's moral questions. These questions are approached to the reader through depicting the children's transition from their innocent childhood to a mature adulthood.

Indeed, this purposeful novel urges the Americans, particularly the Southerners, to forget their racial, social, and cultural differences that only intensify racism, preconception, and discontent in the community and start establishing a better society with better visions and attitudes toward the others. As a matter of fact, *To Kill a Mockingbird* serves as a moral code by which readers learn how to accept individuals who are different from the mainstream populace since they do not cause harm and can contribute in the improvement of the society. Indeed, this novel brings a precious message that racial preconception should be

erased, because all people of all races are equal before the law.

Throughout the novel, readers can clearly grasp the moral education that Lee wants her audience to apply; she reminds them to recognize the moral responsibility that they have in their treatment with others. Additionally, she stresses the message that before making judgments against a person, one should “climb into [the other’s] skin and walk around it” (Lee 30). At the end of the novel, Harper Lee confirms that the most important lessons in life are those of tolerance, sympathy, and understanding.

Since its publication in the 1960s, *To Kill a Mockingbird* has fascinated minds of many readers around the globe, and has inspired the works of many researchers till now. This novel will be read and studied forever because of its richness with valuable themes and precious models that has influenced readers’ minds for better. This research is undertaken due to the inspiration for examining the Whites’ racial preconception that killed the novel’s human mockingbirds’ innocence using Critical Race and Marxist perspectives.

For undertaking a further research on *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the researcher can use the Psychoanalytical theory that is useful to study the connection between the life of the novelist Harper Lee and her novel by analyzing the psyche, behaviors and inner conflicts of characters she uses.

Gender role and sexual preferences is an important theme that can be developed into a research, since *To Kill a Mockingbird* is about growing up as a female in the South. Lee depicts how a female is treated just like being poor and being African American. Women in Maycomb community do not have much of voice; they are weak, helpless, and inferior to men, the reason why Scout is reluctant to identify herself as a Southern woman; she feels impaired by her gender, because she is aware of its limitations. In doing such study, Feminist theory is practical to shed light on what is typical of women in the patriarchal Maycomb society.

The novel of *To Kill a Mockingbird* can serve as an inspirational source for lawyers;

it provides them with significant moralistic views concerning their career. Therefore, researches can be conducted about the themes of law and justice in this novel. Since Harper Lee's style makes the novel accessible to a large scope of readers; educational specialists, as well as, parents can take advantageous notions from Atticus' parenting and educating style, his interaction with his children, as well as, his guidance and efforts to install consciousness and morality in them. Moreover, this novel can stimulate historians too who can study the era of the Great Depression from a literary primary source. *To Kill a Mockingbird* can be a significant reference to study the history of the 1930s because it memorizes the Southern life during that time and documents its history.

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يعالج هذا البحث التحامل العرقي للبيض الذي نشأ بقوة على الأفارقة الأمريكيين، في مقاطعة مايكوم، بولاية ألاباما، خلال فترة الكساد العظيم، في رواية هاربر لي "أن تقتل طائرا محاكيا". في الواقع، تسعى هذه الأطروحة إلى تسليط الضوء على إيذاء الطيور المحاكية التي ترمز إلى شخصيات بريئة و غير مؤذية تتلقى معاملة غير عادلة في مجتمع مايكوم المتحيز، المليء بالافتراضات الخاطئة و النميمة التي تتحول في نهاية المطاف إلى حقيقة يصدقها كل امرئ. و عليه فان الأطروحة تهدف إلى تصوير جو العيش في مجتمع مايكوم خلال الكساد العظيم، وصف التحامل العنصري للبيض على السود و إيذائهم، التأكيد على فظاعة قتل الطيور المحاكية و تدمير براءتهم، الخوض في الأسباب الرئيسية للتحامل العنصري و تسليط الضوء على تأثيره على الشخصيات الرئيسية، الإشارة إلى الأخلاق الأساسية و الدروس الأخلاقية المستقاة من الرواية. إضافة، هذا البحث يعالج الاسئلة التالية: من هي الطيور المحاكية في الرواية و لماذا تعتبر كذلك؟ ما هي جوانب التحامل العرقي و تأثيرها على الشخصيات؟ الى أي مدى ساهمت الروائية هاربر لي في تصوير الحقيقة الامريكية في الاباما خلال الكساد العظيم من خلال روايتها؟ و ما هي نماذج الاخلاق والسلوكات الاخلاقية في الرواية؟. علاوة على ذلك، في هذا البحث تم تبي نظرية نقد العرق و النظرية الماركسية. هذه الدراسة تنقسم الى فصلين أساسيين الفصل الاول يميل الى وضع الرواية في سياقها السوسيو تاريخي، الادبي، و كذلك اعطاء خلفية منهجية للنظريات المطبقة في الفصل التالي. الفصل الثاني يضع الرواية في سياق التطبيق.