

CHAPTER: ONE

Lee and her Literary Features

Americans wrote about many things and one of them is the issue of the dominance of the blacks by the whites. The question of human slavery profoundly modified the thought and literature of the nation. The question that absorbed the attention of the best Southern intellect was slavery. Long before the Civil War, slavery became an unusually live subject. Opposition to slavery developed naturally as a result of the new spirit in religion and human philosophy. Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, etc. played an important part in the rising movement of the black arts. One of those writers who speak in the favour of the blacks is Harper Lee. Lee's one and only novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* raises the issue of the discrimination of the blacks by the whites.

This study analyzes Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* from the perspective of racism. The main concern goes on white prejudice and discrimination towards the black on the periphery of language, law, religion, myth and social status. *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a novel by Harper Lee published in 1960. It is a successful novel by which she gets the Pulitzer Prize, and the novel has become a classic of modern American literature. The plot and characters are loosely based on the author's observations of her family and neighbors, as well as on an event that occurred near her hometown in 1936, when she was ten years old.

Harper Lee born in 1926 and grew up in the Southern town of Monroeville, Alabama attended Huntington College in Montgomery, and then studied law at the University of Alabama. While attending college, she wrote for campus literary magazines, *Huntress* at Huntington and the humor magazine *Rammer Jammer* at the

University of Alabama. At both colleges, she wrote short stories and other works about racial injustice, a rarely mentioned topic on such campuses at the time. An editor at J.B. Lippincott advised her to concentrate on writing. Donations from friends allowed her to write uninterrupted for a year.

Lee spent two and a half years writing *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The book was initially titled *Atticus*, but Lee renamed it to reflect a story that went beyond a character portrait. Since the original publication, the book has never been out of print. The book met with enthusiastic critical and popular reception upon its publication and has remained one of the most pervasive texts.

Lee has a wonderful gift of story-telling. Several writers commented and praised Lee for her style. Gary Richards writes about the portrayal of true and lively picture of life in an American small town. The statement goes as:

Almost without exception, reviewers praised her depiction of small-town southern life. Granville Hicks notes her “insight into Southern mores,” and Keith Waterhouse, writing from the other side of the Atlantic, offers that “Miss Lee does well what so many American writers do appallingly: She paints a true and lively picture of life in an American small town. And she gives freshness to a stock situation.” This “freshness” arises in part, suggested Frank H. Lyell, because Lee avoids the tropes and imagery of the southern gothic. “Maycomb has its share of eccentrics and evil-doers,” he admits, “but Miss Lee has not tried to satisfy the current lust for morbid, grotesque tales of Southern depravity.” Novelist Lee’s prose has an edge that cuts the cant. (149)

Harper Lee is a young Alabama woman who talks about regional story but claims the universal appeals. She loves to write about the Southern towns of America. Haggerty says that Lee is fascinated by the definite social patterns of the Southern towns:

In her post-publication interview for *To Kill a Mockingbird* Lee stated, "There is very definite social Pattern in (Southern) towns that fascinates me. I would simply like to put down all I know about this because I believe that there is something universal in this little world, something decent to be said for it, and something to lament in its passing. (24)

Harper Lee does not see the South only as traditional and divided on the basis of colour, caste, etc. Throughout her novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, she presents a dual view of the American South. On the one hand, Harper Lee sees the South as still in the grip of the traditions and habits so amply documented by Davis, Dollard, and others as caste division along strictly color lines, hierarchical caste stratification within castes and exaggerated regard for kin-group relations within particular classes. On the other hand, she argues that the South has within itself the potential for progressive change, stimulated by the incorporation of the New England romanticism of an Emerson, and characterized by the pragmatism, principles, and wisdom of Atticus Finch. In this context, Erisman says:

In suggesting the possibility of a shift from the old romanticism to the new, however, Miss Lee goes even further. If her argument is carried to its logical extension, it becomes apparent that she is suggesting that the South, by assimilating native (though extra-regional) ideals, can transcend the confining sectionalism that has dominated it in the past,

and develop the breadth of vision characteristic of the truly regional outlook. (30-31)

R.A. Dave has his own opinion about Lee's writing. He states that Lee has a remarkable gift of narrating the story:

Harper Lee has a remarkable gift of story-telling. Her art is visual, and with cinematographic fluidity and subtlety we see a scene melting into another scene without jolts of transition. Like Browning's poet, Harper Lee is a 'maker-see'. She unfolds the wide panorama of Maycomb Life in such a way that we, the readers, too, get transported in that world within world and watch helplessly, though not quite hopelessly, the bleak shadows of the adult world darkening the children's dream world. (38)

Also we find strong subject matters like references to the sex act, questioning of absolutes and the imposition of values in her writing. The language she uses in her writing is sometimes controversial because she uses slang and ungrammatical speech, curse words and obscene words, racial slurs etc. Johnson in her essay writes that Lee's novel had to face various objections:

A careful look reveals that most of the elements would-be censors object to can be found in *To Kill a Mockingbird*: (1) references to the sex act, (2) slang and ungrammatical speech, (3) curse words and obscene words, (4) racial slurs, (5) descriptions of rebelliousness or challenges to authority, (6) unfavorable portrayals of the establishment, including organized religion and the government, (7) questioning of absolutes, and (8) the imposition of values. Author Julian Thompson, in categorizing the most frequent objections to literature, cites three

main categories that are all pertinent to Harper Lee's novel: (1) vulgar language, (2) references to the sexual activity, and (3) expression of anti-establishment attitudes. *To Kill a Mockingbird* has raised objections on all counts. (3)

Lee's writing is autobiographical in the sense that all the characters and events she portrays in her novel have some similarities with the real people and real events. In her novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* her characters Atticus, Jem, Dill, Scout all seem to be based on her real life relatives, friends and Lee herself but although her characters are inspired from the people of her real life, she is successful in presenting her characters in such a way that they are representative of their group. For example, in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Atticus represents the rational white people who are not guided by the common social belief and are open to change, Scout and Jem stand for those innocent minds who have been given the right kind of education, Calpurnia represents the aware black population and Tom Robinson is one of those victimized for the crime he has not committed. So Lee's characters are all a part of the society, and we can easily identify with them.

In this regard, Dave states, "In the novel, Harper Lee installs herself avowedly as the narrator and depicts not only the external world of action, but the internal world of characters also. It is certainly not an innovation; Chaucer had done it in his *Canterbury Tales*" (37).

Lee uses entertaining methods to drive the plot. In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, when Atticus is out of town, Jem locks a Sunday school classmate in the church basement with the furnace during a game. This prompts their black housekeeper Calpurnia to take Scout and Jem to her church, which allows the children a glimpse into her personal life, as well as Tom Robinson's. In Lee's writing we can find the

study of nostalgias. Harold Bloom says, “The book’s continued popularity, still extraordinary, partly suggests that we find in it a study of the nostalgias” (2).

Lee chooses a small county of Maycomb, Alabama as the setting of her novel and the time of depression when people were in the grip of poverty. Maycomb is a tired, old town, hot and not exciting at all. As Fred Erisman says:

As Miss Lee unfolds her account of three years in the lives of Atticus, Jem and Scout Finch, and in the history of Maycomb, Alabama, she makes clear persistence of the old beliefs. Maycomb, she says, is “an old town . . . a tired old town,” even “an ancient town.” A part of Southern Alabama from the time of first settlements, and isolated and largely untouched by the Civil war, it was like the South, turned inward upon itself by reconstruction. (24)

Lee’s strongest quality is her talent for narration. She has a wonderful gift of storytelling; we can visualize her characters and the action when we read the book. Her scenes flow smoothly and one scene melts into another scene without jolts of transition. The narrative strategy Lee uses in *To Kill a Mockingbird* is quite interesting. In the novel, she combines the narrative voice of a child observing her surrounding with a grown woman’s reflecting on her childhood. Lee uses the ambiguity of this voice combined with the narrative technique of flashback to play intricately with perspectives. Dean Shackelford says, “Clearly, part of the novel’s success has to do with the adult-as-child perspective. Lee recalling her own childhood, projects the image of an adult reflecting on her past and attempting to recreate the experience through a female child’s point of view” (104).

Lee has the capacity to alter the tone and atmosphere of her novel easily and in an interesting way. Commenting on her writing in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Evans says,

"In shifting her narrative focus from Boo to Bob, Lee also alters the tone and atmosphere of the novel, turning what begins mainly as a nostalgic, amusing children's book into a highly disturbing exploration of personal and social immorality" (105).

Harper Lee's life and her literary features have been compared with Jane Austen's by Andrew Haggerty. He says:

Lee admired and sought to emulate Austen's genius for bringing to life all the social rules and customs of a particular era and class . . . Austen is famous for writing exclusively about the lives and manners of the English Country gentry, particularly young women's lives. *To Kill a Mockingbird* likewise remains tightly focused on small-town, Southern, middle-class culture. But a restricted setting does not necessarily indicate a restricted view of human nature, if it is observed honestly and intimately enough. Lee took this lesson to heart. (24)

Dave finds some similarities in the writings of Lee and Whitman. He says, "Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* has an astonishing technical kinship with Whitman's 'Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking.' Both, Whitman and Harper Lee, recollect childhood memories after many years have gone by" (37).

Review of Literature

To Kill a Mockingbird is a Pulitzer prize-winning novel by Harper Lee published in 1960. It was instantly successful. The plot and characters of the novel are loosely based on the author's observations of her family and neighbours, as well as on an event that occurred near her hometown in 1936, when she was ten years old. The novel is renowned for its warmth and humour. It is noted that Lee addresses the issues of class tensions, courage, and compassion, and gender roles in the American Deep

South. Lee's novel has been reviewed by many newspapers and magazines. Gary Richards examines the subtle intimations of Truman Capote's homosexuality in Dill, for whom Capote served as model, and in Scout Finch's perpetual boyishness:

Like so much Southern literary production during and after World War II, *To Kill a Mockingbird* centrally preoccupies itself with gender transitivity. These violations of normative gender manifest themselves in characters as diverse as Dill Harris, Scout Finch . . . Lee draws attention to such transgressive performances through their alterity to normative ones, such as those of Aunt Alexandra, and by overt communal demands for gender conformity . . . What nevertheless emerges in *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a destabilization of heterosexuality and normative gender that seems far more radical because of its cultural pervasiveness. (151-52)

The novel is not an autobiography, rather an example of how an author should write about what he knows and write truthfully. Nevertheless, several people and events from Lee's childhood parallel those of the fictional Scout. In this context, it is relevant to quote some of the lines of Michael J. Meyer where he says that although Lee's characters and events are based on real life, she has created the connection between the written words and their lives:

Charles Shields, in his biography of Lee entitled *I am Scout*, draws his readers attention to all the “real” elements in *Mockingbird*. Maycomb, Alabama, is based in Lee’s hometown, Monroville, located in the same state; Atticus Finch is based in Lee’s father, Amasa Coleman Lee . . . Yet what I wish to suggest on this preface to my collection of essays on *To Kill a Mockingbird* is that it is of little importance to readers if Harper Lee is Scout

or if there is actual fact behind fiction. What matters is that Lee has created a novel wherein her readers can create an empathetic connection between the written word and their lives. (xviii)

Since the publication of the novel many critics and writers have written on it. Fred Erisman emphasizes the more hopeful mode of Southern Romanticism he attributes to Harper Lee:

A more hopeful view, however, appears in Harper Lee's novel of Alabama Life, *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Miss Lee is well aware of traditional Southern Romanticism and, indeed, agrees that it was and is a pervasive influence in the South . . . At the same time she sees in the New South-----the South of 1930-1935-----the dawning of a newer and more vital form of romanticism. She does not see this newer romanticism as widespread, nor does she venture any sweeping prediction as to its future. Nevertheless, in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Miss Lee presents an Emersonian view of southern Romanticism, suggesting that the south can move from the archaic, imported romanticism of its past toward the more reasonable, pragmatic and native romanticism of Ralph Waldo Emerson. (23-24)

Further, Ellen Price's criticism of the novel is based on ethic and recognition. In this regard, Ellen writes, "When read through a new lens, Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* has the potential to contribute more to literary study than simply a lesson of tolerance; instead it can be interpreted as having new implications for the study of ethic and recognition" (3).

Dean Shackelford talks about the feminist issues in the novel. The novel is very much about the experience of growing up as a female in the South with very narrow definitions of gender roles and acceptable behavior. Shackelford also talks

about the narrator of the novel, Scout Finch who is a female but despises the ways of the females, especially Southern. Throughout the novel she remains in constant fear of being called a girl by her brother Jem:

As in the novel, he tells her she is getting to be more like a girl every day, the implication being that boys are courageous and non-fearful and girls are weak and afraid. Nevertheless, what is most important in the scene is Scout's reaction. Knowing that being called a girl is an insult and that being female is valued less than being male in her small Southern town, she suddenly becomes brave in order to remain acceptable to her brother. (105-106)

The novel raises various other questions related to gender issues. In this regard, Shackelford says that questions about Scout's womanhood and her relations with other male characters are raised:

Furthermore, a number of significant questions about gender are raised in the novel: Is Scout (and by implication, all females) an outsider looking on an adult male world which she knows she will be unable to enter as she grows into womanhood? Is her identification with Atticus due not only to her love and devotion for a father but also to his maleness, a power and freedom she suspects she will not be allowed to possess within the confines of provincial Southern society? Or is her identification with Atticus due to his androgynous nature? All three of these questions may lead to possible, even complementary readings which would explain Scout's extreme identification with her father. (110)

Patrick Chura speaks about the historicity of the novel. Harper Lee's novel is based on some of the historical events but they are not accurate. Her version of history, like the version of events agreed upon as the real story of Bob Ewell's death, is therefore not literally but symbolically true:

Her most profound interpretations of the novel's events are not derived through conscious analysis, verbal instruction or logic. Instead, they seem enabled by a prelingual or prediscursive state of sleep-induced semi-consciousness in which events from different time periods come together to create a version of reality that is as individual as it is anachronistic in the sense of the word that literally means "outside of time." Here she subject to discourses or texts that are "of" both her past and present but which operate simultaneously and across time barriers. (133)

Despite its themes, *To Kill a Mockingbird* has been the target of various campaigns to have it removed from public classrooms. Often the book is challenged for its use of racial epithets, and writers have noticed that although white readers react favorably to the novel, black readers tend to respond less positively. Claudia Durst Johnson traces the history of early censorship of the novel:

Objections to the use of *To Kill a Mockingbird* in the classroom or its presence on library shelves were made chiefly in the South in the years just after its publication. The most highly publicized case occurred in 1996 in Hanover County, Virginia, where the school board initially decided that the novel would not be on the list of books approved for school use. The chief reason given was that it was immoral. . .

Although the black characters are sympathetic and the novel exposes

racism as abhorrent and white racists as ludicrous and hypocritical, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, like *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, has frequently been challenged by African-American parents chiefly because it contains racial slurs. (6)

R. A. Dave, from an Anglo-Indian perspective, inflates the book's status to tragedy. According to him:

To Kill a Mockingbird is indeed a criticism of life and that, too, a most disturbing criticism, but we hardly feel any tension between the novelist's creativity and social criticism and the tale of heroic struggle lingers on our memory as an unforgettable experience while its locale, Maycomb County----'Ad Astra per Aspera: from mud to the stars'----stretches itself beyond our everyday horizon as an old familiar world. (46)

Dave further comments on the use of the mockingbird myth in the novel:

At once the moral undertones of the story acquire symbolical expression and the myth of the mockingbird is seen right at the thematic centre of the story. The mockingbird motif, as effective as it is ubiquitous, and a continual reminder of the thematic crux, comes alive in the novel with all its associations of innocence, joy and beauty.

In spite of all these common beliefs existing in the society, in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Harper Lee views racism as a deep-rooted evil practice which can change but too slowly. Lee's views on racism are symbolically mentioned in her book. With the help of a snowman made out of mud and snow she tries to prove that skin colour does not determine a person's inner quality. R.A. Dave takes the example of the snowman made by Jem to show that skin colour is temporary:

Jem makes a snowman first by mud which Scout refers to as a 'nigger snowman' and he tries to cover it with some snow-flakes, making it white. But at night Miss Maudie's house is on fire, and Scout watches 'our absolute Morphodite go black and crumble.' The snowman turning alternately white and black suggests how frail and skin-deep is the color. (39)

Harold Bloom thinks the novel, in its societal aspects, is already a period piece, and its faith in essential human nature can seem very naïve. He says, "The book's continued popularity, still extraordinary, partly suggests that we find in it the study of the nostalgias. Yet nostalgia itself dates; the reader becomes alienated from it, when nothing restores a sense of its relevance" (2).

Fred Erisman writes about the caste system prevailing in the Southern old town of Maycomb. Lee illustrates Maycomb's archetypal Southernness through the caste system prevalent there.

The town's social structure, for example, is characteristically Southern. Beneath its deceptively placid exterior, Maycomb has a taut, well-developed caste system. Even more indicative of Maycomb's characteristically Southern caste system is the power of the sexual taboo, which has been called "the strongest taboo of the system," This is dramatized by the maneuverings during Tom Robinson's trial of allegedly raping Mayella Ewell, a central episode in the novel. Although Tom's infraction of the black man-white woman code is demonstrated to have been false, he is nonetheless condemned. The caste taboo outweighs empirical evidence . . . Despite the presence of a more than reasonable doubt as to his guilt, despite the discrediting of

Ewells, the chief witnesses for the prosecution, Tom Robinson is condemned. (25)

Samuel D. G. Heath criticizes *To Kill a Mockingbird* with special emphasis to the children. Children have their own wisdom and their wisdom has no prejudice, they learn to hate from the adults:

It is once more the wisdom of the child that Harper Lee brings out so clearly, vividly, in her novel. The wisdom of the child has no prejudice. Like the song "Carefully Taught" in *South Pacific* it takes an adult society to teach children to hate those who are different from them. Such adult society reminds me of something Atticus says in the novel, "Naming people as Confederate general makes them slow steady drinkers. (12-13)

Heath also points out the presence of hypocrisy in many characters of the novel, especially, the preachers of the religion who view women as a sin:

Harper Lee makes some profound points concerning hypocrisy on the part of so many in her novel. For example she recognizes the religious animosity toward women. That of the Moslem and Jewish religions is patently obvious. But when Harper Lee points out the preaching of the "Women are unclean and a sin by definition" doctrine of Christianity, she strikes at the heart of the matter. (11)

By looking at all the criticisms by the critics, I came to know that no one has dealt with the issue of racial prejudice, which my research undertakes to investigate in the novel. The problem of this thesis is Lee's fictional town, Maycomb, which is in the clutches of racial prejudice. In this novel, the white race is the superior race and

the black race is the inferior one. So, the whites discriminate and dominate the blacks which means there is the presence of racial prejudice in Maycomb.

The hypothesis is, due to the presence of racial prejudice, the black people of *To Kill a Mockingbird* are dominated by the white people and the dominance can be seen in all the sectors like language, religion, law, myth and social status. Due to the presence of racial prejudice the society of Maycomb is disintegrated and it is full of conflicts and disasters. To prove it, intensive study of the text is done. The wide range of materials pertaining to race, racism and racial prejudice is used as the theoretical tool. In addition internet, library consultation and related commentaries are supportive and the guidance from professors and lecturers is the inspiration to complete this thesis. This thesis is divided into four chapters. The chapters include Introduction, Race and Racism, Racial Prejudice in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* and Conclusion respectively.

CHAPTER: TWO

Race and Racism

Racial Matter and Race Studies

Race is a socially constructed concept that generalizes humankind in major divisions in terms of distinctive characteristics. In this regard Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban, defines the term and states, “Race is a unique concept belonging in the history of ideas, the world of biology, and the realm of social science” (5). In fact, “race” is a social construct which derives mainly from perceptions conditioned by the event of recorded history, and it has no basis in biological reality. Race is conceived as a biological, genetically determined concept. But the meaning of race has not always remained same. Bruce Dain describes the changing faces of “race” in such a way:

Long before the eighteenth century, the western tradition had seen the existence of differentiated human groups marked by physical attributes. These attributes were sometimes understood as innate but more often as a function of climate. The Old Testament refers to the hot sun as related to African blackness. But “blacks” only became a “race” in the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries . . . New “breeds” of men had been discovered by European explorers and conquerors circumnavigating the globe, setting up colonies in strange and distant places. Hence “race” connoted roughly geographical groups of people marked by supposedly common physical characteristics. The word “race” was also used to characterize all human beings as distinct from animals. (6-7)

With the changing time, the definition of race is also changing. The words slavery, discrimination, dominance, prejudice, etc. come along with the word “race”.

Dain further states:

By the turn of the eighteenth century slavery had not petered out, African-American had remained black, racial apocalypse had not come to the United States. Instead, the number of slaves rose by nearly three quarters from 1790 to 1820, the number of free blacks tripled, and the total number of African-Americans nearly doubled. (40)

In the course of time, the view about race kept on changing. In this regard, Appiah says:

We could divide human beings into a small number of groups; called “races” in such a way that all the members of these races shared certain fundamental, biologically inheritable, moral and intellectual characteristics with each other they did not share with members of any other race. (276)

As time passes by, race becomes a problem and the reason of violence. As Bruce Dain says, “Jefferson presented slavery and race as problems made insoluble by Negro resentment, white prejudice, and “the real distinctions which nature has made” between black and white” (1). Many people believe that race has been constructed primarily around phenotype or physical appearance and some think it is not only about physical appearance. In this regard, Lobban states, “Race is not now, nor has it ever been simply about the physical description of human variation. Since its origin in Western Science, in the eighteenth century, race has been used both to classify and rank human beings according to inferior and superior types” (4).

Slowly in the United States black race becomes more than a physically different race. Blackness becomes crime. People start believing that to become a part of black race is to be inferior, to suffer and to live the life of servitude. As Dain writes, “Jefferson’s statement: I advance it as a suspicion only that the blacks, whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstance, are inferior to whites, both in body and mind” (13). White people even compare blacks with the animals. In this context, Dain further states:

Jefferson later used the fairly common idea that chimpanzees mated with, African women not as Linnaeus would have used it, as testimony of human animality and closeness to apes, but as proof of the Negro’s bestial distance from the rationally governed white man. Essential nature, not a history of circumstance, explained differences between black and white. (13)

Olson, Keith highlights its origin and states, “In its original use, race itself is referred to origin in common stock. This could be family, religion or nation, but it is applied equally to plant and animal life” (125). The meaning of race has shifted according to socio historical condition. In the course of time race is referred to “The noble race, the Jewish race, French race” (Olson 125). In the period of colonization, the new practice came about the race which enforced black to struggle for their right.

So, race is a unique concept belonging in the history of ideas, the world of biology, and the realm of social science. In the United States there is confusion about the categories; perhaps Americans try to make less of race, or more of culture. In short, Lobban says, “Race is about outward physical appearance, or phenotype” (20).

Racism, on the other hand is about ranking the differences in humans into inferior and superior types. In this regard, Lobban says, “Racism not only takes note

of racial difference but evaluates that difference, ranking it into superior or inferior, higher or lower types” (4). Racism is basically used to describe negative feelings of one group towards the other. Racism both takes note of race and makes judgments about good and bad behavior, better or worse attitudes. Racism is based on false belief of the society and it is legalized by politics. In this context, Lobban says, "As an ideology racism belongs to the realm of cultural construction and the power of politics, even as it is rooted in an erroneous biological foundation and a false belief that the determination of behavior can be reduced to physical, genetic attributes of race" (4).

The term “racism” is often used in a loose and unreflective way to describe the hostile or negative feelings of one group toward another and the actions resulting from such attitudes. Racism can exist in the society even when it is not supported by the state and the law. In this context, George M. Fredrickson says that racism can exist under the illusion of non-racism:

Racism does not require a full and explicit support of the state and the law. Nor does it require an ideology centered on the concept of biological inequality. Discrimination by institutions and individuals against those perceived as racially different can long persist and even flourish under the illusion of non-racism. (4)

Fredrickson defines racism as more than just a belief. He thinks that racism is not just an attitude but it is practically seen in the society. It creates hierarchy in the society:

Racism, as I conceive it, is not merely an attitude or set of beliefs; it also expresses itself in the practices, institutions, and structures that a sense of deep difference justifies or validates. Racism therefore is more

than theorizing about human differences or thinking badly of a group over which one has no control. It either directly sustains or proposes to establish a racial order, a permanent group hierarchy that is believed to reflect the laws of nature or the decrees of God. (6)

Many people view racism as an idea, some say it is more than idea but Albert Memmi in his book *Racism* looks at racism in a different way. He defines racism as a structure. He thinks structure of racism has four moments. Steve Martinot says:

It is this fundamental disparity, its banal, social “il-logicality,” that Memmi seeks to illuminate, and to resolve. He does so by understanding structure rather than an idea, a social relation rather than a feeling or a prejudice. For him, the structure of racism has four moments. First there is an insistence on difference, whether “real or imaginary.” The second aspect is that a negative valuation is imposed upon those seen as differing, a positive valuation for those imposing it. Third, this differential valuation, which renders the difference unignorable, is generalized to an entire group, which is then deprecated in turn. And fourth, the negative valuation imposed upon that group becomes the legitimization and justification for hostility and aggression. The inner purpose of this process is social benefit, self-valorization, and the creation of a sense of identity for the one through the denigration of the other. (qtd in Memmi, xvii-xviii)

Race and racism are interrelated subjects. Actually racism is about race but there is a great difference between these two terms. Race is basically about physical description of human variation and racism is about ranking these differences in humans into inferior and superior types. According to the Oxford Dictionary, race is,

“a group of people who share the same language, history, culture, etc” (1240), and racism is, “the unfair treatment of people who belong to a different race; violent behavior towards them; the belief that some races of people are better than others” (1241).

From the definitions above, it is clear that race is about the difference and racism is about ranking the difference into inferior and superior, for example “black” is a race and the discrimination of white against black is racism. In this context, Dreidger and Halli, say that race is the biological grouping of people on the basis of physical traits:

Race is defined as an arbitrary biological grouping of people on the basis of physical traits. Racism as the doctrines that behavior is determined by stable inherited characteristics deriving from separate racial stocks, which have distinctive attributes and are usually considered to stand to one another in relations of superiority and inferiority. (3)

Various other writers have written on the difference between race and racism. One of them is Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban. Lobban differentiates race and racism in this way:

Racism is about race. Race is about outward physical appearance, or phenotype, and racism is about ranking these differences in humans into inferior and superior types. Thus, racist ideas can claim that white skin is superior and black skin is inferior. Racist “Science” can use physical measurement of the skull to show high or low intelligence, it can rank people by racial type. In popular culture, hair type, nose shape

or skin color can be valued as “good” or “bad” depending on its approximation of a white ideal. (20)

In the west, the concept of race develops during the enlightenment and spreads to many parts of the non-western world through international commerce, including the slave trade, and later, colonial conquest and administration which uses it as an effective tool of social division. Racism can be easily identified with ideas of white supremacy in which superior intelligence is asserted to whites and the lowest position is occupied by the Negro. America has always been in the grip of racism. The white people there once made a rule called “one-drop rule,” in which any connection (mostly related to blood) with the black at any time would make the person black. In this context, it is relevant to quote the lines of Lobban. He says, “The notorious “one-drop” rule in the peculiar American history of race is tied to the slave system, which held that “a single drop” of black blood, or “a single ancestor” who was African, constituted “blackness” (12).

In the history of America, the white people have at times made very unfair rules to dominate blacks. Thus, the white people’s ability to hate the blacks is racism and for the whites, the ability to contest racism hinges on understanding how they are given hegemony by it through their whiteness.

Racism is stereotyping and generalizing about people, usually negatively because of their race commonly a basis of discrimination against members of racial groups. Prejudice means the negative attitude or emotion towards a group. Rupert Brown says that prejudice is present if the attitude of a group towards another group implies some negativity, "Prejudice will be regarded as any attitude, emotion or behavior towards members of a group, which directly or indirectly implies some

negativity or antipathy towards that group" (6). Brown also gives the definitions of prejudice in the words of Allport and Samson:

Allport wrote: Prejudice is an antipathy based upon a faulty and inflexible generalization. It may be directed toward a group as a whole or toward an individual because he is a member of that group. More recently, Samson: prejudice involves as unjustified, usually negative attitude towards others because of their social category or group membership. (4)

Racial prejudice is the phenomenon found between, so-called racial categories and it pervades human history and contemporary life. Afua Arhin and Bruce A. Thyer define prejudice as an opinion developed without proof:

Prejudice can be defined as an opinion about an individual, group, or phenomenon that is developed without proof or systematic evidence. The prejudgement may be favourable but it is more often unfavourable and may become institutionalized in the form of a country's laws or customs. (3)

In racial prejudice, the race which is inferior is discriminated and dominated. They are the minorities and they are supposed to bear the unfair treatment of the dominant group. Harold D. Fishbein says that the inferior group has to accept the unfair treatment of the superior ones because even the rules and regulations are in their hands:

. . . accept unfair and illegal abuses of power by government authorities; weaken constitutional guarantees of liberty, such as the bill of rights; go easy on authorities who commit crimes and people who attack minorities; are highly self-righteous; uncritically accept

insufficient evidence that supports their beliefs; help cause and inflame intergroup conflict; and seek dominance over others by being competitive and destructive in situations requiring cooperation. (280)

The feeling of superiority or inferiority of one group over the other because of the presence or absence of certain characteristics is known as discrimination. These beliefs in practices are more complicated, such as cultural racism and racial subjugation. Political and social institution and other social systems affect the position of social minorities as ethnic groups. Mainly such concept developed in South America where Black people are badly treated by the Whites.

In this way, different upheavals are seen in the racial concepts through the history of the world civilization. Contemporary form of racism links itself to the discourses such as patriotism, xenophobia, gender differences, etc. These themes combine to provide a definition of race in terms of culture and identity. Its link to different institutions of the society is the newness of racism in contemporary approach.

Racial History of America

America is a new land with heterogeneous groups of people, mostly from Europe and Africa. It is a mixture of different cultures. At the same time, it has years of terrible history in which it has to fight for the freedom and for the emancipation of slavery. As soon as the European tribes arrive in America, the contention about black rights stem. Both the whites and blacks come together in the new world, the whites as masters and the blacks as slaves. In the long run, the blacks are suppressed more and more, they are forced to live under the white's pity.

Moreover, the white people develop the culturally embodied rights and suppress the blacks as much as they can. Until date, though various acts on behalf of

the black people have been carried out, the problem remains the same. In this regard, Dain's statement is relevant to quote. He says, "For, despite the various definitions of race and blackness that would appear in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, one thing would seem sure in the United States. Someone with very dark skin and full features was "black" (59).

The history of American society is the history of oppression and migration. American geographical and cultural space has provided limitless potential to the whites since its settlement, but the blacks are denied such spaces. Their African heritage and later the Southernness are repudiated by the larger culture. Over the different historical events –slavery, emancipation, and migration- they try to negotiate their relationship with their cultural traditions. But white race and its cultural heritage consistently marginalize them. Therefore, it won't be hyperbolic to state that American history itself is a practice of racism.

Despite the political proclamation and independent war, America has been enjoying slavery till now. In 1860, Abraham Lincoln, proclaimed that slavery is an evil. In a speech in Illinois in 1858, Lincoln had declared for restricting slavery and eventually to be abolished through legislative reforms. North was ruling the south and seemed a little biased in the anti –slavery movement, since the cotton farming again promoted slavery, which was declared free. The conservative white force fighting against anti- slavery movement sent people leading the anti-slavery movement into jails. They tried to dismiss the anti-slavery movement and imposed the white man's burden on the black people. In this context, Olson writes:

In July 1866, congress had passed a civil rights bill and set up a new freedman's Bureau both designed to prevent racial discrimination by Southern legislature. In 1870 the legislative decision was made and

declared the rights of citizen of the US to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any states on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude. . . In Alabama, Southerners white, seeing their civilizations threatened and finding no way to stop the course of events, turned to illegal means. Soon violence became more and more frequent, and in 1870, increasing disorder led the black to their civil rights. Different acts were enforced to abolish slavery on one hand, the wrath of whites losing their power created social unrest on the other, and that continued for decades. (23)

The history of America began with the grabbing of the land from Native Americans and enforcing the blacks to cultivate the land. It consequently created hierarchies in color and division of land. The white established a system of privilege in terms of oppression and exploitation. In this regard, Harris and Ordonez say:

The social division along the color line crossed class, nationality, language, and religious barriers. The simple fact of whiteness meant the overall life; fortune and destiny of white people . . . White people were exempt from slavery, land grab and genocide the first form of white privilege. White enjoyed wide latitude of opportunities, personal freedom, and democratic rights protected by the state. Even though rich white viciously exploited poor American born and immigrant white, they were not the bottom. The bottom was reserved for Indians, Black and other people of color. (310)

American society generated and condoned so much prejudice before the abolition of slavery, that the country has not been able to politically remove the evil efforts of its former bad example. One white man in the south had always had greater

power than the two or three white men in the North and Negro people were entirely excluded from their proportionate representation and participation in the government.

The government has failed in the hands of the white man to do political justice to itself and to the Negro. American injustice to her colored citizens deprived the American people of their influence in world movement of freedom and democracy.

Regarding political prejudice George W. Ellis says:

The government of the United States represented at its birth the political dream of countries. Founded upon the freedom and equality of all men, it invited to its shores the oppressed of every land. Its founders laid the foundations of democracy that was supposed to be a poetical light to the nations of the earth. Before this government was established the institution of slavery had manufactured so much class prejudice in industry, education and religion, that at the adoption of the constitution, the white race was unable to make this government in fact what theory it was announced to the world. (15)

Thus it is clear that there is ambivalence in American politics about the color discrimination. On one hand, there is the slogan of equality and on the other hand, there is still prejudice upon Negro. The Negroes are restricted in the matter of political activity. As slave they are obviously outside the party system and can take no part in government. This situation continues even after the civil war. It is from the time the Africans were first brought to America, the social body and mind of the white race has been acting against the Negro. The Afro-American lives in the state of constant humiliation. His dignity as an individual is not admitted and he gets no respect from the white and even non white people of the world.

The Afro-American is deprived of public facilities and has to suffer excessive political brutality. The Afro American's cultural identity is only that of a wage earner and professional man in American society. Afro- Americans are never privileged for jobs that are more skilled. Rather they continue to be concentrated in the less skilled jobs and most of them work for living, not getting money. They are living with both socially and economically depressed status. It is due to the discrimination against them in training and employment opportunities offered by armed services, discrimination against them by labor organizations. Even if given admission, the student is not given equal treatment; he is required to sit at the separate table in the library and has a specific seat in the classroom.

It is believed that many Negroes are poor, uneducated and deficient in health, morals and manners and thus were not very agreeable as social companions. It is also pointed out that Negroes are different in physical appearance even if they have the same basic mental capacity and moral propensities. Beside this belief centering on Negro inferiority, there are a great number of other popular thoughts arranged to justify social segregation; the thought that Negroes like to be separated, that they were happy in their humble status and would not like to be treated as equals. Another idea with the same function is that separation was necessary in order to prevent friction between the two groups.

Against their condition, the Afro- Americans start the voice of deep hurt and bitter disappointment. They glorify the attainments of Negroes in music, literature, painting and athletes. They promote Negro fraternal orders, civic association, churches, commercial establishment and other groups and institutions. People like cooks, butlers, maids and shoeshine men serve white people but they no longer trust, respect or love them. And with the breakdown of faith in the integrity of the white

power structure, there is loss of respect for law as an effective means of social change. Since the Afro- Americans are merely bundle of resentments and sufferings, an explosion is inevitable.

With germination of the sense of revolt, organization such as the national Association for Advancement of Colored, the committee on racial equality and the Urban League accelerate movement for Afro- American rights pointing to the doctrine to the human equality and the natural or divine rights of men. Freedom Riders range through the south demanding de-segregation and implementation of US Supreme Court decision on educational desegregation. In this regard, the following lines of Olson are relevant to quote:

After massive black demonstration in segregated deep- south city of Birmingham, Alabama, President Kennedy proposed to Congress the most sweeping legislation in the century to eliminate discrimination in voting, education, employment and public accommodation. (45)

The Kennedy administration further advanced racial equality by appointing many eminent blacks to the high government post. In this regard, Olson states:

Dozens of Americans gained appointment to positions ranging from presidential assistant to ambassador. With more than 240,000 black students attending institutions of higher learning in 1964, there were reasons to believe that the trend towards better jobs and more influential role in government for black would be hastened. (67)

Various declarations made the country free from the slavery, however, there is still difference prevailing in America since domestic practices, communal feelings which are deep rooted are hard to change, and it may take generations to change the feelings and behaviors.

Race and Literature

Literature itself can be the study of racial structure of society. The artistic portrayal of the society in literature provides a space for the study of race. In this regard, Appiah says:

For literary purposes, the developments that begin at the turn of the nineteenth century have another immediate consequence: race becomes important as the theme of great body of writing in Europe and North America and, indeed, in the rest of the world under the influence of “Western” cultures-and the concept often plays a crucial role in structuring plot. (279)

When we observe the history of racism in literature Appiah's reference is relevant to quote:

Difference among people, like differences among communities within a single society, play a central role in our thinking about “who” we are, in structuring our values, and in determining the identities through where we live . . . And so long as it continues it is likely that race will continue to be preoccupation, not only of literary history of nineteenth century and twentieth century, but also of future literary production and literary study. (287)

Race study is, consciously or unconsciously, presented even in classical literature. In the classical period people would be respected for a person's individuality, not for his skin color. Racial prejudice is observed also in the renaissance literature especially in Shakespeare's *Othello* and the *Merchant of Venice* and Marlow's *The Jew of Malta*. The stereotypic views in Elizabethan England were that Moors and Jews were barely an empirical reality. They were the most despised

ones though the attitudes to them do not seem to have been based on experience.

Those people based their views on theological conception that Jews and Moors were non-Christian. Moors were distinguished by color that was associated in Christian iconography with sin and the devil.

The associative racial and colonial issues are themselves the study of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. It is a study of colonization and slavery where one separates others. Prospero is a man of intellect, as the scholar of Caliban, a savage and deformed slave. Caliban has a dark complexion, his mother is probably from Africa exiled from civilization, and Prospero has taken the island from Caliban and forces him to live in rocky and desolate region. Though Prospero segregates Caliban physically and socially, he uses him as a slave, a worker who serves his master. Caliban and Prospero are so connected that the peculiar brutality of Prospero as a colonizer can be justified only by Caliban's incorrigibly devilish nature.

In fact, America was a stage for *The Tempest* where many Prosperos enslaved many Calibans, natives and Africans. This belief system that has trust in human abilities determined by common physical characteristics and culture has been practiced to retain the hierarchy of races. Various writers have introduced racial issues in literary writing from the time of enlightenment. Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970), Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1990), and Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1992) etc. are the main literary writings which encircle on the periphery of the racial issues.

In this way, racial issues have become the constant theme of literature especially in the United States of America. American culture projects the hierarchy of white and black culture. The differences among people play a vital role in forming the value and identities. The violence forces people separate from one another. There are

various discriminations in the world. Racial discrimination has been systematically studied since early nineteenth century. Gender and race discrimination come together in the field of study through writing of literature. In the early decade of 19th century there is a voice in America against racial discrimination which has opened the new horizon for the gender. The issues of gender and race together appear as the issues of sex in the Western world. Walker Heads and other woman writers contaminate both sexual and racial issues and develop the identities of women as umbrella term during the time of late twentieth century.

In American early writing, black writers are influenced by religion and folklore. These writers unwillingly accept the slave institution and their writing itself is a protest against slavery. Thus, literature in America has the root on black /white opposition: blackness as a silent protest and whiteness as oppression. In 19th century, the study of race is concerned with race as nation.

In the South the issues of race appears as a great one and it hangs the American history whole hundred years. Whole America is divided in two. On the one hand they realize the slogan of life, liberty and pursuit of happiness, on the other the country is still in the clutches of racial problems. Most of the literary writings of late nineteenth century are based on the issues of race and violence.

This new concept forms a significant body of literary writing as writers begin to work under the influence of western culture and cease to imitate the great classics of the Hellene world. In 1819 Scottish novelist and poet, Sir Walter Scott published *Ivanhoe* carrying the theme of hatred between Anglo-Saxons, the original inhabitant of Britain and the Norman rulers. The plot consists of the historical incident, the conquest of England by William the Conqueror. There is an antipathy and hatred between the Anglo-Saxon race and French speaking Norman rulers. The struggle

between them is not simply a struggle of the poor and oppressed against their rich oppressors but a struggle for Anglo-Saxon national and Norman aristocracy as lawless. Mark Twain's novel *Huckleberry Fin* looks thoughtfully at color.

Morrison has observed the novel that freedom has no meaning. In this regard she explains, "The agency, however, for Huck's struggle is the nigger Jim, and it is absolutely necessary. Because they for go a close examination of interdependence of slavery and freedom, of Huck's growth and Jim's serviceability within it, and even of Mark Twin's inability to continue to explore the journey into free territory" (55).

In the 19th century the central question-why one race is superior to another is strongly raised. When the Christianity believes on common ancestry of all human beings and the Enlightenment emphasizes the Universality of Reason, how can some race be superior and other inferior? The notion that blackness embodies inferiority of intellect has been challenged by Afro-American writers from the colonial period to now by writing literature. To the artists the transformation of internal conflicts to conventionally bound and violently silenced black bodies has become a major theme in American literature. The origin of it can be found in the notion of hierarchy of race. So Black's slavery has enriched the country's creative possibilities. Morrison describes how the new themes become possible in the new world as:

I want to suggest these concerns-authorities, newness and difference, absolute power-not only became the major themes and presumptions of American literature, but that each one is made possible by, shaped by, activated by a complex awareness and employment of constituted Africans. It was this African; who developed ground and arena for the elaboration of the quite essential American identity. (44)

Morrison has adopted a new style, magic realism that suits to explore black experiences from the early southern plantation to northern neighborhoods and in which are incorporated black myths, folklore and ghost stories. Particularly influenced by Faulkner in narration, Morrison succeeds in unearthing glorious Afro-American cultural heritage, which was undermined during different political and social upheavals. Different from abolitionist perspective of early Afro-American writers and protest novels of Harlem Renaissance, Morrison pays heed to black cultural heritage and community codes to reveal the silence discourse. She accepts that black American writers are collectively bounded because they feel that their mission is to expose the annihilate Afro- American history. Ancestors are the guiding presence who grant them shelter and energy to complete the task. The content for them are the black experiences of hardship and travels which are the consequences of white oppression. It is expressed in indistinctive, effortless and suggestive language that black people love playing with. In her writing, Morrison bridges the gap between the past and present of her race by exploring mythical and historical past.

In Lee's writing, she uses the symbols to provoke black consciousness and create a new history of black with full of imagination and Emotion. Her writing has made African culture as the interesting field of research in literature, which was done before by Toni Morrison. In this regard Morrison herself states:

It is crucial in reading literature that we are truly critical that we look for potential problems and points of connection as well as considering the most successful aspects of any text, or simply celebrating an author's reputation . . . while we may want on the one hand to highlight the tremendous advances of women authors in recent literary history. (22)

Lee seems to represent the problems of black. It is often tempting to assume this kind of representation for instance we might assume that the characters in Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* are representative of the black people in a more general sense. But of course the characters are fictional not real, and they are more representative of the black people than other black writer's writing. She has looked at the experience of working class African American. Her genius of writing makes her one of the distinct American writers in the history of America.

To Kill a Mockingbird, deals with the issue of racism that were observed by the author as a child in her hometown. The characters she portrays have some realistic features and they seem to represent their class in a perfect way. Each black character in the novel seems to be a part of the real world and he/she represents a group really existing in the society. The first black character Lee introduces in the novel is Calpurnia, Atticus' housekeeper. She takes care of his children and she is one of the very few blacks who can read and write.

Tom Robinson, the central victim of the story is falsely accused of raping a white girl. He is condemned nonetheless and then shot seventeen times when he attempts to escape. So, Tom Robinson represents those helpless blacks who are punished for nothing but their colour. Zeeboo, Calpurnia's son whom she has taught to read and write represents a different group of black race. In their church he reads out the hymns for all but among the whites his identity is of a garbage collector. Tom Robinson's wife represents those unlucky black females who have to suffer for nothing. Her husband is dead, she has to take care of her children and no one is ready to give her work.

CHAPTER: THREE

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

Tom Robinson is a Negro, happily married and has three children. In this context, Scout narrates, "Tom was twenty-five years of age; he was married with three children" (210). He is basically a good guy with a soft heart. Though he belongs to the lowest class member, he is ready to help a white girl, Mayella Ewell because he thinks she does not have anybody to help her. In this regard, the conversation below is relevant to quote:

'Why did you go inside the fence lots of times?'

Tom Robinson's forehead relaxed. 'She'd call me in, suh. Seemed like every time I passed by yonder she'd have some little somethin' for me to do – choppin' kindlin', totin' water for her . . .

'Were you paid for your services?'

'No suh, not after she offered me a nickel the first time. I was glad to do it, Mr. Ewell didn't seem to help her none, and neither did the chillum, and I knowed she didn't have no nickels to spare.'(211)

Mayella Ewell is a poor white girl with many brothers and sisters and a drunkard father. Her mother is dead and she doesn't have any friend. Her father doesn't help her in household activities, so she sometimes takes help of Tom Robinson who selflessly helps her. As Scout says, "As Tom Robinson gave his testimony; it came to me that Mayella Ewell must have been the loneliest person in the world. She was even lonelier than Boo Radley, who had not been out of the house in twenty-five years. When Atticus asked had she any friends, she seemed not to know what he meant" (211).

One day Tom is blamed of raping Mayella and taken into custody. His case is given to Atticus. Atticus knows the truth that Tom Robinson is not the culprit and he also knows that he will not win the case because the person he is trying to save is a Black. But he is determined on trying though he knows that he and his family have to sacrifice so many things for choosing to fight for a Black.

People of the town tell Atticus that he is a disgrace of the place. His relatives think he is ruining the family and they will not be able to walk in the streets of Maycomb with their heads held high because he has chosen to support a black. People also call him 'nigger-lover' and trash. His daughter and son are humiliated so many times in public. They are even attacked and Jem's hand is broken. Still, Atticus is sure that change is possible but he knows that it is not an easy process.

It is crystal clear from the argument Atticus presents at the court that Tom is not guilty. He could not possibly have hurt Mayella Ewell or raped her. His left hand was crippled. Everyone in the court knew that it was Mayella who started it. She calls Tom on purpose to help her, takes him inside and tries to seduce him but as her father sees it Tom runs away in fear because he knows he is in trouble now. Mayella's father beats her and then she blames Tom of trying to rape her. As Atticus says:

She was a white, and she tempted a Negro. She did something that in our society is unspeakable: She kissed a black man. Her father saw it. We do know in part what Mr Ewell did: he did what any God-fearing, persevering, respectable white man would do under the circumstances- he swore out a warrant, no doubt signing it with his left hand, and now Tom Robinson sits before you, having taken the oath with the only good hand he possesses- his right hand. (225)

The society believes it because of its preconception that Negroes cannot be trusted around their women. Even after they know the truth in the court they cannot give the right decision as they are racially prejudiced. The decision is made and Tom Robinson is proven guilty by the jury. Finally Tom is shot dead while trying to run away from the prison. Not only Tom his family also has to suffer a lot. His wife finds it hard to find job and she does not have money. People do not hire her because of the case. In this context, Reverend Sykes says, “Helen’s got three little’uns and she can’t go out to work . . . Helen’s finding it hard to get work these days” (136).

The novel reflects racial prejudice in the society of Maycomb. White people of Maycomb dominate the black people for the only reason that their skin colour is black. There are some white people who have the same economic status as that of the blacks but still they have higher status than the blacks. Black people are lowest in the social ladder. In this context, the lines said by Jem are relevant to quote:

There’s four kinds of folks in the world. There’s the ordinary kind like us and the neighbours, there’s the kind like the Cunninghams like in the woods, the kind like the Ewells down at the dump, and the Negroes . . . I mean in Maycomb County. The thing about it is, our kind of folks don’t like the Cunninghams, the Cunninghams don’t like the Ewells, and the Ewells hate and despise the coloured folks. (249)

Hence, it is clear that Negroes have lowest position in the society and they are dominated by everyone. Language, legal practices, social status, myth and religion etc. are the different sectors of the society where dominance is seen. It is believed that Negroes are poor, uneducated and deficient in health, morals and manners and thus are not very good social companions. It is also pointed out that Negroes are different in physical appearance even if they have the same basic mental capacity and moral

propensities. White people believe even if they try to teach the blacks, they are not going to change. As Mrs. Farrow says, “We can educate them till we are blue in the face, we can try till we drop to make Christians out of ’em, but there’s no lady safe in her beds these nights” (256).

Racial prejudice is seen in the day to day activities of black living in the South. White people humiliate the blacks by comparing them to inferior creatures. Social foundation of the South is dominated by the whites. So one of the important characteristics of South living white people is to satire and humiliate black. Members of the white community dominate the blacks in each and every sector of their life. As Atticus says, “As you grow older you’ll see white men cheat black men every day of your life” (243). There is racial prejudice in Maycomb and the white people dominate the blacks in every way possible. This dominance can be seen in different sectors such as Language, Religion, Social Status, Law, and Myth which are described below:

Language

Language is a part of man’s life and culture. Language helps us express ourselves but in the case of the whites and the blacks, language serves as a medium of dominance. Whites always try to verbally dominate blacks and try to prove that blacks are not so rational like them. Mrs. Merriweather says “May-? No, child. That darky’s wife. Tom . . .” (255). Mrs Merriweather refers to Tom Robinson as darky. Giving the names from their skin colour or from their physical structure is common among the whites. Mrs Merriweather further states:

Gertrude, I tell you there’s nothing more distracting than a sulky darky. Their mouths go down to here. Just ruins your day to have one of them in the kitchen. You know what I said to my Sophy, Gertrude? I said, “Sophy,” I said, “You simply are not being a christian today.” (256)

Mrs Merriweather's statement is a sure sign of dominance. Though white men need black as helper, they cannot stand their faces. Mayella Ewell calls Tom Robinson by saying, "Come here, nigger, and bust up this chiffarobe for me, I gotta nickel for you" (199). Mayella Ewell whose economic condition is similar to Tom's has the authority to dominate him by telling 'nigger', because her skin colour is white.

On the one hand white men verbally dominate the blacks and on the other hand language shows the difference between the blacks and the whites. They are identified by their language. The conversation below shows the difference:

'Cal,' I asked, 'Why do you talk nigger-talk to the –to your folks when you know it's not right?'

'Well, in the first place I'm black'

'That doesn't mean you hafta talk that way when you know better,' said Jem.

Calpurnia tilted her hat and scratched her head, then pressed her hat down carefully over her ears. 'It's right hard to say,' she said.

'Suppose you and Scout talked coloured – folks' talks at home – it'd be out of place, wouldn't it? Now what if I talks white – folks' talks at church, and with my neighbours? They'd think I was puttin' on airs to beat moses.'(139)

Calpurnia, a black housekeeper, in the novel. Calpurnia speaks like the white people whenever she is among the whites. As the conversation below:

'That's why you don't talk like the rest of 'em,' said Jem.

'The rest of who?'

'Rest of the coloured folks, Cal, but you talked like they did in church .

..'

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 her having command of two languages. (138-139)

Calpurnia is literate and she speaks like the whites do whenever she is among them. But the reality is she has her own way of speaking that is different than the white man's. She talks like the dominant class when she talks with them because their grammar is said to be correct as it is defined by them. It is very important for her, as she belongs to the inferior group, to learn the dominant grammar. But whenever she becomes emotional or angry, she becomes her original self and speaks in her tone. 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" (27).

Both the blacks and the whites speak the same language, English, but the way they speak differs because of the patterns of grammar which are historically situated and vary among social groups. The two conversations below is between the blacks and the whites:

'What you want, Lula?'

'I wants to know why you bringin' white chillun to nigger church.'

'They's my comp'ny,' said Calpurnia. Again I thought her voice strange: she was talking like the rest of them.

'Yeah, an' I reckon you's comp'ny at the Finch house durin' the week.'

(131)

It is the way the black people speak and the white people speak like:

'Cal, can I come see you sometimes?'

She looked down at me. 'See me, honey? You see me every day.'

'Out to your house,' I said. 'Sometimes after work? Atticus can get me.'

'Any time you want to,' she said. 'We'd be glad to have you.' (139)

The grammar the whites and the blacks use is different. Same language is spoken in two different ways. It is because of the different patterns of grammar that is inherent in the people and it seems natural. And to the question of grammatical correctness or what is appropriate and proper, the grammar the dominant class uses is proper.

The language white men use is said to be correct and standard while the language of the black is considered incorrect because of the racial prejudice present in the society. Also blacks do not prefer to speak white men's language even if they know it. This difference easily creates dominance in the society because one is considered right or correct and the other wrong. So racial prejudice is created through language in the novel.

Religion

Religion is a part of human civilization. Religion and culture include various events, ceremonies, cultural activities and it is mainly about the one we have faith in also called god or Jesus or many more. Both the blacks and the whites have faith in the same god. As Calpurnia says, "It's the same god, ain't it?" (131) Both follow the same god Jesus Christ and the same religion Christianity. So, both the groups go to the same religious institution, the church. But although both follow the same religion, there are many differences. Whites and blacks both go to the church but there is great difference in their church. The description of First Purchase i.e. black men's church makes it clear:

First Purchase African M.E. Church was in the Quarters outside the Southern town limits, across the old sawmill tracks. It was an ancient paint-peeled frame building, the only church in Maycomb with a steeple and bell, called First Purchase because it was paid for from the first earnings of freed slaves. Negroes worshipped in it on Sundays and white men gambled in it on weekdays. (130)

The Holy place of black i.e. the house of Jesus is turned into a gambling place on weekdays by white men. This shows that the whites do not think that black men's holy place is worthy of respect. The pathetic condition of black man's church is clear from the example below:

First Purchase was unceiled and unpainted within. Along its walls unlighted kerosene lamps hung on brass brackets; pine benches served as pews. Behind the rough pulpit a faded pink silk banner proclaimed God is Love, the church's only decoration except a rotogravure print of Hunt's *The Light of the World*. There was no sign of piano, organ, hymn-book, church programmes - the familiar ecclesiastical impedimenta we saw every Sunday. It was dim inside, with a damp coolness slowly dispelled by the gathering congregation. At each seat was a cheap cardboard fan bearing a garish Garden of Gethsemane courtesy Tyndal's Hardware Co. (132)

The paragraph above is the description of the church of blacks by a small white girl, Scout. Her description is innocent and not prejudiced. So, she gives the real picture of the church where she does not find anything that she finds in her own church. It is because of racial hegemony that blacks accept the discrimination so easily. They think they are destined to be dominated and to be poor. It is clear that the

condition of the church is similar to the life of black men. Religion is same, the god they worship is same, the way they worship is same, the prayer they say is same but the blacks are not allowed to go to the church where the white men go. The poverty of the black men and their church is further described below:

The churchyard was brick hard clay, as was the cemetery beside it. If someone died during a dry spell, the body was covered with chunks of ice until rain softened the earth. A few graves in the cemetery were marked with crumbling tombstones; newer ones were outlined with brightly coloured glass and broken Coca-Cola bottles. (130)

Black men's culture is the result of their poverty and white men's dominance. They are compelled to postpone their cremation because of their inability to dig the ground. Black men are accustomed to do so many things as a result of racial prejudice. Black men are trained to show respect towards white. It has become a part of their culture to be dominated and they have also accepted it. In this regard, it is relevant to quote the following lines:

When they saw Jem and me with Calpurnia, the men stepped back and took off their hats; the women crossed their arms at their waists, weekday gestures of respectful attention. They parted and made a small pathway to the church door for us. Calpurnia walked between Jem and me, responding to the greetings of her brightly clad neighbours. (131)

Although Jem and Scout did not expect such thing, the black men have been compelled by the whites to remain inferior in front of them. So, the religion of the blacks has been guided by the dominating nature of the whites. Racial prejudice compels them to remain inferior in the same religion.

Myth

The life of Negroes living in the South is not freed from racial prejudice. They never think themselves as the free folks of America. Due to the colour they are compared with various images that are brought from history, myth and day to day life of the blacks. Lots of myths against black men exist in the white society and these myths are so famous that even the children use them while speaking. The myths were fostered originally as a means of control to discredit the blacks and to assuage the conscience of racists.

The white society has created various myths like the myth of absence, the myth of original slavery, the myth that the blacks are liars and immoral and other myths highlighting the weaknesses of the blacks. In American history, as in American life, Black Americans are invisible presences. They are not seen, not because of their absence but because of the presence of a myth that prepares and requires their absence. The myth of absence, which expresses this idea and intention, operates not by misinterpretation, but by silence and exclusion.

As Reverend Sykes says, "Now don't you be so confident, Mr Jem, I ain't ever seen any jury decide in favour of a coloured man over a white man" (230). It doesn't matter whether a black man files a case or not, he never wins if he fights against a white man. The jury does not even bother to think what the black man has to say. If it is a black man and a white man, the black man is the culprit. The black man is absent. His presence does not matter; it is just his colour that matters. Also the black people are not included in any social activities of the whites. They do not allow them in their church; they are segregated in the court. Blacks are excluded from the life of the white people. As Scout describes:

The Negroes having waited for the white people to go upstairs, began to come in, 'Whoa now, just a minute,' said a club member, holding up his walking stick. 'Just don't start up them stairs yet awhile' . . . 'Looka there now,' now,' he said irritably, as the black people surged upstairs . . . The Coloured balcony ran along three walls of the court-room like a second-storey verandah. (180-181)

White people want to ignore the presence of the black people by not allowing them to be present with them. They do not even want to walk with the blacks let alone sit with them. So the white Americans have created the myth of the absence which means in practical life the black people are absent in the life of the whites. It is the sure sign of dominance that white people do not want to accept their presence.

The myth of original slavery is another myth prevalent in the white society. White people think that the blacks are meant to be slaves. They are meant to do the marginalized jobs. Most of the black characters present in the novel are seen going low level jobs like housekeepers, garbage collector, farm workers, etc. Some of the examples from the book are, "We lived on the main residential street in the town- Atticus, Jem and I, plus Calpurnia our cook" (6), "We sat waiting for Zeebo to arrive in the garbage truck. We saw Zeebo drive up. He took a pitchfork from the back of the garbage truck and gingerly lifted Tim Johnson. He pitched the dog onto the truck, then poured something" (109), "Mrs Dubose lived alone except for a Negro girl in constant attendance" (110).

All these black characters work for their white masters. Calpurnia is a housekeeper, Zeebo is a garbage collector, Mrs Dubose has a black girl to work for her and so do all the white families in Maycomb. Tom Robinson and his wife Helen have to work in the field, Sophy is a housekeeper. There is not even one example of

the black who works in the office. Zeebo, the garbage collector is literate but he has pick up a mad dead dog which is as dangerous dead as it was alive. It seems that the blacks are meant to serve the white people. So, the whites dominate the blacks by limiting their activities to low level jobs.

The power of myths and their related ideologies lies not in their objective truth but in their being perceived as true. Another such myth is that the blacks are liars and they are immoral. Mrs Merriweather says, "The poverty . . . the darkness . . . the immorality" (254). She connects the three words poverty, darkness and immorality. She actually wants to talk about the black people. It is the social reality that the black people are poor but it is just the myth that they are immoral. An individual can be immoral but the whole group cannot be immoral. It is just the false belief created in the society to dominate the blacks.

The main issue in the novel is the rape of a white girl by a black man which is not true but proved to be true on the basis of myth and the white prejudice on the blacks. It is based on the myth that the blacks are liars. Atticus talks about the false assumption the whites have about the blacks:

You gentleman would go along with them on the assumption- 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.(225)

White men give decisions depending on what myths say even when it is the matter of somebody's life and death. When a black man is involved, logic doesn't work, proofs are of no importance, it is only the assumption or myth that black men are liars. On the basis of these myths they are not trusted, they are humiliated, they are

blamed and they are punished but it is always forgotten by both the blacks and the whites that these myths are the creation of the white people to dominate the blacks.

White people easily believe that black men are coward, they are liar, they steal things etc. In this context, Scout says, “A Negro would not pass the Radley Place at night, he would cut across to the sidewalk opposite and whistle as he walked”

(9).Above lines show that there is a belief among the whites that Negroes are coward.

Belief turn into myth and these myths serve as a medium to dominate the blacks. The whites use these myths like Negroes are coward, they are liars, and they cannot be trusted around the women, etc. in their day to day life. The conversation between Jem, Scout and Dill given below shows what people think about Negroes:

‘Haven’t you ever walked along a lonesome road at night and passed by a hot place? Jem asked Dill. “A Hot Steam’s somebody who can’t get to heaven, just wallows around on lonesome roads an’ if you walk through him, when you die you’ll be one too, an’ you’ll go around at night sucking people’s breath’

‘How can you keep from passing through one?’

‘You can’t,’ said Jem. ‘Sometimes they stretch all the way across the road, but if you hafta go through one you say, “Angel-bright, life-in-death; get off the road, don’t suck my breath.” That keeps’em from wrapping around you.

‘Don’t you believe a word he says, Dill,’ I said. ‘Calpurnia says that’s nigger- talk.’(41)

This whole conversation shows a lot of things about what white people think black people are. First of all they think that Negroes believe in ghosts and other scary things, they also think that black people’s words are not to be believed. Children also

think that black people do not speak truth. When they say “nigger-talk” (41), it is meant that it is not to be believed. In this case, it is the black woman herself who thinks that blacks believe in unnecessary things like ghosts and tells the children not to believe it. Miss Maudie’s words, “That is three-fourths coloured folks and one-fourth Stephanie Crawford” (50), also clears that white people think Negroes are liars. All these examples prove that white men dominate the blacks by using various myths. The same myth compels the jury members to decide against Tom Robinson even though they knew he was not guilty:

So, the white people create various false beliefs or myths to dominate the blacks and the presence of racial prejudice compels the whole society i.e. the dominant group and the group that is dominated, to believe in such myths.

Law

Law institutionalizes society’s rules and regulations and racial discrimination exists in the society, it is by law. In Lee’s novel too racial discrimination is legalized by the court not in the papers but in action. Tom Robinson is convicted for the crime he has not committed. Reverend Sykes says, “Now don’t you be so confident, Mr Jem, I ain’t ever seen any jury decide in favour of a coloured man over a white man . . .” (230). No matter what the case is if a Negro is involved, he/she is sure to lose. The following lines make it further clear:

Atticus, how bad is it going to be? You haven’t had too much chance to discuss it.

It couldn’t be worse, Jack. The only thing we have got is a black man’s word against the Ewells.’ The evidence boils down to you did, I didn’t. The jury couldn’t possibly be expected to take Tom Robinson’s word against the Ewells. (97)

Law is biased and dominates Negroes. Racial prejudice creates problems in the life of people and threatens liberty, equality and pursuit of happiness. The slogan is not new in America but racial prejudice appears as the challenge of this social reform. White people use this slogan every time and everywhere but they do not think they are just being superficial because in the real world of black and white it is almost impossible. In this context, it is relevant to quote the following argument of Atticus in the court:

Thomas Jefferson once said that all men are created equal . . . There is a tendency in this year of grace 1935 for certain people to use this phrase out of context, to satisfy all conditions. The most ridiculous example I can think of is that the people who run public education promote the stupid and idle along with the industrious- because all men are created equal, educators will gravely tell you, the children left behind suffer terrible feelings of inferiority. We know all men are not created equal in the sense some people would have us believe – some people are smarter than others, some people have more opportunity because they're born with it, some men make more money than others, some ladies make better cakes than others – some people are born gifted beyond the normal scope of most men. (226)

Hundred percent equality is not possible in the practical world. One is always better or worse than the other. Education sector, politics and law promote the idea of equality but only in written form, in practical life white people do not even want to acknowledge that black people are human beings. They think they are still at the stage of barbarity. The people who are born with black skin colour bear all the qualities that rank them lowest in the hierarchy and thus they are supposed to suffer. The white people

forget the simple fact that despite all the differences there is still one thing in common, both are human. And there is one institution in the society that is supposed to recognize them as human and that is the court. Atticus says that court is that institution which has to treat everyone equally:

But there is one way in this country in which all men are created equal – there is one human institution that makes a pauper the equal of a Rockefeller, the stupid man equal of an Einstein and the ignorant man the equal of any college president, That institution, gentleman, is a court. Our courts have their faults, as do any human institution, but in this country our courts are the great levelers, and in our courts all men are created equal. (226)

As said in the paragraph above courts are established with the objective of equal justice to all. But racial prejudice in the hearts of white men is so deep-rooted that it is very difficult to sow the seeds of equality for black men. Since the people are biased, the institution made out of the same people cannot remain free from prejudice. Atticus again says:

I'm no idealist to believe firmly in the integrity of our courts and in the jury system –that is no ideal to me, it is a living, working reality. Gentleman, a court is no better than each man of you sitting before me in this jury. A court is only as sound as its jury, and a jury is only as sound as the men who make it up. (227)

The court is established to give equal justice but the people who work in it are the ones who break the rule. So, law is one of the sectors where racial prejudice exists and where blacks are given the cruelest punishment for just being black.

Social Status

The condition of the black is guided by the perception of white because of racial prejudice. Racism defines them as inferior to the white. Maycomb reflects deep sense of racism. The geographical setting of the blacks itself gives the idea of their condition. Their living place is described as:

A dirt road ran from the highway past dump, down to a small Negro settlement some five hundred yards beyond the Ewells'. It was necessary either to back out to the highway or go the full length of the road and turn around; most people turned around in the Negroes' front yards. In the frosty December dusk, their cabins looked neat and snug with pale smoke rising from the chimneys and doorways glowing amber from the fires inside. Jem and I detected squirrel cooking, but it took an old countryman like Atticus to identify possum and rabbit aromas . . . (189)

The use of the words like dirt, dump, small etc. gives clear picture of their houses. Their food and their shelter show their living condition. They live in small cabins and eat squirrels and rabbits, the animals they hunt. They are very poor and this poverty makes them suppressed forever. By profession blacks are involved on low and social marginalized works such as garbage collector, sweepers, house maids, farm workers etc. The line, "It was Zeboo, the garbage collector" (132) tells that a black man does a low level work and that becomes his identity. Zeboo, Calpurnia's son is one of the very few blacks who can read and he narrates the hymns in the church but in white men's eyes he is nothing but the garbage collector. Also Jem's question, "Why don't you get a coloured man?" (82) to Miss Maudie to help her clean

up her burnt house shows that even in the children's mind, the idea that blacks are meant to work as labours, is set.

The works black people do are the difficult ones but it is made even more difficult by added responsibilities. Blacks could not be freed for the legacy of whites who create extra burden on blacks. The burden has been presented in this way, "what you up to, Miss Cal?" said a voice behind us. 'I want to know why you bring in' white chillum to nigger church.' 'Yeah, an' I reckon you's comp'ny at the Finch house during the week" (131). They give more than their working hour for the whites. Their works are made even more difficult by their own problems. All the family members have to work, so there is no one to take care of small children. Women have to work facing more difficulties. They have to take responsibility of their job as well as their children. Their pathetic condition is described in this way:

'Why can't she take'em with her Reverend?' I asked. It was customary for field Negroes with tiny children to deposit them in whatever shade there was while their parents worked – usually the babies sat in the shade between two rows of cotton. Those unable to sit were strapped papoose style on their mother's backs, or resided in extra cotton bags.
(136)

White people take advantage of their poverty and their condition is made more and more pathetic. During the time of depression farm and factory workers were affected by economic problems. Their social status had fallen to ground. Both blacks and whites were in tension still white humiliated black. Blacks were in double suppression at that time. In this regard Reverend Sykes says, "You all know of Brother Tom Robinson's trouble. He has been a faithful member of First Purchase

since he was a boy. The collection taken up today and for the next three Sundays will go to Helen – his wife, to help her out at home” (133).

They are themselves poor; still they have to donate for the poorest in their church. They have to spend a part of the money they have earned by working very hard for the one who is in trouble. No white man comes to their help. They are there just to create problem not to solve. Domestic situation such as clothing, eating and other common things of the life of blacks is not so well due to the racial problems. In this context she states, "A thin man in khaki pants came up the aisle and deposited a coin. The congregation murmured approval. Reverend Sykes then said, ‘I want all of you with no children to make a sacrifice and give one more dime apiece" (135).

Black men as well as women are forced to work a lot to earn their living. They do all kinds of dirty work that require maximum physical strength and the result is visible in their bodies. In this regard, Scout describes, “Calpurnia was something else again. She was all angles and bones; she was near sighted; she squinted; her hand was wide as a bed slat and twice as hard” (9).

Negroes are not open to education. They are not given the opportunity to attend school. Scout doesn’t find any black face in the school, also when she goes to the church she finds out most of the blacks are illiterate. The conversation below is suitable to quote:

‘He’s just like our preacher,’ said Jem, ‘but why do they all sing hymns that way?’

‘Lining’?’ she asked.

‘Is that what it is?’

‘yeah, it’s called linin’. They’ve done it that way as long as I can remember.’

Jem said it looked like they could save the collection money for a year and get some hymn-books.

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 the First Purchase read . . . I'm one of 'em.'(137)

White people have deprived the black of their education. White people think that Negroes do not have the same mental capacity as the whites'. They want the blacks to be at the bottom of the social ladder and not giving the opportunity to be educated makes it possible. Once they remain uneducated they will be forced to do low level works and they can never make money which makes them poor forever. And when they are poor it is easy to dominate them.

White people keep black maids at home but they usually do not treat them like human beings. They seem to doubt them every time. The conversation between Atticus and aunt Alexandra is relevant here:

She waited until Calpurnia was in the kitchen, then she said, 'Don't talk like that in front of them.'

'Talk like what in front of whom?' he asked.

'Like that in front of Calpurnia. You said "Braxton Underwood despises Negroes" right in front of her.'(172)

White people cannot trust Negroes and they think they will not be able to understand the issues of the society which is why Alexandra says, "I don't think it's a good habit, Atticus. It encourages them. You don't know how they talk among themselves. Everything that happens in this town's out to the quarters before

sundown” (173). White people think black people make things talk of the town but the truth is even the white ones love to gossip about blacks. Mrs Farrow in one of the Missionary circle gatherings says:

‘S-s-s Grace,’ she said, ‘it’s just like I was telling Brother Hutson the other day. “S-s-s Brother Hutson,” I said, “looks like we’re fighting a losing battle, a losing battle.” I said, ‘S-s-s it doesn’t matter to’em one bit. We can educate’em till we’re blue in the face, we can try till we drop to make Christians out of’em, but there’s no lady safe in her bed these nights.’(256)

White people think black people are no more than an animal and even if they try to teach them, educate them it is of no use, Negroes are not capable of learning but the fact is white people are not trying to educate them they are just trying to install their thoughts and their values into their brain which they cannot accept so easily. Whites also think that using the blacks to do their work is actually for the good of black not their own. In this context, Mrs. Merriweather says, “. . . I’m sure I don’t know, I’m not read in that field, but sulky . . . dissatisfied . . . I tell you if my Sophy’d kept it up another day I’d have let her go. It’s never entered the wool of hers that the only reason I keep her is because this depression’s on and she needs her dollar and a quarter every week she can get it” (257). White people want the blacks to believe that it’s them who need the whites and not the whites who need them. Whites want to scare them so that they will not revolt. It is the result of racial hegemony that makes the blacks so helpless. Racial Domination compels them to say ‘yes’ to whatever whites say.

White people think black people have a different brain and they think differently, so they name their thought ‘Typical of a nigger’s mentality’ (Lee 265).

White people thought that Tom's attempt to escape was the result of his nigger mentality. So, they said:

'Did you hear about? . . . No? Well, they say he was runnin' fit to beat lightnin' . . . ' To Maycomb, Tom's death was typical. Typical of a nigger to cut and run. Typical of a nigger mentality to have no plan, no thought for the future, just run blind first chance he saw . . . sss Hell no. You know how they are. Easy come, easy go. Just shows you, that Robinson was legally married, they say he kept himself clean, went to church and all that, but when it comes down to the line the veener's mighty thin. Nigger always comes out in'em. (265)

Whites believe that all the evils of the world lie within a Negro's heart. Racial Hegemony has become the society's trend. Biasness, discrimination, dominance seem natural. Humanity does not come anywhere. White people think it is their right to dominate and blacks accept it so easily that it becomes the culture of the society. White people cannot sit with blacks; they think it's a sin. The example below shows this clearly:

The court-house was covered with picnic parties sitting on newspapers, washing down biscuit and syrup with warm milk from fruit jars . . . In the far corner of the square, the Negroes sat quietly in the sun, dining on sardines, crackers, and the more vivid flavours of Nehi Cola. (176)

The difference and discrimination is clear. Negroes are supposed to take the corners; they are not allowed to sit among the whites. Even in the house of justice, justice is not possible. These lines are the proof of injustice going on in the court, "The Coloured balcony ran along three walls of the court-room like a second storey verandah, and from it we could see everything." (181) Even in the court there is a

separate place for blacks. They cannot sit together with the whites. Sitting together is impossible and so is walking together. Blacks have to wait till all the whites pass. In this the following lines are suitable to quote:

The Negroes, having waited for the white people to go upstairs, began to come in. 'Whoa now, just a minute, said a club member,' holding up his walking stick. 'Just don't start up them stairs yet awhile.' (180)

Negroes do not have a dignified existence. They are bound in the crutches of the rules and regulations made by the whites and they accept those humiliation, cruelty, dominance etc. as if they were born for that. They cannot walk together with the whites; they have to wait till the whites are gone. They cannot touch the whites even by mistake, it becomes an offence.

If a white tries to think rationally or if he thinks that both the blacks and the whites are equal, he/she becomes the talk of the town. Mrs. Merriweather in this regard says:

Gertrude,' she said, 'I tell you there are some good but misguided people in this town. Good, but misguided. Folks in this town who think they're doing right, I mean. Now far be it from me to say who, but some of'em in this town thought they were the right thing a while back, but all they did was stir'em up. That's all they did. (257)

The white people do not approve when a white takes the side of a black man.

The following lines are suitable here:

Hypocrites, Mrs. Perkins, born hypocrites,' Mrs. Merriweather was saying. 'At least we don't have that sin on our shoulders down here. People up there set'em free, but you don't see'em settin' at the table with'em. At least we don't have the deceit to say to'em yes you are as

good as we are but stay away from us. Down here we just say you'll live your way and we'll live ours. I think that woman, that Mrs. Roosevelt's lost her mind- just plain lost her mind coming down to Birmingham and tryin' to sit with'em.(258)

Sitting with the blacks on the same table is far from imagination for the white people and if someone dares to do it, he/she is supposed to be mad. Atticus Finch, a white lawyer attempts to give justice to a black man and he is attacked from all sides. He and his family becomes the victim of society's hatred. Even his relatives blame him of doing the wrong thing. Scout, Atticus's daughter gets into trouble many times just because her father tried to help a black man. In this context, Scout says:

This order given by me to Cecil Jacobs was the beginning of a rather thin time for Jem and me. My fists were clenched and I was ready to let fly. Atticus had promised me he would were me out if he ever heard of me fighting any more; I was far too old and too big for such childish things, and the sooner I learned to hold in, the better off everybody would be. I soon forgot.

Cecil Jacobs made me forget. He had announced in the yard the day before that Scout Finch's daddy defended Negroes. (82)

A child whose father tries to help a black man is tortured in the school by her friends. The tradition of dominating the blacks has been transferred to the children by their parents. They do not actually know the meaning but they know they should discriminate the blacks. So, Cecil Jacobs says, "You gotta make me first! My folks said your daddy was a disgrace an' that nigger oughta hang from the water- tank!" (85).

Not only the folks of the town, Atticus's own relatives are also critical about the subject. In this context, Francis, Scout's cousin says:

If Uncle Atticus lets you run around with stray dogs, that's his own business, like Grandma says, so it ain't your fault if Uncle Atticus is a nigger-lover besides, but I'm here to tell you it certainly does mortify the rest of the family. . . Grandma says it's bad enough he lets you all run wild, but now he's turned out a nigger-lover we'll never be able to walk the streets of Maycomb again. He's ruining the family, that's what he's doin. (91-92)

The fire of racial prejudice is so hot in Maycomb that it burns everyone connected with that. Atticus faces a lot of problems. He is blamed of being a disgrace, of mortifying the family and ruining the family. While walking on the streets of Maycomb Mrs. Dubose says to Scout and Jem, "Your father's no better than the niggers and trash he works for!" (113). He is put into the category of the blacks and also called trash. Even after winning the case Mr. Ewell cannot accept the fact that Atticus was against him in the court, and thus he spits in Atticus's face saying, "Too proud to fight you , you nigger-lovin' bastard?" (240). Not only this he attacks his innocent children one night while they were returning from school and succeed in breaking Jem's hand.

Atticus and his children are the exception to the usual trend of the society and this plays vital role in reconstructing the society. American civil war and other human/civil rights movements abolished physical slavery but they are still ma^c - victim of slavery.

In short, the novel reflects the racial prejudice through descriptions of all the phenomenon of the blacks and the whites living in the South. Symbolic title *To Kill a Mockingbird* indicates the suppression of the blacks and racial prejudice of the South which plays vital role to continue the racial discrimination between the whites and the blacks.

CHAPTER: FOUR

Conclusion

In racial prejudice, the inferior race suffers the dominance and hatred of the superior race. Between the blacks and the whites, the black is the inferior race and the white is the superior race. So, the blacks are hated, dominated and discriminated. The analysis of *To Kill a Mockingbird* in the previous chapter proves that the novel is about the dominance of the black race by the white race in many sectors of the society and the harmful effects of this dominance. *To Kill a Mockingbird* is the murder of innocence i.e. the murder of an innocent black man on the charge that he is a black.

A society is made up of many people and sometimes the people living in it are divided into superior and inferior types. Those who belong to the superior type, then make faulty assumptions about the inferior race, to keep them in the superior position. And when the inferior and the superior groups include blacks and whites respectively, the process is called racial prejudice.

To Kill a Mockingbird is also about the presence of racial prejudice in the County of Maycomb. Maycomb consists of different types of people and it is mainly divided into two, the blacks and the whites. Most of the people of Maycomb consciously or unconsciously support racial prejudice. The white people of the town dominate the blacks and dominance can be found in language, religion, law, myth and other social practices. *To Kill a Mockingbird* as a symbolic title helps to understand the dreadful history of the dominance of blacks by the whites. The blacks are not able to be free from racial prejudice. Even when the whites and the blacks have the same socio-economic and education background, whites humiliate the blacks and satire them by using various images and symbols related to myth and rituals constructed by these whites to dominate the blacks.

The main concern of the analysis goes on white prejudice and discrimination towards the blacks on the periphery of language, religion, myth, law and social status. Language serves as the main medium of dominance in various ways. First of all, White people use various words like “nigger”, “sulky, darky” etc. to dominate the blacks. The words whites use are offensive but the blacks have to listen to those without a question because their minds have been set that way. The blacks are habituated of such remarks. The blacks are also compared with animals and other dirty things. Mrs. Dubose who cannot even walk by herself and needs the help of a coloured housekeeper to run her daily activities does not even bother to think that she would be helpless without her black helper. In fact she looks like a trash herself because of her old age and her disease but the colour of her skin permits her to verbally dominate the blacks. The whites believe that Negroes are trash and can never rise above it. The way the white people address the blacks is enough to prove that the blacks are dominated by the white people in their day to day language. Secondly, language easily shows the difference between them. Both the blacks and the whites use the same language i.e. English but they speak in different ways. Both the blacks and the whites believe that the whites speak correct language and the blacks speak grammatically incorrect and rough language. Thus, language shows that the black race is inferior and the white is superior.

Religion is the other sector of the society through which the whites dominate the blacks. The white men do not think that the black men are equal to them. They do not even like to touch them let alone sit with them. So, though they both follow the same religion, they practice it differently. They go to different churches and the churches they go to are enough to clear that there is discrimination and dominance in religious sector also. The white men’s church is fully facilitated but the black men’s

church does not even look like a church. The white men gamble in the blacks' church. The whites do not even think that the god the black men worship is same as theirs. Culturally blacks are placed at the bottom of the hierarchy. Black people are badly affected by poverty and so are the white people but this does not make them equal. The skin colour of the blacks always marginalizes them in every religious or cultural activity.

Myth plays a vital role in the domination of the blacks. The whites create various myths against the blacks which are used frequently to dominate them. Some of the myths are black men are liars, they are coward, they cannot be trusted around women, etc. Not only the whites but the blacks also refer to these myths while speaking. Law is the other sector which legalizes racial prejudice not in paper but in practical life. The blacks never get justice in the court. No court, no jury ever decides in the favour of a black and the reason is the same myth that blacks are liars and criminals. In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Tom Robinson is proved guilty not for his crime but for his colour. Actually, he has not committed the crime he is charged of, everyone knows that in heart but still is punished. Law is a very important part of the society where equality is must but the same institution is unable to treat everyone equally. So, there is dominance towards the black in the legal sector of the Maycomb County.

Finally, in the Maycomb society the blacks have no status at all. Blacks are treated as untouchables. They are placed last in the hierarchy. They are supposed to do the low grade jobs like collecting garbage, housekeeping, working in the farm, etc. Blacks are segregated everywhere. They have to sit separately and wait till the whites finish their task. They do not have the right to get education. In the place where education is compulsory for all, blacks do not even think of going to school.

Thus, Maycomb society is full of the people who discriminate and dominate the blacks. It is full of the people who are racially prejudiced. Racial prejudice gives birth to conflict and disaster. The blacks are sure to fight against the dominance. It is the reason of social disorder. Tom Robinson gets killed for nothing. Scout and Jem are attacked because their father Atticus tries to help a black man to get justice. The white man's heart is full of hatred and anger towards the blacks and the same is the case with the blacks. Words like robbery, murder, rape come together with blacks. Dominance creates conflict and conflict causes disaster. So, racial prejudice is the reason of social disaster.

All the black characters are representative of black race and they are the victims of racial prejudice. Though Calpurnia takes care of white children honestly, some of the whites do not trust her and want to get rid of her. Tom Robinson is prejudiced by the whites because white people know that he is not guilty but they cannot break the tradition by deciding in his favour. So, they let him die to maintain their superiority. Tom is shot dead but Tom's wife has to die each day to survive. Whites cannot even show humanity towards blacks. So, the characters of Lee are truly the representative of black race and Maycomb is fully in the grip of racial prejudice.

Lee's novel is not completely pessimistic. Although the ending does not seem so positive; we can still find some hope in the story. The verdict of the court against Tom Robinson and his death give the impression that in the battle between the blacks and the whites, the blacks are sure to lose, they are born to suffer. Also when Jem and Scout are attacked and Jem's arm is broken, the readers feel that white people's prejudice against the blacks cannot change. But among all these depressing situations, there are some bright sides. Atticus, a white man fights for a black man; Miss Stephanie and Judge Taylor (both whites) support Atticus. Jem and Scout learn that

colour does not define a person. These are the hope of Maycomb in *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

So, through her novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Lee tries to show the real face of the society engrossed in racial prejudice, the different sectors of the society where dominance against blacks exists and also she tries to give the message that such dominance may lead to violence and disorder.

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