Every creation of man's mind that has withstood the buffeting of time was born of love—love of something or someone...It is possible even to love mathematics. (Harper Lee).

By: Asst.Prof.Maamon S.Salih(PhD)

## **Abstract**

The present study is concerned with the ideas of supremacy and prejudice in Go Set a Watchman and To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee. The study aims at showing how Harper Lee presents the ideas and beliefs that led to the persecution of black people in her two novels. The focus of the paper is on the following subjects: Harper Lee's life, Go set a watchman, To Kill a Mockingbird, and the issue of black people's oppression. The study concludes that persecution of the black people that has been presented by Harper Lee in her novels is highly important issue that has its own reflections in the lives of the oppressed.

Key words: Harper Lee, supremacy, prejudice, persecution.

## 1- Harper Lee

Nell Harper Lee was born April 28, 1926. She is an American novelist that is known mainly for her novel To Kill a Mockingbird which was published in 1960. Her novel was such a great success that became a classic of modern American Literature (Presidential Bush Honors Medal) https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2007/11/20071105-1.html. In 2007, she was awarded the presidential model of freedom for contribution to literature. Lee won many honorary degrees. She also became famous for assisting her friend Truman Capote in his search for the book In Cold Blood (1966) (Harris, 2013).

The plot and the characters in To Kill a Mockingbird are based on Lee's surroundings of her neighbors and family which she has observed. Also it is related to events which occurred in her life when she was a young girl. Her novel To Kill a Mockingbird explains the unreasonableness of adults' thoughtful toward race and class in the Deep South of the 1930s. She was inspired by the racists' insolences in her hometown of Monroeville, Alabama. She wrote another novel "Go Set a Watchman" that was written in the mid of 1950 and published in 2015 (Joe, 2015).

Harper Lee has never appeared on T.V and under the spot light, because this was the last thing she ever had chosen. She prefers to live her remote life. The last things Harper Lee ever has desired is to appear on television, since she hates fame (Madden, 2009). Harper Lee was a collection of contradictions. She was an Alabama native who had a great love for Alabama and New York at the same time. She was a special mixture of engagement and elusive (Mills, 2014).

As it can be seen, Harper Lee had an unusual character that gathers both love for her home Alabama and New York. Her character is replicated the character of Jean Louise in Go Set A Watchman who loves her home Meycomb and New York at the same time.

After seventeen years of publishing To Kill a Mockingbird and twelve years since helping her friend Truman Capote in reporting the crime story in Kansas under the title "In Cold Blood", she was ready to work on a new novel. She began investigating the most serious cases in her town. She spent a year investigating the case and wrote about it. The case dealt with the crime of

Every creation of man's mind that has withstood the buffeting of time was born of love—love of something or someone...It is possible even to love mathematics. (Harper Lee).

By: Asst.Prof.Maamon S.Salih(PhD)

Department of English-College of Education for Human Sciences-University of Babylon hum.maamun.sami@uobabylon.edu.iq
Asst.Prof.Sanaa Salman Shindi(PhD)

College of Administration and Finance –University of Babylon

shooting Reverend Willie Maxwell. The unidentified nature of this case became part of Harper Lee's book (Cep, 2019).

Harper Lee was a very brave girl in her childhood which is similar to Scout in her childhood: "Get Offa Him" Nell said "Get off him now". She said these words to keep the older boys away from her friend who was lying on his face and badly hurt. The bigger boys were playing a game and dared any one to pass through them and Harper Lee was brave enough to challenge them. Her friend Truman who was seeking Harper Lee's attention moved to fight the older boys but they were so much stronger than him and they hit him who forced Harper to get in and save her friend (Shields, 2008).

Harper Lee's power of character came initially from here parents who had roots in Virginia and South Carolina but they ended up in the rural Alabama in Harper Lee's home town general vicinity of Manorville. Her mother was Frances Cunningham Finch was born in 1881 and received an education at Montevallo then studied in a small college in Alabama. She had four children and died in 1915. Her father Amasa Coleman Lee is clearly reflected in the novel To Kill a Mockingbird as Atticus Finch. Her father was born in 1880 and married Frances in 1910. He became part of the bar in 1915 and worked in the field of low for some years. He became part of Manorville law firm which proved to be successful and then his daughter which join as an adult (Johnson, 2018).

Lee in her books redesigns the heritage that she inherited from her father Amasa Coleman Lee who was reflected in the character of Atticus Finch as the lawyer who faces his town people to defend an innocent Black man mistakenly blamed of raping a white girl in the novel To kill a Mockingbird. Lee's father had some racist assertiveness which had changed progressively. While Lee was writing To Kill A Mockingbird, Mr. Lee had a change of heart turning to a man who believes in equality between black and white men. This shift in Lee's father character was reflected also in her novel Go Set a Watchman in which he altered from a extremist to civilrights hero. In 1962, in New York, Herald Tribune interviewed Lee and her father. Lee said that her father carries as similar character to Atticus Finch's character (The Wall Street Journal: Inspiration for Atticus Finch, Changed His Views on Segregation)

https://www.wsj.com/articles/harper-lees-father-theinspiration-for-atticus-finch-changed-hissegregation-views-1436670661

Her most loyal friend was Truman who shared with her the memory of childhood where she spent many days with him. Truman was very important character in Lee's daily life. He suffered from the divorce of his father and mother when he was only eight years old. He is reflected in the novel To Kill a Mockingbird as Dell. Later Capote and Harper Lee were involved together in a literary work entitled "In Cold Blood". Harper graduated from high school in 1944 and there were hints that she did not like her classes but she developed a friendship with her teacher Ida Gaillard whom she kept in contact till Gillard's death (Johnson, 2008).

In 1948, Lee entered the law school as her father and sister did before but she was not enjoying her studies. During her study in Law school, she was at a cross road in her life. By the spring of 1948, Lee's father was convinced that his daughter Lee was not happy in her Law

School and she was not ready to be a lawyer like him and his other daughter. Lee adored literature and was prepared to study it after being admitted to Oxford University in England. These courses of Law were supposed to get literature out of her mind. Unfortunately, all these programs had failed. She later moved to New York where she was stimulated by her friend Truman Capote and others to write, so she begin to write (Harper Lee's Oxford's Summer: Department of Continuing Education, Oxford University)

https://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/about/harper-lees-oxfordsummer

In 1957, Lee presented the manuscript of Go Set a Watchman to be published. Tey Hohoff who read the manuscript was enthralled by the novel. Like most of writers at the outset of their career, Lee was unconfident of her aptitude as a writer as she said "I was a first time writer, so I did I was told". Lee said this statement when concerning changing the title of her first novel from Go Set a Watchman to To Kill a Mockingbird (Mahler, 2015). In spite of being considered as a model for writing Southern gothic novels, Lee seldom made any public appearance. She also did not publish any book immediately after her book To Kill A Mockingbird, but one last book Go Set A Watchman which was an early draft of To Kill A Mockingbird that was written in early 1950. Lee's work is relevant today as they were relevant after their publication.

Besides the issue of racism, Lee dealt with human relationships in general, especially the relation between women and men. In her novel Go Set A Watchman, Lee presents the relationship between women and men which is sometimes hostile and other times amicable. She, in this novel, establishes comparisons and contrasts among the values and conventions of feminism. Lee presents and investigates the social context in which men and women acquire independence of each other. The feminist ideology is reflected in the character of Jean Louise who faces the anti-feminist perspectives in her town when she was a child and when she became a young woman. She, in her novel Go Set a Watchman, presents feminism dependence as well as independence from patriarchy (Hossein, 2017).

Lee was different from the other ordinary girls in her town. When she attended Huntingdon College in Montgomery, she was wearing simple clothes and did not use any makeup. Her classmate Catherine Helms described her as having nothing common with the other girls. She was not worried about her hair or her dates and did not participate in any speech regarding her hopes of marrying or finding a future husband (Burling, 2016).

One of the topics that Lee dealt with is masculinity of white men and the honor of white southern women. In her novel To Kill a Mockingbird, Lee presents two sided relationship between lawyering and empathy, and the white supremacy and their power abuse to belittle the black people. She shows the belief of southern people that black male predation carries the greatest threat to white womanhood in the south and the response of those white people was to harm black people so not to question the authority of the white supremacy (Mc Adams, 2015).

In 1960, Lee published her first novel To Kill a Mockingbird at the age of 34. It was clear that this novel was the beginning of a brilliant career and this turned out to be. For the vast majority of her life, she was described as an author who disregarded publicity and preferred to live a quiet life. Lee also published in magazines like Vague. In 1961, this magazine published her essay Love —in other Words in which Lee presents her meditation on the meaning of love. Harper Lee died in 19 February, 2016 old enough at the age 89 (Felsenthal, 2016).

2- Go Set a Watchman and To Kill a Mockingbird

Go set a watchman is a novel concerned mainly with the character of Jean Louise Finch who has come back from New York to her town Maycomb. Meycomb is a typical small American county in Alabama which Jean Louise used to live in in her childhood. She returns

Every creation of man's mind that has withstood the buffeting of time was born of love—love of something or someone...It is possible even to love mathematics. (Harper Lee).

By: Asst.Prof.Maamon S.Salih(PhD)

Department of English-College of Education for Human Sciences-University of Babylon hum.maamun.sami@uobabylon.edu.iq
Asst.Prof.Sanaa Salman Shindi(PhD)

College of Administration and Finance –University of Babylon

back to her town to visit her aging father Atticus for two weeks. Atticus is a prominent lawyer in Meycomb who has fought for justice and equality between black and white Americans. Atticus in the past few years has been suffering from peoples' beliefs in racism. Even his sister Alexandra finch is a racist. Jean Louise's older brother Jem has died of a sudden heart attack when he has been only in his early twenties.

Jean Louise has a relationship with Henry Clinton who works in Atticus's law office. Henry has been Jem's childhood friend and has a relation with Jean Louise for a number of years. Jean Louise has beautiful memories of her childhood with Jem and Henry when they have been living in happiness and have been fighting racism.

One day, Atticus and Henry have left to pray in the church and then have left the church for a political meeting. Jean Louise has found a pamphlet entitled "The Black Plague" among Atticus's papers. This makes her frightened of the danger that racism is still raving between black and white people in her town. Jean gets angry of her father Atticus and her beloved Henry because she believes that their speech is racist in their meetings in the Supreme Court. She has coffee with Henry and tells him that she cannot marry him, and in the same day with enormous annoyance, she returns back to her house to pack her bags and to go back to New York. Uncle Jack comes over and slaps her in the face because of being angry convincing her to stay. Finally, Jean has decided to stay in Meycomb.

The novel Go Set a Watchman is based on the events of Lee's previously published novel To Kill a Mockingbird which is classified as a rare literary phenomenon. It won many awards besides the Pulitzer Prize. In 1961 which is the year after its publication, it won the award of Brotherhood Award of the National Conference of Christians and Jews and the Alabama Library Association Award. In the following year the novel has won the Best Seller Paper back of the year Award and in 1999, the Library Journal identified this novel as the best novel of the Century Award (Johnson, 2018).

To Kill A mocking Bird is a southern novel which is most significantly about conscience. This conscience is found in two children, Scout and Jem Finch and their father Atticus who is identified as a lawyer who defends a black person charged of raping a white girl. "Shoot all the blue jays you want, if you can hit'em, but remember it's a sin to kill a mockingbird". This was the father/ lawyer's advice to his children when he was defending the real mocking bird of this novel: the black man charged with the rape of a white girl. Harper Lee uses Jem and Scout Finch to highlight the irrationality and ignorance of people's perspectives regarding race and class in the deep South of Alabama in 1930s. The town people are filled with prejudice and hypocrisy regarding the case of black people and their rights and the heroism of a lawyer who is seeking justice by defending an innocent black man (Lee, 2010).

To Kill A Mockingbird is an autobiography of Harper Lee. The similarities between Lee's life and Scout's life cannot go unnoticed. The setting of the novel's events is in Alabama, Maycomb which was a place full of violence and racism against black people. The town in this novel is a manifestation of the Manorville Town where Lee has lived with her older brother, her father and her sisters. All the violence and hatred against black people that has been found by the

reader of this novel in Maycomb town can be found as exactly the same in Manorville Town. Scout's father in the novel To Kill a Mockingbird was her inspiration in her life that lead her to success which is also found in Lee's life, since her father was her inspiration to success. Like Atticus' father, Lee' father has defended the rights of the black men and as a lawyer has tried to save them but he could not (Hutami, 2014)

Harper Lee wrote Go Set A Watchman before beginning to write To Kill A Mockingbird, but she was encouraged to write To Kill A Mockingbird by her editor which led finally to her great achievement. While Scout was characterized as child in Lee's first novel, she was presented as a grown young lady. When her second novel Go Set A Watchman was announced, Lee stated the following: "My editor, who was taken by the flashbacks to Scout's childhood, persuaded me to write a novel from the point of view of the young Scout. I was a first-time writer, so I did as I was told" (Milligan, 2015).https://www.vogue.co.uk/gallery/harper-lee-novel-go-set-a-watchman-to-kill-amockingbird-author.

Frederickson (2002) describes the term racism as being used in un reflexive and a loose way to show the feelings of hostility or negative feelings of one group against another and the actions that born from such attitude. Considering blacks as slaves for the whites in America was the root of white supremacist attitude that internalizes and naturalizes supremacy over whites. Brewer and Brown (1998) define prejudice as the attitude that is pointed toward some people simply because they are members of a different social group. Also Sue (2003) in his Overcoming Our Racism: the Journey to Liberation states that "discrimination deals with treating people differently because they are members of another social group. African Americans as a result of being different are called Negroes and are under the pressure of prejudice and discrimination done by white people".

Colored skin people especially of African American have been under the pressure of racial injustice throughout the history. When slavery ended in America in the mid of nineteenth century, it sounded like slavery in America has reached to an end and there will be equality and different treatment for the black people in America. In spite of all these changes, white Americans consider black Americans as equal to them but separated. The laws which were devised to protect black people became only a cover for considering the blacks as a second class in the society. As a result, the black people were treated badly with inequality, oppression, discrimination and prejudice. They were called as savage and uncivilized people who are inferior to white people. For such reasons, Harper Lee can be studied as a novelist who deals with all issues of the black people. She dealt with issues such as discrimination, inequality, injustice and oppression of the black people. Lee in her two novels To Kill a Mockingbird and Go set a Watchman evoked black people as oppressed due to prior prejudice. In her two novels, she describes the society that she used to live in as egotistical and racist and also pictures the injustice of the towns' white dominant people of being mainly motivated by legacy of white supremacy and hidden prejudices.

Lee presents the story of the little girl Scout, her brother Jem and her friend Dill and her father Atticus Finch. These characters did not embrace the belief of the white dominance over the black ones. She had written those two novels with a peculiar aim of that people must live in harmony with other minorities, embracing and accepting diversity as a source of strength, rather than a source of conflict. That is why To Kill A Mockingbird is categorized as an anti-racial novel which stands against racial prejudice, discrimination, and injustice. Lee made the setting of the novel to be in time of the Great Depression in America and viewed the life of the racist society in a town called Meycomb in Alabama which resides in south of America. She describes racism in its peak in the court trial of a black man named Tom Robinson who is accused of

Every creation of man's mind that has withstood the buffeting of time was born of love—love of something or someone...It is possible even to love mathematics. (Harper Lee).

By: Asst.Prof.Maamon S.Salih(PhD)

Department of English-College of Education for Human Sciences-University of Babylon hum.maamun.sami@uobabylon.edu.iq
Asst.Prof.Sanaa Salman Shindi(PhD)

College of Administration and Finance –University of Babylon

raping a white girl but he is innocent. Atticus is blind to color differences so he is described as Color-blind that is a metaphoric expression describing wisdom and insight that makes a person see all the people as being equal. Lee describes a town in which people are not equal. She describes a racists society full of prejudice and injustice that is deeply ingrained in the people of this town. In this town, the black people are living as isolated from the other people's' town. These black people are described as being poor and black (Rezazade and Zohdi, 2016: 1).

To Kill a Mockingbird is about a family that resists the ideology of discrimination. When Atticus was asked why he defends Tom Robinson, he says:

For a number of reasons... The main one is, if I didn't I couldn't hold up my head in town, I couldn't represent this county in the legislature, I couldn't even tell you or Jem not to do something again. ... Scott, simply by the nature of the work, every lawyer gets at least one case in his lifetime that affects him personally. This one's mine, I guess [Lee, 1960:86].

Atticus is considered to be a symbol of justice and a stand against discriminating the rights of the black people and the clearest example for this is his saying "Shoot all the blue jays you want, if you can hit 'em, but remember it's a sin to kill a mockingbird" (1960: 103).

To intensify her beliefs, Lee also writes Go Set a Watchman to describe more profoundly the issue of persecution of black people in America. This novel is a modern one which depicts the Civil Rights and political turmoil that were changing in Southern America. It shows how people refused the decision of the Supreme Court that black and white people are equal. This refusal led to more oppression regarding the civil rights of the black people (Abielah , 2016). The events of the novel depend on real events related to political, social aspects of black peoples' rights. This racial prejudice was visible in different aspects of black peoples' lives. Simpson and Yinger (1985) present the aspects of racial prejudice that commonly occurs in the social structure.

In the economic life, the aspects of superiority of white people over black ones were obvious in Go Set a Watchman. The feeling of superiority is the belief that one dominant group is superior the other dominated group. In this novel, the feeling of superiority is depicted by Alexandra's expression toward black people when she asked Jean Louise to come down because the black people in the town were isolated since they resisted being inferior to white people and describes them as shiftless which means that they are lazy. Racial prejudice in this novel can be seen clearly in political and legal aspect which are the result of the superiority of the white people. They think that the black people are not qualified to have legal, political, educational and any other right. White people think that black people are slaves or only property for them. Also the feelings of fear that results from thinking that black people will rebel to get their rights of citizenship led white people to put death penalties on the black people who break any rule (Abielah , 2016).

The topic of race was the most dominant topic in the novel Go Set a Watchman. Go set a watchman begins in 1955 when Jean Louise returned to Maycomb in her annual visit. She has been living in New York and working as an artist for five years working as a pink collar and also used to take paintings lessons in night. In her town, Meycomb, Jean Louise faced many

difficulties such as wearing gloves and a hat when she leaves the house and to marry a conventional suitor named Henry. Her experience reflects many aspects of southern American life such as femininity, middle class professionalism, white privilege and segregation (Clukey, 2016). There were many wrong aspects in southern American Society that has been discussed in this novel but the most obvious one was the issue of the oppression of the black people which was reflected in every aspect of life in this town.

## 3- Conclusion

The novelist Harper Lee has presented in her two novels Go Set a Watchman and To Kill A Mockingbird some of the most precarious issues that might constitute a serious threat to the fabrique of any society. Ideas of oppression, supremacy and prejudice beside many cases that she has presented in her two novels are the main core of interest. It shows how this idea of oppression has become part of peoples' ordinary life and how it is gradually going to be naturalized in modern societies. The present study suggests that this case must be taken seriously and not for granted since it can lead to very hazardous consequences that affect the safety and the future of people's life.

## References

Abielah , M. N.( 2016). Racial Prejudice in Harper Lee's Go Set a Watchman. Thesis. Malang: University Islam Negeri

Brewer,M and Brown,R .1998) in Social Psychology of Prejudice: Historical and Contemporary Issues. Crandall, Christian S. & Mark Schaller(eds) PUBLISHED BY LEWINIAN PRESS

Burling, A. (2016). Harper Lee. United States of America: Abdo Publishing of ABDO.

Cep, C. (2019). Furious Hours; Murder, Fraud and the Last Trail of Harper Lee. Knopf Publishing Group.

Champion, L. (1999). When You Finally See Them: The Unconquered Eye in "To Kill a Mockingbird", The Southern Quarterly 37, no. 2, Reprinted by the permission of The University of Southern Mississippi.

Clukey , A. (2016). The Sexual Politics of Massive Resistance. Contemporary Literature. Volume 56, Number 4 , Winter 2015.

Fredrickson, G. M. (2002) Racism: A Short History, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press

Harper Lee's Oxford's Summer: Department of Continuing Education, Oxford University, Accessed on December ,2019 https://www.conted.ox.ac.uk/about/harper-lees-oxford-summer

Every creation of man's mind that has withstood the buffeting of time was born of love—love of something or someone...It is possible even to love mathematics. (Harper Lee).

By: Asst.Prof.Maamon S.Salih(PhD)

Department of English-College of Education for Human Sciences-University of Babylon hum.maamun.sami@uobabylon.edu.iq
Asst.Prof.Sanaa Salman Shindi(PhD)

College of Administration and Finance –University of Babylon

Harris, Paul (2013). ". "Harper Lee sues agent over copyright to To Kill A Mockingbird". The Guardian.

Heller, N. (2019). Remembering Harper Lee and the Book That Meant Almost Everything to Everyone. Vogue Magazine. Date of Access 29/12/2019.

https://www.vogue.com/article/remembering-harper-lee-to-kill-a-mockingbird

Hossein, M. (2017). Ideological Conflict and Coming of Age Affinity Between Patriarchy and Feminism in Harper Lee's Go Set a Watchman. Research Journal of English Language and Literature. Vol 5. Issue 3. ISSN: 2395-2636. Date of Access: 13/12/2019.

https://www.wsj.com/articles/harper-lees-father-the-inspiration-for-atticus-finch-changed-hissegregation-views-1436670661

Hutami, W. (2014). Racial Prejudice Revealed in Harper Lee's To Kill A Mockingbird. Thesis. Faculty of Languages and Arts: Yogyakarta State University.

Joe, Nocera (2015). "The Harper Lee "Go Set A Watchman" Fraud". Johnson, C, D. (2018). Reading Harper Lee: Understanding to Kill a Mockingbird and "Go Set a Watchman". United States of America: Greenwood.

Johnson, C, D. (2018). Reading Harper Lee: Understanding To Kill a Mockingbird and Go Set a Watchman. Santa Barbara, California: Greenwood.

Lee, H, (2010). To Kill A Mockingbird. New York: Harper Collins Publishers.

Madden, K. (2009). Harper Lee. New York: Penguin Group.

Mahler, J. (2015). The Invisible Hand Behind Harper Lee's To Kill A Mockingbird. The New York Times.

Mc Adams, R. (2015). Empathy and Masculinity in Harper Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird (Chapter 13: Masculinity in American Law and Literature. Levmore, S & Nassboum, Martha(Ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Milligan, L. (2015). Cheat Sheet: Harper Lee's Controversial New Novel. Vogue Magazine. Date of Access. 29/12/2019. https://www.vogue.co.uk/gallery/harper-leenovel-go-set-a-watchman-to-kill-a-mockingbird-author

Mills, M. (2014). The Mockingbird Next Door: Life with Harper Lee. New York: Penguin Books.

Presidential Bush Honors Medal of Freedom Recipients".

https://georgewbushwhitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2007/11/20071105-1.html Shields, C. (2008). I am Scout: The Biography of Harper Lee. New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC.

Simpson, G. E. & Yinger, J. M. (1985). Racial and Cultural Minorities: An Analysis of Prejudice and Discrimination. 5th Ed. USA: Springer Science and Business Media.

Sue, Derald Wing (2003). Overcoming Our Racism: the Journey to Liberation. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

The Wall Street Journal: Inspiration for Atticus Finch, Changed His Views on Segregation). December 13, 2019. Date of Access: 13/12/2019.

Tyson, L (2006) Critical Theory Today, New York, Routledge

Whitley, B. E. & Kite, M. E. (2009). The Psychology of Prejudice and Discrimination, 2nd ed., Wadsworth Cengage Learning, US

Zohdi, Esmaeil& Rezazade, Faeze(2016). The Power of Being Color-Blind in To Kill a Mockingbird. International Letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences ISSN: 2300-2697, Vol. 71, pp 47-53