



**People's Democratic Republic of Algeria**  
**Ministry of Higher Education and scientific Research**  
**University of Echahid Hamma Lakhdar, Eloued**  
**Faculty of Arts and Languages**  
**Department of English Languages**



**Presentation of Women in Modern  
American literature, To Kill a Mockingbird by  
Lee HARPER**

**Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for a  
Master Degree in English Literature and Civilization**

**Submitted by:** Hanane BERRIM

**Supervisor:** Miss. Embarka KHELEF

Ouarda ZEGHOUD

**Board of Examiners:**

**Chairman/President:** Mrs. Samira SEMMAk

UEHL -Eloued

**Supervisor:** Miss. Embarka KHELEF

UEHL -Eloued

**Examiner:** Mr. Nacer DEHDA

UEHL -Eloued

**Academic Year: 2017 /18**

## **Dedication 1**

Dedicated to the memory of

To whom I miss ... To the soul of my dear sister Latifa

Always in our hearts... You will never be forgotten.

To my faithful parents, who never stop giving of themselves in countless ways. My love for  
you can never be quantified. God bless you.

My beloved sisters Imene, Sara, Mouna Aya, and my brother Islam

To all those who love me and support me

I dedicate this modest work.

Miss. Hanane

## **Dedication 2**

Thanks Allah for giving me support and strength while working on this dissertation  
I would like to dedicate this work to those who gave me their support and encouragement;  
My dear mother Samira, father Bachir and my lovely sisters Ouidad, Roumaissa, Maroi,  
Kaouwther, Fatma Zohra, and Ritadj Massouda may Allah protect all of them  
My precious friend Imane MEHELLOU, and all those who love me without forgetting my  
partner Hanane

Miss. Ouarda

## **Acknowledgement**

First of all, in the name of Allah, the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful, all praise is due to Allah The Almighty for His countless blessings upon us.

We would like to express our warmest gratitude to our supervisor Miss. Embarka KHELEF who made this work possible. Her friendly guidance and priceless advice have been countless throughout all stages of the work. Without her help and encouragement, this dissertation would not have been finished.

Great thanks are given to the jury members for reading and reviewing our dissertation and for the comments and remarks they would provide us with.

## **Abstract**

The present study aims at exploring the presentation of women in the modern American literary work Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. We followed the descriptive approach to investigate the way Lee embodies her females in this novel. The story takes place in Maycomb, a small fictional southern town in Alabama, during the Depression. It shows a range of themes including the presentation of women. Harper Lee mirrors a set of contrasting women's portrayals during that time. This dissertation is divided into two parts. The first part, in its turn, consists of two chapters. The first one presents the historical background of modernism and its characteristics. It also addresses the modern literature and the innovative aspects about it as a result of modernism with a focus on the American modernism, literature, and novel. The second chapter deals with the feminist movement, and displays women's status in America during the modernist age and how the writers present them in their literary works by the influence of this movement. As for the third chapter, it introduces the author and her novel within its historical context; besides, it provides a summary of its major events. The fourth chapter which is the practical one analyzes the various images that Lee draws about her female characters concerning their physical and moral traits and their familial and social relationships. This study reveals that the writer combines between stereotypical women with a reprehensible view, and the independent rebellious women who are presented fondly.

### **Keywords**

Modernism, American Modernism, Feminist Movement, Presentation of women.

## **Contents**

Dedication 1.....	I
Dedication 2.....	II
Acknowledgement.....	III
Abstract.....	IV
Contents.....	V

## **General Introduction**

1. Background of the Study.....	1
2. Aim of the Study .....	2
3. Justification.....	2
4. Motivation .....	3
5. Research Questions.....	3
6. Methodology .....	3
7. The Structure of Dissertation .....	3

## **Part one**

### **Chapter One**

#### **A Historical and Literary Overview of American Modernism**

Introduction.....	6
1.1. Modernist Period.....	6
Modernism in America.....	7
1.2. An Overview of Modern American Literature.....	9

Modern American Literature.....	11
1.3. Modern Novel.....	12
Modern American Novel.....	13
Conclusion.....	14

## **Chapter Two**

### **Feminism and Its Impact on Women's Status and Presentation in Modern American Literature**

Introduction.....	16
2.1. An Overview of Feminist Movement.....	16
2.1.1. Definition.....	16
2.1.2. History of Feminist Movement.....	18
2.1.3. Branches of Feminism.....	19
2.1.3.1. Liberal Feminism.....	19
2.1.3. 2. Socialist / Marxist Feminism.....	20
2.1.3.3. Radical Feminism.....	20
2.1.3.4. Cultural Feminism.....	21
2.2. Status of Modern American Women.....	21
2.2.1. Economic Status.....	21
2.2.2. Social Status.....	22
2.2.3. Political Status.....	23
2.3. Women in Modern American Literature.....	24
Conclusion.....	25

## **Part two**

### **Chapter Three**

#### **Harper Lee' s Profile, Historical Context and Summary of To Kill a Mockingbird**

Introduction.....	27
3.1. Harper Lee's Profile.....	27
3.1.1. Harper Lee's Biographical Sketch.....	27
3.1.2. Harper Lee's <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> .....	29
3.2. Historical context of <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> .....	30
3.2.1. The Great Depression.....	30
3.2.2. The Scottsboro Trial.....	31
3.2.3. The Civil Rights Movement.....	31
3.3. Summary of <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> .....	33
Conclusion.....	36

### **Chapter Four**

#### **The Presentation of Women in To Kill a Mockingbird**

Introduction.....	38
4.1. The Characterization of Women in To Kill a Mockingbird.....	38
4.1.1. Jean Louise Finch.....	38
4.1.2. Aunt Alexandra.....	39
4.1.3. Calpurnia.....	41
4.1.4. Miss. Caroline Fisher.....	42



4.1.5. Miss. Maudie Atkinson.....	43
4.1.6. Mrs. Henry Lafayette Dubose.....	44
4.1.7. Miss. Stephanie Crawford.....	45
4.1.8. Miss. Rachel Haverford.....	46
4.1.9. Mrs. Radley.....	46
4.1.10. Miss. Blount.....	47
4.1.11. Mayella Violet Ewell.....	47
4.1.12. Misses Tutti and Frutti Barber.....	48
4.1.13. Helen Robinson.....	48
4.1.14. Eula May.....	49
4.1.15. Lily Brooke.....	49
4.1.16. Lula.....	49
4.1.17. Mrs. Grace Merriweather.....	49
4.1.18. Miss. Gates.....	50
4.1.19. Mrs. Greshaw.....	50
Conclusion.....	50
<b>General conclusion</b> .....	51
<b>Works Cited</b> .....	53

ملخص

## **General Introduction**

1. Background of the Study.....	1
2. Aim of the Study .....	2
3. Justification.....	2
4. Motivation .....	3
5. Research Questions.....	3
6. Methodology .....	3
7. The Structure of Dissertation .....	3

# **General Introduction**

## **1. Background of the Study**

In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, many economic and social developments had taken place in the world. This period is called modernism. It is a term that was given to the artistic and cultural movement that characterized the urban life at that time in different domains such as art, literature, science, and philosophy in which artists, scientists, and thinkers broke down with old-fashioned ideas. In literature, the writers also undertook an innovative process by which they came with new modes, styles, and themes to replace the outdated ones to keep up with new conditions. The modern era was a turning point and remarkable period in American literature. This period was distinguished by the emergence of massive groups and movements like the Lost Generation and the Harlem Renaissance. The modern American novel, in particular, witnessed an unmatched achievement and a great stature.

Women have long been marginalized in men-centered societies, where men have held leadership and work positions and exercised their authority against women. Woman was a disgraceful and worthless member in those societies. She was seen as such a near-sighted creature and her duties were limited to cooking, cleaning, and childcare; thus, women were prevented from exercising their rights and expressing their ambitions and desires. However, this situation did not continue as a result of feminist movement.

Starting from the late nineteenth and onward, women started openly challenging the women's sphere and demanding equal social, political and economic rights. The modernist period is also stamped by the feminist movement which is related to women's struggle against the oppression that was practiced against them. It was mainly in The United Kingdom and The United States of America, and participated in the elaboration of women 'status especially American women who got the enfranchise in 1920. The social perception

of women also had changed. They became more independent and powerful, and were seen as an effective member in the modern societies.

Feminism affected also the literary arena. In the modernist period, American literature realized a shift in style and content of writing. American novelists, used their talents to spotlight women's issues. They increased, as well, the depiction of feminine images and themes in literature. So, modern American women completely redefined their roles in almost every social, political, cultural and economic roles, in addition to their traditionally associated roles as a lovely, caring and motherly figures.

Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a modern American novel that was written during three years and was published in 1960. This work has been known and acclaimed among readers. It is a story of childhood experiences towards finding the answers in adults world. *To Kill a Mockingbird* deals with racial discrimination, loss of human values, innocence of childhood, and gender issues. This latter is demonstrated through the portrayal of women of different ages and interests.

## **2. Aim of the Study**

In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Harper Lee introduces a number of females through the eyes of her little protagonist Scout. The story takes three years during the Great Depression. Lee served her females in a juxtaposition of images. She tackles this theme as it was widely spread among most of the writers in modernist period when new issues started being discussed as a response to this artistic and cultural movement. The presentation of women in modern American literature is common for the American writers of both sexes. This study aims to investigate the portrayal of women in *To Kill a Mockingbird* for Harper Lee.

## **3. Justification**

*To Kill a Mockingbird* is one of the prominent American works in the modernist era. Harper Lee had been unique in her presentation of women whether for traditional and non-traditional women.

#### **4. Motivation**

It is an interesting task to go through a study about *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The novel is considered one of the best novels in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and it deals with an important issue that was widely discussed in modernist literature. For that, we chose this study to see to what extent she had been unique in her portrayal of women.

#### **5. Research Questions**

In this study, we are going to answer the following questions :

- How does Harper Lee present female characters in *To Kill a Mockingbird*?
- Does this presentation reflect the real status of women in modern America?
- Is this presentation similar or different from the modern American literature? If it is different, what are the differences?

#### **6. Methodology**

The method adopted in this study is descriptive. So, we will analyze the characterization of women *To Kill a Mockingbird*; their physical and moral description, besides, their social relationships.

#### **7. The structure of Dissertation**

This research contains four chapters. The first chapter intends to detect modern American literature through giving a general scope of modernism in America and its historical circumstances during that period, and how it contributed in the rise of modern American novel especially after the First World War. Concerning the second chapter, we will deal with the development of feminist movement in the late 19th century and the early 20th century, and the status of American women at that time. We are also going to discuss briefly the presentation of women in modern American literature. The third chapter will be devoted to Harper Lee and her novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*. We will give Lee's profile, the historical context of the novel and its summary. Ending by the fourth chapter which is the practical one, we will go through reviewing the female characters for their physical and

moral description and their relations to each other and the other male characters, then we will compare and contrast the portrayal of women in modern American literature to that in *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

## **Part one**

### **Chapter One**

#### **A Historical and Literary Overview of American Modernism**

Introduction.....	6
1.1. Modernist Period.....	6
Modernism in America.....	7
1.2. An Overview of Modern American Literature.....	9
Modern American Literature.....	11
1.3. Modern Novel.....	12
Modern American Novel.....	13
Conclusion.....	14

# **A Historical and Literary Overview of American Modernism**

## **Introduction**

The world literature often reflects the circumstances and the period where and when it is produced. American literature is one paradigm which passed through different stages over the history from the colonial times until today. In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, it flourished rapidly because of a cultural and intellectual movement called 'modernism' and more particularly 'American modernism'. This movement touched all the fields of the modern life including literature in which the writers broke with the outdated literary traditions and innovated new ones. In this chapter, we will discuss the major features of modernism in general and American modernism in specific. In addition, we will review the effect of this movement on American literature and novel which gained its apotheosis in the modern era focusing on their themes and styles.

### **1.1.Modernist Period**

Oxford dictionary defines modernism as "a style and movement in art, architecture and literature popular in the twentieth century in which modern ideas, methods, and materials were used rather than traditional ones". Stephen Kern argues that modernism is dropping the outdated views to the world stating that: " modernism is primarily a set of new ways of seeing and interpreting the world, and narrative forms are the literary manifestations of those ways"(2). According to M. H Abrams, the term modernism is used to refer to the new changes of literature and arts that came after the first World War(1914-1918), and modernist works are characterized by the break with the previous traditions of Western culture; moreover, he distinguishes between "modernism" and" high modernism" claiming that modernism is dated back to the 1890s while high modernism is stamped by the accelerated changes after the WWI (167).



Broadly speaking, modernism is a cultural and literary movement. It covered different domains in life. For example sciences, philosophy, psychology, anthropology, painting, music, and architecture. Many scholars, philosophers, and scientists had a great influential accomplishments in the modern era. The most notable ones are: Physicist Einstein on Relativity(1905), physicist Planck on Quantum theory (1900), philosophers Nietzsche on the Will of Power and Bergson on the concept of time, philologists William James on Emotions and Inner Time and Freud on the Unconscious (The Interpretation of Dreams 1900 ), psychologist Jung on Collective Unconscious, linguist De Saussure on Language and anthropologist James Frazer on Primitive Culture (Ciaffaroni).

Modernism is related to the period of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It describes the urban life which is marked by the great changes that happened all over the world especially in Great Britain and U.S. A, where technological, scientific, Industrial Revolution and socio-historical changes affected on people's views to the world (Modernism and Postmodernism 20). This period was characterized by the irrational thinking and the changing of human position where the individual is put in front of the social structure. Religious beliefs were no more credited, on the contrary, they started being questioned and criticized (Ibid 24).

Moreover, modernism refuses the objective representation of the world; instead, it argues that everything is relative. This means that the movement does not believe in the ability to present the absolute truth. Modernist artists moved to portray what happens inside humans' minds. This shift is caused by the WWI, and the inability of science to give justifications about the present reality (Ibid 20-21).

### **Modernism in America**

During the modernist period, Americans lived a new period of industrialization. The Industrial Revolution brought new machines and inventions in several fields. This

revolution involved different shifts in transportations, manufacturing, and communication (Abrahamson 22-6).

In 1917, U.S. A entered the First World War after two years and half of efforts by the US president Woodrow Wilson to maintain the country out of the war. He declared that USA would be neutral about the war in Europe considering it as imperialist wars. However, US president changed this neutral tendency to declare war against Germany and its allies in 1917. Later, the USA benefited from this war financially and economically (Ibid 87-8). African Americans found in Harlem in New York a suitable place to live in, and continued to migrate to it from the south (Bertens and D'haen 142).

This state of prosperity came to an end with the 1920s Wall Street Crash when millions of people found themselves bankrupt, hungry and homeless especially the southerners who were affected by this crisis heavily (Ibid 142). This crash is called the "Black Thursday". Hoover had an optimistic view about this situation by expressing his confidence in the ability of the USA to overcome the crisis, and stated: " Any lack of confidence in the economic future of the basic strength of business in the United States is foolish" (qtd. in US History 239).

The Wall Street Crash intensified in the following years, and was called the 'Great Depression' in 1932 because of its catastrophic results; banks announced their bankruptcy, the factories were closed, and millions of people became unemployed (Ibid 244-5). R. A Gray in his book "Brief History of American Literature" mentioned that the American government tried to contain the crisis by adopting various policies which were known as the 'New Deal' claiming that: "... the period that became known as Great Depression, were a time of crisis, they were also a time of renewed hope, as the United States government implemented policies, under what was known the New Deal, to try to get Americans back to work" (166).

## **1.2. An Overview of Modern American Literature**

Modern literature was affected by two main events; the First World War and the Industrial Revolution especially in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The writers started looking at the world with a realistic view and deep sense of pessimism to the chaotic and lamented world; meanwhile, their fragmented and experimented works provided a set of aesthetic alternatives for that world (Modernism and Postmodernism 21-2).

Experimentation in fiction became popular in the modernist period. The modernist writers like Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf, and James Joyce experimented with form, style, and techniques in their writings to change the readers' perceptions of reality. These writings are called 'avant-garde' (Lodge 105). The term refers to the artistic and social deviation from the norms of culture, and making unexpected innovations in style and subject matter (Abrams 168). Ezra Pound invited for a revolution for innovation with his famous saying 'Make It New' which expressed the most important feature of modernism (Wagner-Martin 4). Modernist artists were interested in the structural organizations of their works rather than on the substance. Their language was rhythmic and concise (Ibid 6).

Modernist period also is widely known by its great writers. Most of them are from Europe such as, Franz Kafka, Robert Musil, Marcel Proust...etc, and from America like T. S. Eliot and the Lost Generation writers (Modernism and Postmodernism 20). The authors moved from dealing with the social phenomena to psychological ones by describing what happens inside people's minds and revealing the hidden motives behind their actions because of the horror, alienation, and dissolution caused by the First World War. People were shocked, and no more trusting the advanced technologies that led to the death of millions during the war and, consequently, effected greatly on people's perception. Philosophical works like those of Arthur Schopenhauer, Friedrich Nietzsche and Sigmund Freud had also a huge impact on the modernist literary products during the urbanization and industrialism (Modernism postmodernism 21-2).

Modernist authors put an emphasis on the subjectivity of experience. Instead of telling us everything, the author lets the characters express their experiences through first person narrator to affirm the idea that reality is relative. Another widely used narrative mode is the stream of consciousness. (Ibid 21-2). It was developed by the philosopher William James, and often used interchangeably with the term "interior monologue". Fiction writers used this technique to portray the thoughts, feelings, and experiences occurring inside characters' minds. James Joyce is the most known writer in adopting this mode in *Ulysses* (1922) (Cuddon 866). M.H Abrams defines:

... stream of consciousness is the name applied specifically to a mode of narration that undertakes to reproduce, without a narrator's intervention, the full spectrum and continuous flow of a character's mental process, in which sense perceptions mingle with conscious and half-conscious thoughts, memories, expectations, feelings, and random associations (299).

Those writers were interested in psychoanalysis along with Sigmund Freud's analysis of human consciousness when they created this technique, in their literary products, which appeared mostly in modern novels (Lončar-Vujnović 69). For example, Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and in Dorothy Richardson's *Pilgrimage* (Ibid 72).

The other features of modern literature can be summarized in the following points:

- 1) Major modernists' works have no clear endings, and the responsibility lays upon the reader to create his/ her own ones.
- 2) Authors move forward and backward throughout the story rejecting to follow the chronological time presentation.
- 3) They use multiple techniques such as irony, parody, fragmentation, and pastiche.
- 4) They lament the chaotic post-war world and belief in the artistic and aesthetic experience as an alternative.

- 5) Their characters are alienated, perplexed and struggle to discover the sense of life.
- 6) They present the urban life by depicting the fragile ties between a person and the society, and among people themselves.
- 7) They refer to mythical and classical works without reformulation of meanings to stress the differences between the past and the present (Modernism and Postmodernism 24 - 5).

### **Modern American Literature**

Modern American writers in particular were known for their innovations. They broke the conventional traditions of literature, used new forms and language, and addressed new subject matters. Those writers such as T.S Eliot, Ezra Pound, William Faulkner and Ernest Hemingway were interested in other arts including painting, sculpture, photography, and music (Wagner-Martin 3). In addition, they were also influenced by the theories and circumstances around them as the rest of modern authors like the psychological and scientific ones which helped them to develop new ideas, new devices, and new spirits. (The Harlem Renaissance and Modernism 867). For them, literature had new function which is presenting the chaotic world. Their writings were playful and ironic (Wagner-Martin 1-4). Pound and many other poets like Ford Madox and T. E Hulme proclaimed that poem's language should be dry and hard to be perceived. This led to 'Imagism' in poetry. This movement was popularized by Pound himself meaning that a poem is a juxtaposition of images, and the reader should detect and perceive the relationship among these images. Pound invested the idea of this movement in his two lines poem *'In a Station of the Metro'* (Bertens and D'haen 148).

Harlem Renaissance or the Negro Movement is the period of creativity and innovation whether in literature, painting, music, dance, or sculpture occurred after the WWI. The

term refers to the African American artists who identified their cultural ethnicity through arts in Harlem after the wide migration from the segregating rural American south seeking for better living conditions. Zora Neale Hurston's novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* is one example of the movement's artistic masterpieces (Abrams 114).

An important group appeared in the modern period is the Lost Generation. It is a group of American writers; Ernest Hemingway, E.E Cummings, Fitzgerald, Dos Passos and many others who lived between 1895 and 1900. The term is coined by Gertrude Stein, and used by Ernest Hemingway as an epigraph to his novel 'The Sun Also Rises'. They shared the 'voluntary exile' preferring to live in Europe particularly in Paris to get the freedom of the expression and to be considered with European modernists ( Bertens and D'haen 163-5). Those writers who separated themselves from their nation and identities lost their identity after the Great War and characterized as 'Franchified' affecting European culture and innovators (Davis and Lee 12-3 ). The Lost Generation writers expressed the alienated and confused feelings of Americans after the WWI (The Harlem Renaissance and Modernism 870).

### **1.3. Modern Novel**

The modern novel came as a reaction to Victorian one. During Victorian era, the novel characterized by moralization or idealization, omniscient narrators, simple plots, and marriage or death are its conventional ends. Modern novel challenged these traditional modes of narratives and replaced them with new styles and forms of 'openness, skepticism, and horror.' Modern novel writers tried "to make it new" to cope with the flux of modern life; chaotic urbanization, sexual freedom, the Great War, and the advanced technologies. These changes in style and forms manifested in fragmentation, explicit sexual discussion, variation of point of views, reproduction of interior thoughts, feelings, and memories, non-chronological time presentation, expressing the loss of faith, and disbelieving in objective

reality (Matz 215). Furthermore, the modernist novel does not have a real beginning, middle, and end because it is based on the flow of the characters' experiences which the reader has to follow to become familiar with the story. Nevertheless, the reader will not know the characters' final fates at the end (Kern 3).

Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane summarized the features of the modernist novel in four points stating that: "The Modernist novel has shown, perhaps, four great preoccupations: with the complexities of its own form, with the representation of inward states of consciousness, with a sense of the nihilistic disorder behind the ordered surface of life and reality, and with the freeing of narrative art from the determination of an onerous plot"(393). The modern novel and modernism generally share the same causes behind these changes. However, moderns had desire to emphasize the "art of novel", and the changes in human relationships (Matz 215).

The novel gained its reputability after the First World War when a collection of modern works emerged. The modern writers explored innovative narrative styles, and the most well-known products are James Joyce's *Ulysses*, Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*, Gertrude Stein's *The Making of Americans*, and Robert Musil's *Man Without Qualities*. In *Ulysses*, the writer demonstrated a set of modern novel's features including subjectivity and disillusion, depiction of modern life with a breakdown with old views in the new developments and no clear end is illustrated. The same thing can said about the other three works (Ibid 216-7).

### **Modern American Novel**

Modernist American novel occupied the highest standing among the other literary genres. The American writers during and after the First World War contributed in providing the novel with new force. For example, Edith Wharton in *The House of Mirth* (1905), and *The Age of Innocence* (1920), Theodore Dreiser in *Sister Carrie* (published

in 1900), Sinclair Lewis in *Main Street* (1920) and *Bobbitt* (1922), F. Scott Fitzgerald in *The Great Gatsby* (1925), and Ernest Hemingway in *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) (Anderson 6).

The impact of the Great War on the American novel was great as it was on people's beliefs. This war became the main concern of modern American novelists. John Limon affirmed that the novelists who missed war, in fact, they missed America which was built by war (Zhou and Liu 19). The war novel established itself in the American literary history and became as what Peter. G Jones suggested that it is a "part of the overall experience of life" (qtd in. Ibid 19), and in the post war period, "the war novel has become one of the most logical ways of writings about life in twentieth century" (qtd in. Ibid 20).

## **Conclusion**

This chapter was devoted to modernism and modern literature in America. Modernism is a cultural and literary movement that characterized the period of the turn of the twentieth century. Modernist fiction writers looked for new forms and techniques to reflect the post-war depressive world and the urban and industrialized life. American writers are not exception. They contributed to make different innovative changes in American literature like the Lost Generation and Harlem Renaissance writers. Novelists also made massive efforts to make the novel achieves its unprecedented stature.



## **Chapter Two**

### **Feminism and Its Impact on Women's Status and Presentation in Modern American Literature**

Introduction.....	16
2.1. An Overview of Feminist Movement.....	16
2.1.1. Definition.....	16
2.1.2. History of Feminist Movement.....	18
2.1.3. Branches of Feminism.....	19
2.1.3.1. Liberal Feminism.....	19
2.1.3. 2. Socialist / Marxist Feminism.....	20
2.1.3.3. Radical Feminism.....	20
2.1.3.4. Cultural Feminism.....	21
2.2. Status of Modern American Women.....	21
2.2.1. Economic Status.....	21
2.2.2. Social Status.....	22
2.2.3. Political Status.....	23
2.3.Women in Modern American Literature.....	24
Conclusion.....	25

# **Feminism and its Impact on Women's Status and Presentation in Modern American Literature**

## **Introduction**

Women's struggle to get their right is traced back to the far history. Women were associated with home and family, suppressed by the social conventions, and considered as inferiors in men-centered societies. So, they began questioning their contemptuous social status. Then, they started their journey to change this situation demanding more elaboration in their social, political, and economical positions. They unified their efforts and organized movements to achieve their goals. Particularly in USA, American women became increasingly interested in that due to the immense financial shift of the Great Depression and WWI. Those movements are known as "feminism".

Feminism seeks to fight the oppression practiced against women, and strive to make both sexes equal to each other. Pioneers of this movement, including fiction writers, made considerable contributions in establishing its keystone all over the world. Feminism in modern period is continual process for the former periods. In this chapter, we will spotlight "feminism", its branches and waves. In addition, the status of American women in the modern period will be highly considered. Then, we will tackle the presentation of women in modern American literature.

## **2.1. An Overview of Feminist Movement**

### **2.1.1. Definition**

Various definitions are given for the term "feminism". Merriam Webster Dictionary defines feminism as "the theory of political, economic and social equality of sexes ("Feminism"). According to J.A Cuddon," It is an attempt to describe and interpret (reinterpret) women's experience as depicted in various kinds of literature ...". He claims that feminism attacks the privileged men's values in literature, and opposes the old-

fashioned presuppositions of men concerning women's actions, feelings, and their responses towards life and living (273).

Feminism is mainly a western concept. Deborah Madsen states that "Feminism deals with women and their status in society and asks questions about oppression conscious and gender". Madsen argues that the concerns of feminist theory are "the unique experience of women in history; the notion of female consciousness; the definition of gender that limit and oppress; and the cause of women's liberation from those restrictions ." (qtd. in Theoretical Framework of Feminism 21). Chris Weldon considers "feminism" as politics:

It is politics directed at changing of existing power relation between women and men in society. These power relations structure all areas of life, family, education, and welfare, the worlds of work and politics, culture and leisure. They determine who does what and for whom, what we are, and what we might become (Ibid 22).

There is no one theory or procedures which unify feminism because of the various points and procedures that feminism relies on including adaptation of certain theories which are Psychoanalysis, Marxist, and diverse Poststructuralist. However, feminists have three main assumptions in common :

- The notion that western culture is patriarchal, that is; women are inferiors, they are ideologically oppressed and subordinate to men in all the cultural issues such as familial, social, political, economic, and legal. Women are presupposed to men superiority unconsciously in the process of being socialized (Abrams 89).
- Gender is not determined by one's biological anatomy which in fact determines our sexes. They are the cultural constructions resulted from prejudiced patriarchal civilization which identify what is masculine, and presenting it as strong, dominating, invented, and rational, and what is feminine, and presenting it as passive, weak, silly and conventional.

Simone De Beauvoir claims "one is not born, but rather becomes a woman ... It is described as feminine" (Ibid 89).

- The patriarchal ideology pervades the works of literature mainly those which were written by man for man and revolved male protagonists like Oedipus Ulysses, Hamlet, Tom Jones, and others. In those works, men depict masculine feelings and traits, and present female characters as marginal and suppressed as fulfillment or opposition to men's desires (Ibid 89-90).

### **2.1.2. History of Feminist Movements**

From the nineteenth century, feminism is classified into three waves specially in the United States and the United Kingdom :

- First wave: this phase began in the late 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in America and Britain. Women in this period revolted against the oppression practiced toward them to get the freedom in various issues such as property rights, marriage, and the right to vote (Theoretical Framework of feminism 28 ). The first wave stands on two main pillars: the women's rights and women's suffrage movements. It includes a number of feminists who found the modern feminism like Elizabeth Robins, Dorothy Richardson, Katherine Mansfield, Virginia Woolf and Simone De Beauvoir who wrote the notable book "the Second Sex"(1945). The first wave of feminists demanded educational and legal rights, the right to vote and equal wages. Its topics concerned mostly with sexuality. Feminists in this wave gained most of their demands including the right to vote in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Ibid 28).

The first wave's women were called "suffragettes". They demanded the right to vote and struggled against oppression. Feminism had been seen as an opposition to patriarchy. Chris Weedon defined patriarchy in "Feminist practice and poststructuralist theory"(1987) stating that:

The term patriarchal refers to power relations in which women's interests are subordinated to interests of men. These power relations take

on many forms, from the social division of labor and social organization of procreation to the internalized norms of femininity by which we live. Patriarchal power rests on social meaning given to biological sexual difference (Hodgson-Wright 3).

- The second wave: this wave began in the 1960s. It highlighted the cultural, social, and political inequities related to women. This period witnessed active participation of young women and girls who started studying at university and participated in Civil Rights struggle. However, women suffered from previous discriminations related to low wages, and many of them were driven back to their traditional roles as mothers and wives with less opportunities in the field of work. Betty Freidan and Simone De Beauvoir who wrote the *Second Sex* are two pioneers in the second wave (Theoretical Framework of feminism 29).
- The third wave also called post-feminism which began in the 1990s, and flourished in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is concerned with discovering gender and language relationships, discussing issues related to biased actions against women in publishing sectors. This wave concentrated on sociopolitical and economical aspects and factors of race and class. It holds different identities of girls and women with different ethnicities and experiences (Ibid 30).

### **2.1.3.Branches of Feminism**

#### **2.1.3.1. Liberal Feminism**

In the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, some women were influenced by the political environment in which liberals argued that all the citizens should be equal in the governmental participation. Liberal feminists such as Mary Wollstonecraft in *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1798) and John Stuart Mill in *The Subjection of Women* (1869) claimed that women should take equal positions with men. Liberal feminism believes that the legal and political systems construct gender inequality.

Therefore, women inferiority will be removed only by achieving equality in the political and legal rights (Heckman 91-92).

#### **2.1.3.2. Socialist / Marxist Feminism**

In the late twentieth century, socialist feminists used Marxists theories to formulate socialist feminism. Marxism believes that if women were independent economically from men by giving them the right of property, they will get liberation, and the center of power in the society will change. Friedrich Engels in *The Origins of the Family*, and *The State* (1845) claimed that women should challenge capitalism to achieve their liberation. In addition to capitalism, other socialist feminists affirmed that patriarchy led to women oppression like Nancy Hartsock and Like Mitchel. Socialist feminists go beyond the legal and political structures of the society by focusing on the influences of capitalism and patriarchy on women oppression (Ibid 92).

#### **2.1.3.3. Radical Feminism**

Beyond the legal, economic, and political aspects of the society, radical feminism revolves around certain practices such as mothering, sexuality, and gender roles. Radical feminists argue that women oppression is a result of the cultural constructions concerned with their roles as mothers and baring children. Shulamith Firestone in *The Dialectic of Sex* (1970) argues that even if women are given their political and legal rights, the fact that they are mothers will not change; as a result, they still subordinated to men. Thus, she suggests to abandon mothering to achieve their equality with men. On the other hand, many radical feminists such as Mary O'Brien in *The Politics of Reproduction*(1981), and Adrienne Rich refuse what Firestone came with claiming that mothering should be celebrated, and the reproductive process does not make women subordinated to men. On the contrary, mothering is an additional contribution of women. Radical feminists emphasize that the cultural construction of the society is the cause behind women oppression rather than their biological nature (Ibid 93).

#### **2.1.3.4. Cultural Feminism**

Cultural feminism appeared after the death of radical feminism even though many feminists kept using the same term; radical feminism. Cultural feminists emphasized on the idea that the biological differences between men and women cannot be withdrawn. So, they moved from challenging the patriarchy in the society to trying to avoid it as they can. Cultural feminists worked under the notion that women are "inherently kinder and gentler" to construct women's culture and to give justifications for neglecting the social change (Literature and gender section A&B 32-3).

### **2.2. Status of Modern American Women**

For women, the modernist period meant a radical change in their daily lives. The women's movements with their emphasis on granting equal rights led to form women's organizations and to withdraw the social patriarchy by a new generation of female artists and professionals. All these changes permitted women to take social and political positions occupied previously only by men, and made a paradigm shift in their domestic roles (Bomarito and Hunter 1).

#### **2.2.1. Economic Status**

At the late nineteenth century, women fought against the image of female as a modest, delicate, and restricted to domestic roles under the suffrage movements in U.S.A. When men joined the First World War, white women, colored women and men called for jobs in factories that employed only men with high wages. However, this factor increased the racial and gender tensions, and some jobs became considered as womanly work like teaching, nursing, secretarial work, and telephone operators in that period (Ibid 1). In spite of the far distance between women's workplaces, and homes and the low wages they got as well, they were socially independent and economically free, and the rates of married women entering the work field increased between 1911-1921. A conviction spread in this

time was that women can make a balance between her work, marriage, and home successfully (Brigitte 12).

After the WWI, the soldiers returned from Europe to their jobs in the factories and women were driven back to their traditional roles in home and family (US History 231). At the same time, some women especially those from ethnic minorities suffered in their work as mothers and professionals (Bomarito and Hunter 2). During the 1920s, African-American women mainly held domestic roles including cooking, cleaning, and laundering in addition to less desirable jobs with low wages in factories as many other women from other minorities. Despite that educated African-American women could enter education and nursing fields, they suffered from the discrimination against them (US History 245).

During the depression, women were luckier than men to find jobs quickly especially African-American women. However, inequities against them increased because of the presumptions that they steal men work and their place is at home. A number of married women also were excluded from their jobs such as teaching (Ibid 245-257).

### **2.2.2. Social Status**

The early decades of the twentieth century or the Progressive Era as it was named witnessed the emergence of the new women and the disappearance of the weak, delicate and stereotypical image of the Victorian female. According to Jane Deutsch the new women were concerned only with rebellious, young middle class women who were presented as "women with short hair short skirts... kicking up their legs and kicking off a century of social restrictions". Nineteenth century prohibitions like smoking, dancing in public were, finally, withdrawn (Bomarito and Hunter 1). During 1920-1929s, women's clothes were entirely changed. Women began to wear less conservative clothes showing their arms and legs. This kind of women was called "flappers". They wanted to eliminate the social restrictions and to practice what they were banned from in the past. Women also



changed their hairstyles and adopted chin-length bob, put cosmetics and wore various types of hats which became popular like the Newsboy hats and cloche hats. Those changes were accepted by the American society in the 1920s (US History 235-243). During the same period, the automobiles were enclosed and women benefited from this revolution and became more independent (Ibid 226). Women expressed their sense of freedom in many ways ranged from doing intellectual and physical activities to forming clubs and associations. They revolted against their parents' traditions concerning their relationships with men; consequently, the interaction between sexes increased and sex issues discussed apparently (Brigitte 12-13). Freedom extended to cover marriage, work, and the intellectual freedom (Wrenn 10).

The 1930s marked a shift in women's concerns. Instead of demanding their rights, they turned their attentions to keep their families together during the economic crisis. Thus, their roles limited in household chores while men were struggling to maintain their jobs, or to find ones (Smith). At the same time, many women had to go out for work including single mothers and widows. They had to work and take care of their house without undermining any of them ( Gender Roles of the 1930's).

### **2.2.3. Political Status**

Women won the suffrage and gained the right to vote in 1920. The enfranchise came after the nineteenth amendment was passed chiefly due to the new perception of women and their abilities after the WWI as a result of their endeavor during wartime. After that, the suffragettes failed in their incoming battles for equal rights. Women continued to occupy inferior positions at the state level as their ability to serve on juries while they were completely eliminated at the local and national level. Yet they invested their organizations to discuss various issues like birth control, education, and peace. Women in these

associations aimed for legislators' support to strengthen their political status (US History 234).

### **2.3. Women in Modern American Literature**

The early twentieth century was a time when various issues have been discussed by society and literature. Issues of gender, class, struggle for knowledge, and alienation were widely embraced. Gender became the main focus for the most of the writers and thinkers. Modernist literature witnessed many changes in the portrayal of women, and the concept of the "new women" was demonstrated (Wrenn 9). Heike Wrenn's *The Women in Modernism* illustrated that modernism contributed in making these changes, and woman was portrayed as an independent individual who has the right to take her own decisions whether to marry, or to work, or both of them (Ibid 9). Feminist movement also influenced the depiction of women in American literature as they went along in their struggle against men oppression (Svoboda).

In the early nineteenth century, American literature portrayed female characters with minor roles, and often to support men. It was until the end of the century when women took liberal and rebellious roles against the patriarchal society. In the early twentieth century, female characters held new responsibility and freedom roles in both women and men's texts (Ibid) .

Female writers became effective and preoccupied with showing changes in their style and content. They captured the new feminine pictures and subject matters. Dorothy May Sinclair, and Katherine Mansfield who tackled the major womanly issues and obstacles in imposing their identities in the new world with Virginia Woolf, Gertrude Stein, Charlotte Perkins Gilman and others are among the most influential writers in the modern era (Bomarito and Hunter 2). In this period, female novelists participated in the emergence of distinctive literary styles between men and women to represent the women's modern roles,

unlike their precedents who were writing under male pseudonyms (Kern 165). However, many male writers could not keep up with the feminist movements, and they presented women in an old-fashioned image such as Earnest Hemingway, William Faulkner, and F. Scott Fitzgerald (Wrenn 11).

## **Conclusion**

Feminist movement has a great impact on changing the economic, social, and political status of women in society as well as their portrayal in literature. In this chapter, we provided an overview about feminist movement, its waves, and branches. Then, we examined the position of women in modern American society, and followed it with the recurrent images of women in modern American literature.

## **Part two**

### **Chapter Three**

#### **Harper Lee' s Profile, Historical Context and Summary of To Kill a Mockingbird**

Introduction.....	27
3.1. Harper Lee's Profile.....	27
3.1.1. Harper Lee's Biographical Sketch.....	27
3.1.2. Harper Lee's <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> .....	29
3.2. Historical context of <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> .....	30
3.2.1. The Great Depression.....	30
3.2.2. The Scottsboro Trial.....	31
3.2.3. The Civil Rights Movement.....	31
3.3. Summary of <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> .....	33
Conclusion.....	36

# **Harper Lee's Profile, Historical Context and Summary of *To Kill a Mockingbird***

## **Introduction**

Harper Lee is a modern American writer from Monroeville, Alabama. She is well known for her renowned and successful novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Lee treats in this work several themes and issues including racial and social discrimination, and gender issues. The novel was published in 1960, and won Pulitzer Prize in literature in 1961. The story happened and was published during sensitive periods in the American history. Therefore, in this chapter, we will introduce Harper Lee's profile focusing on the journey she made until her novel was published. Then, we will move to present the events and circumstances that took place while writing and publishing the novel. At the end, we will give a summary of *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

## **3.1. Harper Lee's Profile**

### **3.1.1. Harper Lee's Biographical Sketch**

Nelle Harper Lee was born in Monroeville, Alabama, USA, on April 28, 1926. Lee was the youngest child to Amasa Coleman who was known as A. C Lee, and Frances Cunningham Finch Lee. She is known as Harper Lee; the name that was written in *To Kill a Mockingbird* 's cover because she asked the publisher to drop the first name " Nelle" which is pronounced as "Nail" in the Alabama accent which annoyed her. As a child, Harper Lee was very close to her father, and fond of sitting in his lap while he was reading as Scout does in the story. Unfortunately, her relationship with her mother was stamped by a tumultuousness. They often got in conflicts because of Harper Lee's maleness behaviors and clothing. This relationship is similar to Scout-aunt Alexandra relationship. Frances suffered from a mental disorder, and she could not take care of her children. Lee received the full care from the family's African-American maid Hattie Belle Clausal (Haggerty 13-

5). At a rural grammar school, Harper Lee was a sports fan and enjoyed harsh games, courageous and aggressive against the boys. In addition to her ability to read at an early age, she was distinguished by her self-confidence, expressing her opinion openly, and addressing the teacher with her name (Ibid 19- 21).

In 1944, Harper Lee graduated from high school, and attended Huntingdon College; a women's school in Montgomery, with her older sister Alice. When she dropped out by her roommate, she moved to Alabama University to study law (Ibid 23-6). Lee tried to balance between her desire to become a writer, and her father's wish that one of his children work in law and newspaper. So, she produced a number of private pieces of writings while she was studying. Lee was encouraged by Capote's career who won an award for his story *Mademoiselle*. She also joined to a sorority in Alabama university, and started writing and editing humor articles in the university's magazine, *The Rammer Jammer* (Ibid 28).

She went to Oxford University in 1948's summer. At the end of the summer, she went back to University of Alabama, but she left it without a degree, and arrived at New York in 1949 where she worked in a bookstore, then she held a clerical work in airline reservation, and devoted her spare time to writing. She made friendships with literary and cultural members. Lee's friends believed in her talent in writing, and motivated her to pursue her career. On Christmas, they gave her a sum of money, so she quitted her work, and engaged wholly in writing *To Kill a Mockingbird* manuscript (Ibid 30-1).

Since 1964, Lee disappeared from the public scene refusing to get into any interviews. She did not produce any other novel (Ibid 40). For her, the novel still convey its message and wrote in the foreword of 1995 edition of the novel the following:

I associate 'introductions' with long-gone authors and works that are being brought back into print after decades of internment. Although *Mockingbird* will be thirty three this year [1995], it had never been out of print and I am still alive Although very quiet... *Mockingbird* still says what it has to say; it has managed to survive without preamble (Kort 176).

Lee participated in literary, cultural, and humanistic activities. She got many awards including the one from Alabama Foundation in 2002, the Presidential Medal Freedom in 2007. In the same year, she became a member in the American Academy of Arts and Letters. In 2010, she was awarded by the President Barack Obama the National Medal for Arts for her enrichments in the artistic field. She died in her hometown Monroeville, on February 19, 2016, and was buried in Hillcrest Cemetery (Anderson).

### **3.1.2. Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird***

Harper Lee started writing *To Kill a Mockingbird* in the mid 1950s in New York (sparknotes Editors). She submitted the manuscript to a New Yorker publisher. An editor asked her to review it again. Lee reviewed her manuscript many times. The novel was published in 1960 achieving great success, and winning numerous awards like the Pulitzer Prize and Brotherhood Award from the National Conference of Christians and Jews. According to Literary Journal, *To Kill a Mockingbird* was voted as the best novel in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is translated in forty languages and had sold more than thirty million copies. Lee has other pieces of writing; however, *To Kill a Mockingbird* remains her unique masterpiece. It still widely read over the generations, and occupies its stature in colleges' programs (Kort 175-6).

*To Kill a Mockingbird* received many admirable reactions. Most of the reviewers drew their attentions to childhood experiences and the life in small town. Furthermore, they praised Lee for her storytelling potential, and the features of the novel such as "sweetness, humor, and compassion"(Champion and Austin 197). Herbert Mitgang, a reviewer in *Times*, indicates Harper Lee as "a storyteller justifying the novel as a form that transcends time and place." He went to say that "The author eases the reader to the life of the town with warmth and good humor" (Ibid 197).

Nevertheless, some reviewers claimed that the novel is melodramatic. They criticized Lee for the point of view she had chosen to claim that a little child cannot narrate a story from a mature woman's perspective (Kort 175). Others like Elizabeth Lee Haselden criticized Lee for the typical characters whom the reader cannot associate themselves with, and the absence of the character's internal conflict to find the moral justification for injustice (Champion and Austin 197). Phoebe Adams in the *Atlantic* described the narrative as "frankly and completely impossible, being told in the first person by a six years old girl with prose of well-educated adult." (qtd. in Haggerty 45). Patrick Chura criticized Lee in some referential points for the Great Depression describing them as anachronisms. For example, Lee mentioned the WPA (Work Progress Administration) in the forth chapter which is set in 1933, while it came into existence only in 1935 (Ibid 82).

### **3.2. Historical Context of *To Kill a Mockingbird***

Harper Lee' novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* starts from the summer of 1932, and ends in 1935 It was published in 1960. Those periods were the most critical ones in the American history as they witnessed a series of important events which have changed Americans' fate. Those events are the Great Depression, Scottsboro Trial, and the Civil Rights movement.

#### **3.2.1. The Great Depression**

Harper Lee referred to the Great Depression in more than occasion in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The novel represents the typical image of Alabama in that time when all the Alabamians including doctors, lawyers, and farmers suffered from the financial crisis where "there was no hurry, for there was nowhere to go, nothing to buy and no money to buy it with, nothing to see outside the boundaries of Maycomb County"(qtd. in Haggerty 81). During the crisis, most of cotton farms employed tenants except the Cunningham who were not tenants. In the story, Atticus tells Scout why Mr. Cunningham who was affected by these troubles cannot pay him with money, and explained to her that "the Cunninghams



are country folk, farmers, and the crash hit them the hardest"(qtd. in Ibid 81). Unfortunately, Mr. Cunningham could not get a WPA job, and this is a reference to the president Franklin Roosevelt's policy to reduce unemployment (Ibid 82).

### **3.2.2. The Scottsboro Trial**

Eric Sundquist asserts that Tom Robinson's trial in *To Kill a Mockingbird* had been affected by another trial was taking place at that time which was the Scottsboro Trial. He points out that the rape case of Tom Robinson in 1935 "is set in a small town Alabama courtroom that would inevitably have been reverberating with the impact of the ongoing trials of the Scottsboro Boys...[which] put the South under sensationally national scrutiny" (Fender 16). The Scottsboro Trial remains one of the most prominent trials in the American court. The beginning of the story goes back to March 25, 1931, when nine black men with other white men and two women were riding from Tennessee to Alabama illegally. A conflict raised between them, and they were arrested. After they were released the two women, Victoria Price and Ruby Bates, accused the black men of rape. The trial began on April 06, 1931, just twelve days after they had been arrested (Johnson 16-7). The retrials took many years almost until 1937 when the U.S Supreme Court accused four defendants while the others would avoid the death penalty, escape, or parole jump (Fender 19-20).

### **3.2.3. The Civil Rights Movement**

Publication of *To Kill a Mockingbird* coincided with a dramatic event which is the Civil Rights Movement. During the 1930s, the racial segregation in the south was in its highest level. White Americans enjoyed a privileged status over the African-Americans. They believed that black people are inferior and uncivilized. Whites and blacks were completely separated from each other in buses, roads, and public areas, and African-Americans were banned from contacting with whites immediately. They occupied certain jobs and professions like ministry, nursing, garbage collecting, and as maids. Most of

Harper Lee's African- Americans characters are illiterate, and work as maids and garbage collectors. African-Americans were not served on juries, consequently, they could not vote. They also suffered from insults and indignity. They were addressed as 'boys' while whites, even little children, were addressed by Mr., Miss, or Mrs. Apparently, African-Americans characters in *To Kill a Mockingbird* are not addressed as ladies or gentlemen.

After the Second World War, African-Americans especially the soldiers led the Civil Rights Movement demanding more amelioration in their status particularly voting and work. The war against segregation made the 1950s a crucial period in America for the memorable events it witnessed. The date May 17, 1954 was the turning point for the African-Americans. It also set the cornerstone for the Civil Rights movement. In this day, the United States Supreme Court abolished, in *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, the separation between African-Americans and white students in public schools, and considered it illegal and inequivalent (Johnson n. pag-86). The Court found that:

Segregation of white and colored children in public schools has a detrimental effect upon the colored children. The impact is greater when it has the sanction of the law, for the policy of separating the races is usually interpreted as denoting the inferiority of the negro group... We conclude that, in the field of public education, the doctrine of "separate but equal" has no place". Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal (Fender 23-24).

This decision incited many whites and African-Americans to rise up against the segregation, while others tried to keep it in an effort to develop restraining laws prompting them sometimes to turn to violence (Johnson 86).

In Montgomery where Harper Lee's father served as a legislator, and on December 01,1955, an African-American woman named Rosa Parks refused to leave her seat for a white passenger, and she was arrested. Her arrest led to boycott the buses in Montgomery causing heavy financial losses until the U.S District Court confessed that segregation in public transportation is illegal (Johnson 86-7).

At the same time of Bus Boycott, Autherine Lucy joined the University of Alabama where Harper Lee studied for six years. Lucy was annoyed and segregated against in the campus, and prevented from staying in the university's dormitory and cafeteria before her attorney had warned the university that he would take the necessary legal procedures. Then, she was abridged from the university after several riots and attacks against black citizens. As a response to the Supreme Court decision that made segregation illegal, she was accepted again in the campus. In this time, Harper Lee was writing *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Johnson 87-9).

In 1960 which is the publication year of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, students in Greensboro, North Carolina made peaceful manifestations against the segregation by integrating lunch counters. White and African-American students who were known by 'Freedom Riders' tried to test the law that abolished segregation, this provoked continuous attacks and violence against them in Montgomery and Birmingham causing many deaths. The most terrible incident was killing four little girls in their church in bomb blast when they were attending Sunday School on Sunday, September 15, 1963 (Ibid 89).

### **3.3. Summary of *To Kill a Mockingbird***

Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* is told through the eyes of the protagonist Jean Louise Finch; a six years old girl who goes by the name 'Scout'. In Maycomb, a rural southern town in Alabama, Scout lives with her father 'Atticus'; a widowed lawyer. Her older brother 'Jem', and the kind hearted African-American family cook Calpurnia during the Great Depression. The story unfolds in its first part about Scout's experiences and adventures with Jem and Dill, while the second part, in most, was devoted to Tom Robinson's trial.

Scout begins with the incident that Jem had when he was nearly thirteen years old and how he became slightly impaired, but he does not care about that as long as he can play football. Jem and Scout meet their new friend Dill. He is a young boy who comes from

Meridian, Mississippi to spend the summer's vacation in his aunt Miss Rachel's house. The three children become close, and enjoy their times in playing and acting. They quickly become obsessed with the idea of making Boo Radley, a strange reclusive neighbor, coming out of his house which has many frightening and mysterious stories, and where he has been held for fifteen years. The children imagine how Boo Radley looks like, and try to see him from the window.

Scout goes to school for the first time, and passes a stressful year. Summer is back, Dill joins to Jem and Scout. One night and while they are attempting to see Boo from the window, they make fuss. Mr. Nathan Radley hears the voice, and shoots, so they run away making Jem losing his pants which hang in the fence. When he returns to take them, he finds them folded and badly sewed, and this fears him.

The second year comes, and it is bad as the first one for Scout. However, every day and after school, Jem and Scout find gifts in a knothole of a tree near Radley's home. Once they find two strange and puzzling carvings of soap for a boy and a girl; they resemble them so much.

In a cold night, Atticus awakens Scout telling her that Miss Maudie's house is burning, and they have to stay away. After the fire subsides, Scout discovers that someone has put around her a brown woolen blanket, but she does not know who is. In school yard, Scout fights with a boy called 'Cecil Jacobs' because Atticus is defending a black man named Tom Robinson story unfolds in its first part about Scout's experiences and adventures with Jem and Dill, while the second part, in most, was devoted to Tom Robinson's trial.

Scout begins with the incident that Jem had when he was nearly thirteen years old and how he became slightly impaired, but he does not care about that as long as he can play football. Jem and Scout meet their new friend Dill. He is a young boy who comes from Meridian, Mississippi to spend the summer's vacation in his aunt Miss Rachel's house. The three children become close, and enjoy their times in playing and acting. They quickly

become obsessed with the idea of making Boo Radley, a strange reclusive neighbor, coming out of his house which has many frightening and mysterious stories, and where he has been held for fifteen years. The children imagine how Boo Radley looks like, and try to see him from the window.

Scout goes to school for the first time, and passes a stressful year. Summer is back, Dill joins to Jem and Scout. One night and while they are attempting to see Boo from the window, they make fuss. Mr. Nathan Radley hears the voice, and shoots, so they run away making Jem losing his pants which hang in the fence. When he returns to take them, he finds them folded and badly sewed, and this fears him.

The second year comes, and it is bad as the first one for Scout. However, every day and after school, Jem and Scout find gifts in a knothole of a tree near Radley's home. Once they find two strange and puzzling carvings of soap for a boy and a girl; they resemble them so much.

In a cold night, Atticus awakens Scout telling her that Miss Maudie's house is burning, and they have to stay away. After the fire subsides, Scout discovers that someone has put around her a brown woolen blanket, but she does not know who is. In school yard, Scout fights with a boy called 'Cecil Jacobs' because Atticus is defending a black man named Tom Robinson whom Bob Ewell accused of raping his daughter Mayella and he has been jailed. Aunt Alexandra comes to Finches for a period of time because she believes that Jem and Scout need a feminine touch in their lives. In these days, Atticus is being harassed by unknown men because of Tom's case. This happens as the trial's date approaches.

On the day of the trial, Scout, Jem, and Dill sneak into the court and attend the trial from the balcony with colored people. During the trial, it appears that Tom is innocent and unfairly accused of rape. Because of the racist nature of white society in this time, the young man is convicted and remains in the prison.

After Halloween pageant in school, Bob Ewell attacks Jem and Scout while returning home. He tried to kill them, and Jem's arm is broken, but Boo Radley saves them and stabs Bob. Then, He takes Jem home where Atticus calls the doctor to examine him. Boo is not convicted because, by killing Bob, he offers a big favor to the town. Scout sees Boo for the first time and discovers that he is a good person unlike what she believed. She accompanies him until the porch of his house, and never sees him again.

### **Conclusion**

*To Kill a Mockingbird* traces an important aspect of history of U.S.A. It is concerned with racial prejudice as well as human values and models of innocence of childhood, and the perseverance of man who risks everything he has to defend his beliefs. It is an enormously popular novel and Harper Lee's brilliant masterpiece. It has been and remains one of the finest novels for the readers and researchers, occupying an overwhelming position in most study programs. Women's image is one of the novel's themes, and the next chapter will examine how the writer portrays female characters.

## **Chapter Four**

### **The Presentation of Women in To Kill a Mockingbird**

Introduction.....	38
4.1. The Characterization of Women in To Kill a Mockingbird.....	38
4.1.1. Jean Louise Finch.....	38
4.1.2. Aunt Alexandra.....	39
4.1.3. Calpurnia.....	41
4.1.4. Miss. Caroline Fisher.....	42
4.1.5. Miss. Maudie Atkinson.....	43
4.1.6. Mrs. Henry Lafayette Dubose.....	44
4.1.7. Miss. Stephanie Crawford.....	45
4.1.8. Miss. Rachel Haverford.....	46
4.1.9. Mrs. Radley.....	46
4.1.10. Miss. Blount.....	47
4.1.11. Mayella Violet Ewell.....	47
4.1.12. Misses Tutti and Frutti Barber.....	48
4.1.13. Helen Robinson.....	48
4.1.14. Eula May.....	49
4.1.15. Lily Brooke.....	49
4.1.16. Lula.....	49
4.1.17. Mrs. Grace Merriweather.....	49
4.1.18. Miss. Gates.....	50
4.1.19. Mrs. Gresham.....	50
Conclusion.....	50

# **The Presentation of Women in *To Kill a Mockingbird***

## **Introduction**

Women have long occupied a prominent position in literary works. The writers are well versed in the presentation of women and their roles in society and family. In the past, women were associated with domestic and stereotypical spheres. Since the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, these weak and fragile female characters have changed into independent and powerful ones who break down with the social norms, and hold high status in the society and family. However, some writers kept that old-fashioned portrait of women. In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Harper Lee depicts different images of women in Maycomb; therefore, this practical chapter will address how Lee portrayed women.

### **4.1. The Characterization of Women in *To Kill a Mockingbird***

#### **4.1.1 Jean Louise Finch**

She is the protagonist and the narrator of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Scout, which is her nickname, means a soldier who goes on missions to gather information about the enemy. Like scouts in the army, Scout goes outside to search answers to her questions about morals and dealing with people (Wheeler). She is the daughter of Atticus and younger sister to Jem. She is six years old when the story begins, and ends when she is at the age of nine. According to the southern social standards, Scout is considered as a tomboy. She wears overalls, and spends most of her time outside playing with Jem and Dill. These boyish behaviors are due to her loss of mother at an early age. She is a curious and spontaneous person who embarrasses people by questioning.

She is a bright and has insightful and intuitive personality, and she learned to read and write at an early age. She is rude and mischievous who is always getting her nose into things she should not be in. She gives her teacher a lesson about self pride and poverty. In addition, she finds pleasure in beating her classmate to release her anger from her teacher,



and she confirms this when she says: "Catching Walter Cunningham in the schoolyard gave me some pleasure" (Lee 37). At the beginning of the story, Scout dislikes being female and to be called a girl because she thinks it means weakness.

Scout's life revolves around a group of people close to her like Atticus, Jem, Dill, Calpurnia, Aunt Alexandra and Miss. Maudie. For example, Scout respects and admires her father Atticus who lets her behave as she pleases without imposing certain way of acting. Unlike Atticus, Aunt Alexandra is fanatical with Scout's overalls and boyish traits. In addition, she wants her to wear a female dress and play with small stoves and tea sets. Miss. Maudie encourages Scout to be the way she is. Scout sees her as a pleasant lady and trusted sources for all her questions. While she considers Calpurnia as the motherly figure in her life, Dill is considered as her man and best friend. Scout begins to think about the female's world which she desires, fears, and considers it as shallow and superficial. She feels that she would be more comfortable in men's world stating:

I must soon enter this world, where on its surface fragrant ladies rocked slowly, fanned gently, and drank cool water. But I was more at home in my father's world. People like Mr. Heck Tate did not trap you with innocent questions to make fun of you; even Jem was not highly critical unless you said something stupid. Ladies seemed to live in faint horror of men, seemed unwilling to approve wholeheartedly of them. But I liked them (Lee 399).

#### **4.1.2. Aunt Alexandra**

She is Atticus' s sister, and lives in Finch's Landing. She represents the ideal southern lady who wears conservative dresses and a corset. She is very strict, strong, and formidable. She is upset about Scout's boyish dressing and traits, and works to turn her into a lady, and often invites her to attend the missionary society to promote a feminine life even though Scout is not interested in that. This is what makes their relation dry and turbulent. Scout describes her aunt as "Mount Everest", and Atticus says that his sister acts in this way because she does not have daughters.

When she comes to Maycomb, she seems that she lived there for long time. She owns a river boat, becomes Secretary of the Maycomb Amanuensis Club, and presides the missionary society which she holds on the east of Maycomb's ladies. Scout describes her coming as a hand that fits the glove. Everyone in Maycomb loves her coming except Jem and Scout. She has a commanding role in the family, and she is always ready to dictate on each one a certain way of acting. She even intervenes in Atticus's breeding by imposing on him certain ideas about how Scout should be and act, and she makes him accept that even if he is not convinced about her ways.

She has a special perception concerning men's roles in the family. She believes that men should take some feminine roles including households such as cooking and taking care of their wives when they are sick. Her marriage to uncle Jimmy does not affect on her ways. His presence is as his absence, and he cannot control her ways and decisions, and the proof is when she leaves her house to stay in Finch's home, and when Scout asks if she is not going to miss her husband, she completely ignores her questions.

Aunt Alexandra is widely concerned with the social and racial differences. She considers that Finches are the best folks in Maycomb, and believes that they should care about their family's reputation and honor. Moreover, she does not miss any chance to refer to the shortcomings of the other tribes. She undermines also low class and poor people, and hates to be in the same status with them, or to defend them.

She is a racist woman. This is why she is against her brother's decision concerning his defense of Tom Robinson believing that he is destroying their honor, and asks Atticus to kick off Calpurnia because she sees that the family is no more in need for her. She treats her as a maid, not as a member of the family unlike Atticus and his children who love and respect her.

#### **4.1.3. Calpurnia**

She is an African-American housekeeper of Finch since they were in Finch Landing, and she moved to Maycomb county after Atticus got married. She has a great influence on Jem and Scout whom she has raised since their mother's death, and represents the maternal figure in their life. Her personality combines several traits; she is severe, strict and, at the same time, she is caring, kind-hearted, and nurturing. She cooks, cleans, and takes care of Jem and Scout when Atticus is absent. The name Calpurnia which is the name of Julius Ceasar's wife who suffers from tragic elements in Shakespeare's play shows the strength that Calpurnia has in Lee's novel. She experiences many difficulties as a black woman at that time (cldbentley ). Scout introduces Calpurnia in the following lines:

Calpurnia was something else again. She was all angles and bones; she was nearsighted; she squinted; her hand was wide as a bed slat and twice as hard. She was always ordering me out of the kitchen, asking me why I couldn't behave as well as Jem when she knew he was older, and calling me home when I wasn't ready to come. Our battles were epic and one-sided. Calpurnia always won, mainly because Atticus always took her side. She had been with us ever since Jem was born, and I felt her tyrannical presence as long as I could remember (Lee 8).

This means that Calpurnia is a strong and severe teacher. She teaches Scout politeness and discipline harshly. In addition, she taught Scout writing at an early age which makes her do well in school.

Calpurnia is highly respected by Finch's family, and she considers herself as the second mother for the children. When she takes them to blacks church, she pays a great attention to their clothes and appearances, and she said: "I don't want anybody sayin' I don't look after my children " (Lee 200). Atticus is grateful to her for helping him to raise his children, and tells aunt Alexandra that she will not leave the home unless she wants to do so. He does not consider her a threat to his children, and "she tried to bring them according to her lights, and Cal's lights are pretty good- and another thing, the children love her " (Lee 233).

When Jem and Scout go with Calpurnia to blacks' church, they notice that she has a different life outside their home. The fact that Calpurnia leads a second life among her folk was interesting and enthralling for Scout. Calpurnia is one of the four black people who can read in Maycomb, and it is Miss Maudie's aunt who taught her reading, but she does not remember much things about her childhood like her day of birth. She speaks two different languages; she uses colored folks' language with her people because she does want to show that she is better than them. Calpurnia has great credit in helping Jem and Scout to understand what happens around them. She answers their questions patiently, especially those related to the differences between whites and blacks.

#### **4.1.4. Miss Caroline Fisher**

She is a young teacher in Maycomb's rural school from Winston County in North Alabama who is impassioned by a new way of teaching she learned in college which is Dewey Decimal System. Scout tells that "Miss Caroline was no more than twenty-one. She had bright auburn hair, pink cheeks, and wore crimson fingernail polish. She also wore high-heeled pumps and a red-and-white-striped dress. She looked and smelled like a peppermint" (Lee 26).

Miss Caroline tells her students stories about animals though they are not interested in that because of the harsh life they are living, and this is what she does not realize. This is a shortcoming of Miss Caroline as a teacher who does not try to identify her students, or ask them about their interests. As a result, they feel bored. Scout states:

Miss Caroline seemed unaware that the ragged, denim-shirted and floursack-skirted first grade, most of whom had chopped cotton and fed hogs from the time they were able to walk, were immune to imaginative literature (Lee 27).

This means that she is easily annoyed, and lacks the experience and flexibility while dealing with her students. She does not have the knowledge about the social and economic life in Maycomb which Scout tries to explain to her. However, she blames and beats her

believing that she is lying. Miss Caroline herself shows another side of her character as a weak and quickly stressed person. She cannot manage her class well causing chaos in the classroom, making her confused, and sometimes she cries. She is also a kind and caring woman. Despite the bad economic conditions, she does not hesitate to loan money to Walter Cunningham. Atticus says that she will learn more about the life in the rural Maycomb and its people.

#### **4.1.5. Miss Maudie Atkinson**

She is an old widowed neighbor of Finch. She is nearly at the same age of uncle Jack, Atticus' s brother, and grew up with them at Finch's Landing. Miss Maudie hates her house, and prefers to spend most of the time on the porch or garden working on her flowers. Miss Maudie is an energetic and optimistic lady. When her house is burned, she cares about her neighbors more than herself, and she does not feel sad, but she becomes happy because she would have more space for her azaleas.

Scout, Jem, and Dill consider her their friend, and the best woman they know because she treats them differently from the other adults around them because as Scout says: "Jim and I had considerable faith in Miss Maudie. She never told on us, had never played cat-and-mouse with us, she was not at all interested in our private lives. She was our friend" (Lee 76). She is lovely and generous with them, and often invites them to eat delicious cakes she makes especially for them. She also represents the source for their questions especially Scout who is the closest one to her. Miss Maudie tells her that she does not agree with foot-washers who consider any pleasurable thing as a sin including women. One of them vows that she and her flowers will go to hell because she is supposed to be in her house reading The Bible rather than being in the garden working on flowers. Miss Maudie says that the reason for that is that those Baptists misuse the bible, and she comments: "But

sometimes the Bible in the hand of one man is worse than a whiskey bottle in the hand – oh, of your father" (Lee 76).

Though Miss Maudie is a member in the missionary society, she is so different from the other women. She is not stern about her femininity. When she works on her garden, she wears men's overalls and an old straw hat, and she changes them after five o'clock bath to turn into a beautiful lady; thus, she is considered as an independent and open minded who does not restrict herself with the social expectations of women in that time. She also does not comment on Scout's overalls or behaviors. Unlike Miss Stephanie Crawford, Miss Maudie does not gossip, and she often shuts her down. She is also not a racist; she supports Atticus for defending Tom Robinson, and trusts him while most of the residents in Maycomb are against that decision, and she says to Aunt Alexandra: "Have you ever thought of this way, Alexandra? Whether Maycomb knows it or not, we're paying the highest tribute we can pay a man. We trust him to do right. It's that simple" (Lee 45).

#### **4.1.6. Mrs. Henry Lafayette Dubose**

She is an old, sick, and rude women in wheelchair. She lives with her maid Jessie two doors up the street from Finch's home. Scout describes her as "Plain hell", and by the worst adjectives like vicious, the sassiest, and most disrespectful mutts. She also was rumored to be hiding a pistol under her clothes.

Mrs. Dubose is so cruel in her conversations with Jem and Scout. They even hate passing by her house, and when they do so, she addresses them with humiliating words. She makes them seem impolite and wild predicting no future for them, and believing that their father is the responsible for making them grow up in this way after his deceased wife. Her insults extend also to Atticus calling him "nigger lover", and accusing him for humiliating Finch's honor. She does not stop there, but she has gone to despise Scout and her overalls, and says that she should be in a dress and camisole, or she will end up as a

waitress in The OK Café. The children become upset about that especially Jem who destroys her camellia bush. Mrs. Dubose orders him to read for her. Jem does that forcibly and takes Scout with him. During this period, Scout notices that Mrs. Dubose suffers from frequent fits, and she is ugly and scary.

After Mrs. Dubose's death, Jem and Scout learn an important lesson about courage. Atticus tell them that she is morphine addict. When the doctor tells her that she has few months to live, she decides to die without being indebted to anyone and nothing, and to free herself from morphine, and this is what happens. Atticus tells his children: "... you know, she[Mrs. Dubose] was a great lady", and "She was. She had her own views about things, a lot different of mine, maybe...". He adds:

I wanted you to see what real courage is, instead of getting the idea is a man with a gun in his hand. It's when you know you're licked before you begin but you begin anyway and you see it through no matter what. You rarely win, but sometimes you do. Mrs. Dubose won, all ninety-eight pounds of her. According to her views, she died beholden to nothing and nobody. She was the bravest person I ever knew (Lee 190-191).

Mrs. Dubose continues her battle against morphine addiction and wins it. This makes Atticus impressed by her courage and points out that this is the real courage.

#### **4.1.7. Miss. Stephanie Crawford**

She is also an old single lady who is known for her gossip. Scout mentions that the snowman that she makes with Jem "... looks like Stephanie Crawford with her hands on her hips...Fat in the middle and little-bitty arms" (Lee 113). She is described also by Scout as neighborhood scold and The English Channel of gossip, and Miss. Maudie says that most of the strange stories about Radley's family are feigned by Miss. Stephanie when she claims: "That is three-fourth colored folks and one-fourth Stephanie Crawford," (Lee 77). For that, Jem and the majority of people in Maycomb take her stories about Boo into account. She enjoys spreading rumors in the town. In addition, she is so busybody and does

not stop interfering in others' affairs. Aunt Alexandra says that Miss. Stephanie's curiosity is inherited.

Miss. Stephanie is a racist lady. Though she says that she will not go to Tom's trial, but she goes there just to see what Atticus can do like many residents in Maycomb who exploit this chance to make fun of the honest man. She also considers that black people have low position than whites, and she often mocks at them.

#### **4.1.8. Miss Rachel Haverford**

She is an old neighbor of the Finch and Dill's aunt. She is an alcoholic lady. Though she makes false excuses for drinking because as she said that "she never got over the fright of finding a rattler coiled in her bedroom closet, on her washing, when she went to hang up her negligee" (Lee 236), Dill assures that his aunt has a real trouble when he says: " I told her till I was blue in the face where I was goin'— she's just seein' too many snakes in her closet. Bet that women drinks a pin for breakfast every morning—know she drinks two glasses full. Seen her. (Lee 366-367).

Though she is so tender-hearted and welcomes her nephew in her house during summer's vacations, she is a racist and believes that Atticus is not doing good by defending Tom. On the contrary, she comments:" If a man like Atticus Finch wants to butt his head against a stone wall it's his head" (Lee 366). She means that he hurts himself.

#### **4.1.9. Mrs. Radley**

She is a neighbor of the Finch family. Scout says that she appears outside her house only to water her plants, or to buy grocery, and "...seldom if ever crossed the street for a mid-morning coffee break with her neighbors, and certainly never joined a missionary circle" (Lee 14). She is very isolated this is why when she dies, people do not grieve.



#### **4.1.10. Miss Blount**

She is the sixth grade teacher, old and experienced from Maycomb. Miss Blount does not agree with Miss. Caroline's ideas which related to Dewey Decimal System. She also gets angry when Miss Caroline's class becomes chaotic claiming that they ban her pupils from concentration, and threatens to burn up all of them without exception. This shows how angry she is from Miss Caroline.

#### **4.1.11. Mayella Violet Ewell**

She is a young girl at the age of nineteen, the oldest daughter for Bob Ewell. They are poor folk in Maycomb. She accuses Tom Robinson of raping her. Scout comments on the red geraniums which she grows in her front yard. They convey the beauty that she seeks and flee from her impasse.

Scout notices that she looks fragile in her behavior in comparison to the rest of the court. She describes her as the following: "She seemed somehow fragile –looking ,but when she sat facing us in the witness chair she became what she was, a thick-bodied girl accustomed to strenuous labor"(Lee 304). Accusing Tom Robinson of raping her is Mayella 's attempt of fleeing the guilt and shame of doing wrong things. Mayella is a very lonely girl. She lives with her drunk father and seven young brothers. This is one of the causes that she resorted to Tom. When Atticus asks her:" Who are your friends?" The witness frowned as if puzzled. "Friends?"(Lee 312) because she has no friends.

Mayella is the victim of the domestic abuse. She lies to protect her father as she is afraid of what he may do to her, and declares daeh ym 'o riah a dehcuot reven s'wap yM“ : in my life,” she declared firmly. “He never touched me.”(Lee 313). In fact, he beats her.

Mayella is a racist lady. She tries to use Tom's race to support her proof, and to affect on the Judge and audience telling them:

I got somethin' to say an' then I ain't gonna say no more. That nigger yonder took advantage of me an' if you fine fancy gentlemen don't wanta

do nothin' about it then you're all yellow stinkin' cowards, stinkin' cowards, the lot of you. Your fancy airs don't come to nothin'—your ma'amin' and Miss Mayellerin' don't come to nothin', Mr. Finch-(Lee 320).

#### **4.1.12. Misses Tutti and Frutti Barber**

The two unmarried sisters are known for being a little whimsical among people in Maycomb. They are famous for building a cellar in their house for chasing district out of it. Misses Tutti's and Frutti's names are Sarah and Frances. They are both deaf. Miss. Tuti lives in the world of quietness while. Miss Fruti uses an ear trumpet "... that Jem declared it was a loudspeaker from one of those dog Victrolas." (Lee 432). Before the Halloween ritual in the previous year, some of naughty neighborhood children slip into their living room at night, and put all furniture in cellar. The Barber sisters upbraid traveling seller because" Miss Tuti was sure those traveling fur sellers who came through town two days ago had purloined their furniture. "Da-rk they were, "they said."Syrians." (Lee 433). Mr. Heck Tate uses blood hounds to locate their furniture, and all evil children wear their shoes to hid the smell for blood hounds.

#### **4.1.13. Helen Robinson**

She is Tom's wife, and she has three tiny children. Sam is one of them. Helen suffers from hardships after her husband's arrest, especially finding a work because people are no more willing to deal with Tom's family. When Calpurnia takes Jem and Scout to the church of the blacks, they notice that Revernd Sykes collects money from attendees for her. Helen also starts working with him despite being harassed by Bob Ewell in her path to work. Helen is a kind and grateful woman. When Atticus goes with Calpurnia to tell her that Tom dies, she welcomes and invites them to her house. According to Dill's description, she is : " A little girl came to the cabin door and stood looking at Atticus. Dill said her hair was a wad of tiny stiff pigtails, each ending in a bright bow. She grinned from

ear to ear and walked toward our father, but she was too small to navigate the steps." ( Lee 410).

#### **4.1.14. Eula May**

A telephone operator who works at the switchboard of a telephone exchange in Maycomb. She is in charge of spreading public announcements and news.

#### **4.1.15. Lily Brooke**

She is one relative of the Finch family and Jean Louise's cousin. Aunt Alexandra wants Scout to converse with her, but Scout shows up careless. When Aunt Alexandra said "Your cousin Lily Brooke,". She our cousin ?I didn't know that."(Lee 223), Scout feels embarrassed because her father overlooks inviting his relatives to meet his children.

#### **4.1.16. Lula**

She is one of members in African Church who bothers Calpurnia for bringing the Finch children there by claiming: "I want to know why you bringin' white chillun to nigger church."(Lee 201). She is a racist lady arguing that the white children do not have place with them, and they should not encroach nigger sanctities.

#### **4.1.17. Mrs. Grace Merriweather**

She is one of the ladies at Aunt Alexandra's missionary circle (a group of Christian women in Maycomb). She is a gossip and hypocrite woman, and complains about her black cook Sophy although she makes help to poor people and black ones in Africa. She is a racist who criticizes Atticus for defending Tom Robinson, and says:

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 doing the right thing a while back, but all they did was stir 'em up. That's all they did. Might've looked like the right thing to do at the time, I'm sure I don't know (Lee 397-398).

#### **4.1.18. Miss. Gates**

She is Scout's third grade teacher. She asks her students to bring current events from the newspapers which annoys Scout because few of rural children have access to newspapers. When Cecil Jacobs brings information about Adolf Hitler who puts the Jews in prisons and takes all their property, Miss. Gates says that America is more democratic country than Germany. She asks them to define Democracy, and Scout defines it as "Equal rights for all, special privileges for none" (Lee 420). Miss Gates agrees with Scout, and says that Germany is dictatorial. She has hypocritical traits which makes her exhort to other people for things that do not exist on the ground.

#### **4.1.19. Mrs. Crenshaw**

She is a seamstress in Maycomb, who makes the costume to Scout's role play in pageant of the Halloween. She is an imaginative, and makes the suit out of chicken wire into the shape of a cured ham. Even though Scout admires her 'fine job' for designing it, she complains that it is uncomfortable, too cramped, it is too hot, and that she cannot scratch her itched nose, and she cannot get out of it alone.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter is a descriptive study of women in *To Kill a Mockingbird* where various physical and moral traits of female characters as well as their status, social and familial relationships in the southern community are presented. It is clear that Harper Lee makes a disparity between women who are oppressed by the social expectations and the economic conditions, in addition to their own beliefs about how woman should be, and women who break with these restrictions to act in the way they want, and the right way they believe in.

## General Conclusion

After analyzing the presentation of women in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, we conclude that Lee's portrayal reflects the real images of American women in the modern age and the modern American literature, but with other differences. In this novel, Lee touches upon a decisive period in the modernist American history which is the 1930s that was stamped by the Great Depression. This was a time of economic difficulties that changed Americans' lives especially women who were also affected by the feminist movement. Although there are common points between the presentation of women in *To Kill a Mockingbird* and women's status in modern America and the modern American literature, Harper Lee has been unique in the characterization of females in other points which make her different from the other modernist writers.

A number of female characters are stereotypical figures who are distinguished by their feminine appearances and preoccupations. They put cosmetics, wear dresses, and meet in the missionary circles. These ladies stay indoors and practice womanly activities. Those portrayals reflect women's images during the Great Depression when women were driven back to homes to perform their domestic roles, and to keep their families together. The ladies of the missionary circle are gossip and hypocrite. They discuss various topics such as talking about the shortcomings of the other people, and express their racist trends towards African-Americans. This is also indicative of the racial discrimination that African-Americans experienced during the 1930s. Aunt Alexandra, Mrs. Dubose, and Miss Stephanie are all examples of those stereotypical ladies who had prejudiced attitudes.

During the Great Depression, women were expected to be subordinate to men. They occupied certain jobs which were considered womanly jobs. In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, most of women do not work, and even those who work are housewives, teachers, seamstresses, telephone operators, and African-Americans women are housekeepers like

Calpurnia. Mrs. Robinson presents single mothers and widows who suffered during the economic crisis when they went to find jobs while taking care of their children.

Lee portrays females as helpful, loving, and caring ones like Miss. Caroline. She also presents other images of women as irrational, unstable, and strange creatures such as Mrs. Crenshaw, Misses Tutti and Frutti Barber, and Mrs. Radley. This is generally what was associated with women in modern American literature. On one hand, all those images prove that Harper Lee presents women similarly to the most of the modern American writers.

On the other hand, Harper Lee wants to break this traditional code by painting vivid pictures of the characters she creates. Jean Louise's masculinity is the result of growing up in a men's environment. She prefers her nickname "Scout", wears overalls, and antagonizes the stereotypical ladies in the missionary circle; thus, Scout challenges the prevailing expectations about women at her time. Yet, she is convinced that she can be a lady, but without adopting the wrong values that women around her have. Though there are a lot of racist ladies in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, there are also others who are not. For example, Miss. Maudie does not consider African-Americans as inferiors, but she sees them as normal people who should be respected. This is a signal that not all people are racist, and they support African-Americans against discrimination.

To sum up, Lee's novel has many similarities with other Modernist American works, and reflects the situation that women lived in. However, this does not prevent her from having a personal vision. She presents them in disgraceful manner through Scout's eyes; a characterization which gives an impression that one day women will be independent and free from social constraints, strong, and able to prove herself in society.

## Works Cited

### Books

Abrahamson, James. L. *The American Home Front*. Washington, D.C: National Defense U, 1983.

Abrams, M. H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. USA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2009.

Anderson, George Parker. *Research Guide to American Literature: American Modernism 1914-1945*. New York: Facts on Files, Inc, 2010.

Bertens, Hans, and Theo D' haen. *American Literature: A History*. New York: Routledge, 2014.

Bomarito, Jessica, and Jeffrey W. Hunter. *Feminism in Literature: A Gale Critical Companion*, vol. 4, Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2005.

Bradbury, Malcolm, and James McFarlane. "The modernist Novel." *Modernism 1890\_1930*. London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1991. 393-415.

Brigitte, Remy-Hébert. The First Women's Movement: Suffragist Struggle in the 19th and Early 20th centuries. N. p, n. d. Web. April 06, 2018.

Champion, Laurie, and Rhonda Austin, editors. *Contemporary American Women Fiction Writers: An A to Z Guide*. N. p: Unspecified, Inc, 2002.

Childs, Peter, and Roger Fowler. *The Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms*. London: Routledge, 2006.

Cuddon, J. A. *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*. London: The Penguin Group, 1999.

Davis, Alex., and Lee, Jenkins. M, editors . *Locations of Literary Modernism: Region and Nation in British and American Poetry*. Cambridge U, 2000.

Fender, Stephen. *The Connell Guide to Harper Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird*. Chippenham:

- The Connell Guides, 2012.
- Gray, Richard. *A brief History Of American Literature*. UK: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2011.
- Haggerty, Andrew . *Harper Lee: To Kill a Mockingbird*. New York: Marshall Cavendish Benchmark, 2010.
- Hodgson-Wright, Stephanie. "Early Feminism." *The Routledge Companion To Feminism And Postfeminism*. Ed. Sarah Gamble. London: Routledge, 2001.1-14.
- Johnson, Claudia D. *Understanding To Kill a Mockingbird: a Student Casebook to Issues, Sources, and Historic Documents*. London: Greenwood P., 1994.
- Kort, C. *A To Z Of American Women Writers*. New York: Facts On File, Inc, 2007.
- Lee, Harper. *To Kill a Mockingbird*. United Kingdom: Penguin Random House,1960.
- Literature and Gender-section A&B*. Rohtak: Maharshi Dayanand U, 2004. Malpas, Simon, and Paul Wake. editors. "Feminism." *The Routledge Companion To Critical Theory*, edited by Susan Hekman. Routledge, 2006.
- Matz, Jesse. "The Novel. " *A Companion to Modernist Literature and Culture*. Ed. David Bradshaw, and Kevin J.H. Dettmar. Madlen, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2006, pp. 216-26.
- Modernism and Postmodernism*. Scribd.com, n. p. Web. April 4, 2018.
- SparkNotes Editors. "SparkNote on To Kill a Mockingbird." *SparkNotes.com*. SparkNotes LLC, 2002. Web. April 4, 2018.
- Stephen, kern. *The Modernist Novel: A critical Introduction*. U Cambridge P.,2011.
- The Harlem Renaissance and Modernism*. Rcsdd. ms. n. d. Web. March 6, 2018.
- Theoretical framework of feminism*. N. p., n. p. Web. April 4, 2018.
- Wrenn, Heike. "The Women In Modernism." *Uscupslate. edu*, 2010. Web. April 4, 2018.



*US History*. N. p: Free-software Foundation, Inc, 2008.

Wagner-Martin, Linda. *The Routledge Introduction To American Literature*, edited by Miller, D. Quentin and Wendy Martin. Taylor Francis Group, 2016.

### **Journals**

Lončar-Vujnović, Mirjana. "Stream Of Consciousness Technique and Modern Novel:

Psychological and Methodological Perspectives on Language Learning." *Journal of Research & Method in Education*, vol. 2, no. 2, Jul. Aug. 2013, pp. 69-76.

Zhou, Wen., and Ping Liu. "The First World War and the Rise of Modern American Novel:

A survey of Critical Heritage of American WWI Writing in the 20th Century." *Journal of Cambridge Studies*, vol. 6, no. 2-3, 2011, pp. 116-30.

### **Websites**

Anderson, Nancy G. "Harper Lee". *Encyclopedia of Alabama*. Auburn University, March 19, 2007. Web. March 31, 2018. [www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-1126](http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-1126).

Ciaffaroni, Maria Teresa. "Modernism in Literature: An Overview of Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Literary Trends". *Slide Share*. N. p, February 28, 2009. Web. March 31, 2018. [www.slideshare.net/ciaffaroni/modernism-in-literature-1082251](http://www.slideshare.net/ciaffaroni/modernism-in-literature-1082251).

Cldbentley, Jamie Wheeler, and Malibrarian. "Why Did Harper Lee Choose Certain Names for Certain Characters? Why the Name Atticus? Why Nickname Arthur Radley "Boo"? According to My Teacher, Even the Name "Calpurnia" Has A...". *Enotes. com*. Enotes, n. d. Web. April 06, 2018. [www.enotes.com/homework-help/why-did-harper-lee-chose-certain-names-for-certain-10705](http://www.enotes.com/homework-help/why-did-harper-lee-chose-certain-names-for-certain-10705).

"Feminism". *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*. Merriam-Webster Online, April 06, 2018. Web. [www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/feminism](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/feminism).

"Gender Roles of the 1930's". *Google Sites*. N. p, n. d. Web. April 06. 2018.

[sites.google.com/site/genderrolesofthe1930s](https://sites.google.com/site/genderrolesofthe1930s).

"Modernism". *Oxford Online Dictionary*. Oxford, 2018. Web. April 8, 2018.

[www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/topic/architectural\\_styles/modernism\\_2](http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/topic/architectural_styles/modernism_2).

Smith, Grace. "Gender Roles in the 1930s". *Prezi.com*. N. p, 11 Feb. 2013. Web. 06 Apr.

2018. [prezi.com/mu96znnsu6im/gender-roles-in-the-1930s](https://prezi.com/mu96znnsu6im/gender-roles-in-the-1930s).

Svoboda, Brenna. "The Roles and Portrayal of Women in American Literature". N. p, n. d.

Web. March 31, 2018. [frontierinamlit.wikispaces.com/The+Roles+and+Portrayal+of+Women+in+American+Literature](http://frontierinamlit.wikispaces.com/The+Roles+and+Portrayal+of+Women+in+American+Literature).

## ملخص

تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى استكشاف تصوير المرأة في العمل الأدبي الأمريكي الحديث لا تقتل عصفورا ساخرا لهاربر لي. لذلك اتبعنا المنهج الوصفي لتقصي الطريقة التي تجسد فيها لي النساء في هذه الرواية الشهيرة. القصة تجري في مايكوم وهي بلدة خيالية جنوبية صغيرة في ولاية الاباما خلال فترة الكساد. تتناول الرواية مجموعة من المواضيع بما في ذلك تصوير النساء فالكاتبة تستعرض صور متباينة للنساء في ذلك الوقت. تنقسم هذه المذكرة إلى جزأين أساسيين. الجزء الأول بدوره ينقسم إلى فصلين. يعرض الفصل الأول الخلفية التاريخية لفترة الحداثة وخصائصها. كما يتناول الأدب الحديث والجوانب المبتكرة بخصوصه نتيجة للحداثة مع التركيز على الحداثة والأدب والرواية الأمريكية. بينما يتناول الفصل الثاني الحركة النسوية ويعرض وضع المرأة في فترة الحداثة وكيف يقدمها الكتاب في أعمالهم بفعل هذه الحركة. أما الفصل الثالث فيعرف بالمؤلفة وروايتها في سياقها التاريخي، إلى جانب ذلك فإنه يحتوي على ملخص لأهم أحداثها. أما الفصل الرابع وهو الجزء العملي يقوم بتحليل مختلف الصور التي ترسمها لي عن شخصياتها النسائية فيما يتعلق بسماتهن المادية والمعنوية وعلاقاتهن العائلية والاجتماعية. تكشف هذه الدراسة أن الكاتبة تجمع بين عدة صور للنساء النمطية بوجهة نظر مستهجنة والنساء المتمردات و المستقلات اللواتي يتم تقديمهن باعتزاز.

## الكلمات المفتاحية

الحداثة، الحداثة الأمريكية، الحركة النسوية، تصوير المرأة.