

**A CRITICAL STUDY OF HARPER LEE’S NOVEL  
‘TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD’**

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**Abstract**

Power, Foucault proclaims is everywhere, our society operates on Power mechanism. Power is not unitary, it has no essence. It is not stable. There are as many forms of power as there are types of relationships. Every group and every individual exercises power and is subjected to it. There are certain categories of person like children, prisoners, the insane – whose ability to exercise power is severely limited. Our social fabric is knitted by power relations. This paper unfolds the power mechanism in *To Kill a Mockingbird* as the name suggests, it is about slaughtering the innocents. In this the innocent black is sacrificed at the altar of court in the name of justice. It indicates the power of white over the black. The innocence of the children Scout and Jem is lacerated and their gaping wounds see the naked drama of injustice played in their sleepy town of Maycomb. Atticus Finch stands like an oak tree to fight against the injustice. He tries to subvert the power discourse and does not allow his identity to be smothered.

Nelle Harper Lee wrote only one novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird* which fetched her Pulitzer Prize and became perennial bestseller for the times to come. According to Charles J. Shields “*To Kill a Mockingbird* is one of the most influential pieces of fiction produced in United States.”<sup>1</sup> In a “Survey of Lifetime Reading Habits” conducted by the Book - of - the Month Club in 1991, researchers found that *To Kill a Mockingbird* ranked second only to the Bible as making a difference in people’s lives. Forty seven years after the publication, the novel still draws almost a million readers annually. What makes this novel so popular is the universal theme of threat to individual’s freedom. Michele S.Ware opines “Harper Lee’s Pulitzer Prize – winning novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, charts the developments of a young Southern girl from a childhood of innocence and freedom to an awareness of cruelty, evil, and the limitation and constraints of her position in her culture.”<sup>2</sup> According to R.A.Dave. *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a

regional novel. Like Jane Austen, who does not care to go beyond the district of Bath, or Thomas Hardy who confines himself to the limits of Wessex. Similarly Harper Lee sticks to Maycomb in Alabama. Dave opines, “The small world assumes a macrocosmic dimension and expands into immensity, holding an epic canvas against which is enacted a movingly human drama of the jostling worlds – of children and adults, of innocence and experience, of kindness and cruelty, of love and hatred, of humour and pathos, and above all of appearance and reality – all taking the reader to the root of human behaviour.”<sup>3</sup> Becky Palmer, a Resident Scholar holds the opinion that, “Harper Lee’s semi autobiographical Pulitzer prize winner is a superb account of bigotry and injustice set in 1930’s Alabama.”<sup>4</sup> Jewel Watson reflects that the story of *To Kill a Mockingbird* “...uses one of its main characters, Scout, to tell a story about family, life and struggle for equality. It is man versus society in this period of time.”<sup>5</sup> I want to explore the working of power at different levels by different institutions in this novel.

*To Kill a Mockingbird* mirrors the social set up and social code prevalent during the 1930s which was the era of Great Depression in the American History. During this era there were discrimination laws, segregation and a strict social code which governed interactions between races. The American principle “equality under the law” did not apply to the blacks. According to Foucault the power relations are prevalent in each and every society. The elite exercises power over the masses, the white over the black, the male over the female, the parents over the child, the society over the individual. Each individual is the product of power mechanism. Either he is exercising power or he feels it being exercised upon him. Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* writes,

Our society is one not of spectacle, but of surveillance under the surface of images, one invests bodies in depth; behind the great abstraction of exchange, there continues the meticulous, concrete training of useful forces; the circuits of communication are the supports of an accumulation and a centralization of knowledge; the play of signs defines the anchorages of power; it is not that the beautiful totality of the individual is amputated, repressed, altered by our social order, it is rather that the individual is carefully fabricated in it, according to a whole technique of forces and bodies.<sup>6</sup>

Scout, the six years old narrator experiences the power exercised upon her and in fact on every individual. Her brother Jem talks about the division of Maycomb on the basis of social status and on the social ladder the coloured folks stand on the lowest step. He says, “I mean in Maycomb County. The thing about it is, our kind of folks don’t like the Cunninghams, the Cunninghams don’t like the Ewells, and the Ewells hate and despise the colored folks.”<sup>7</sup> Right in the beginning of the novel we are made to see the white exercising power and control upon the black. Scout talking about her ancestor says, “So Simon, having forgotten his teacher’s dictum on the possession of human chattels, bought three slaves and with their aid established a homestead on the banks of the Alabama River some forty miles above Saint Stephens.” (8) The blacks lived as out caste and dwelled on the fringes and margins of Maycomb. The whites have blacks working as domestic helps. We find Calpurnia serving Finches since she was a girl. “I’ve spent all my days workin’ for the Finches or the Bufords, an’ I moved to Maycomb when your daddy and your mamma married.” (127) Mrs. Dubose is also shown to have black attendant. We too are made to visualize the penury and exploitation suffered by the Negro mothers working in the fields with their babies on their backs or left to sit in the shade. “It was customary for field Negroes with tiny children to deposit them in whatever shade there was while their parents

worked – usually the babies sat in the shade between two rows of cotton. Those unable to sit were strapped papoose – style on their mother’s backs, or resided in extra cotton bags.” (125-126)

The racial discrimination was so strong that the Negroes had their own church outside the town limit. “First Purchase African M.E. Church was in the Quarters outside the southern town limits, across the old saw - mill tracks. It was an ancient paint – peeled frame building, the only church in Maycomb with a steeple and bell, called First Purchase because it was paid for from the first earnings of freed slaves. Negroes worshipped in it on Sundays and white men gambled in it on weekdays.” (120)

Scout and her brother are awakened by the case of Tom Robinson and they come to know that the small, sleepy town considered to be a perfect world is no more perfect. Their vision is shattered by the realization that racism and class discrimination is rampant in their small town and is affecting their lives. Scout is teased by the kids at school that her father was defending a Nigger. Scout says, “Cecil Jacobs made me forget. He had announced in the schoolyard the day before that Scout Finch’s daddy defended niggers.” (79) She was not only teased by the outsiders but also by her own cousin, Francis. Francis quotes his grandma’s words, “ ‘Grandma says it’s bad enough he lets you all run wild, but now he’s turned out a nigger – lover we’ll never be able to walk the streets of Maycomb agin. He’s ruinin’ the family, that’s what he’s doin’.” (87)

The people of Maycomb did not want Atticus Finch to defend Tom Robinson just because he was black. Mrs. Dubose, an old invalid also spoke against Atticus defending a Negro. She says, “Your father’s no better than the niggers and trash he works for!” (106)

The hatred for black is so strong that all the evil and irrational stream of thought is associated with them. Jem comments upon the attitude of the society by saying, “but around here once you have a drop of Negro blood, that makes you all black.” (164)

Atticus testifies how society thinks that all wrong deeds are done by the black “... the evil assumption – that all Negroes lie, that all Negroes are basically immoral beings, that all Negro men are not to be trusted around our women, an assumption one associates with minds of their caliber.” (207)

Tom Robinson, a Negro is accused wrongly of raping a white woman, Mayella Ewell. “Oppression is ultimately reduced to a subjective psychological state – feeling oppressed.”<sup>8</sup>

Tom Robinson is well aware of his predicament when he was accused by Mayella. He simply runs away from there because he would not have survived. On being asked why he ran away and why he was scared if he didn’t do anything. Tom’s answer was straight and curt, “Mr. Finch, if you was a nigger like me, you’d be scared too.” (198) Tom is well aware of the fact that he would be prosecuted even for what he did not do because he was black accused by a white woman. “No suh, scared I’d hafta face up to what I didn’t do.” (201)

Mayella despite of the fact that she loved a Negro accused him of her rape because she was guilty of loving a black while being a white. This was something which was not in her culture. Drefus interpreting Foucault opines, “Since we share cultural practices with others, and since these practices have made us that we are, we have, perforce, some common footing from which to proceed, to understand, and to act.”<sup>9</sup> “I say guilt, gentlemen, because it was guilt that motivated her. She has committed no crime; she has merely broken a rigid and time – honored code of our society, a code so severe. Whoever breaks it is hounded from our midst as unfit to live with.” (206) It was against society and culture that a white girl should fall for a black man.

She accused Tom Robinson of raping her because “... he must be removed from her presence, from this world. She must destroy the evidence of her offense.” (206) “She was white,

and she tempted a Negro. She did something that in our society is unspeakable. She kisses a black man. Not an old Uncle, but a strong young Negro man. No code mattered to her before she broke it, but it came crashing down on her afterwards.” (206)

Whereas a white man like Mr. Dolphus Raymond though married a black woman is also looked down upon but still he could afford to do it because he was rich enough and had property in his name. But the issues born out of such wedlock are really unlucky as, “They don’t belong anywhere. Colored folks won’t have ‘em because they’re half white; white folks won’t have ‘em cause they’re colored, so they’re just in-between, don’t belong anywhere.” (163)

Mayella was doubly subjugated, first being a woman then being a poor woman. Scout reflects upon this issue and says, “She couldn’t live like Mr. Dolphus Raymond, who preferred the company of Negroes, because she didn’t own a riverbank and she wasn’t from a fine old family.” (194)

Atticus projected Tom Robinson’s case in such a manner so that he comes out to be innocent, what he actually was. Atticus was in possession of truth but according to Foucault, “There is a battle for truth or at least around truth-it being understood once again that by truth I do not mean the ensemble of rules according to which the true and the false are separated and specific effects of power attached to the true.”<sup>10</sup> So truth is given colour the way society or people expected to appear. Mr. Atticus Finch is scared that the truth which he possesses may not be garbed and presented in some other form. So he makes an appeal before the jury to give a fair judgement because he was aware of the dominant social discourse and it was with white and against black. Atticus makes a plea to the judge and prays for the justice and fair decision. “But there is one way in this country in which all men are created equal - there is one human institution that makes a pauper the equal of a Rockefeller, the stupid man the equal of an Einstein, and the ignorant man the equal of any college president. That institution, gentleman, is a court.” (203)

The institution of judiciary uses its power against the black; the verdict if wanted also could not have been in the favour of black. According to Foucault the verdicts were affected by the “juridico – political matrix”. The jury could not go against the white so they charged the innocent man with rape.

“Judge Taylor was polling the jury: “Guilty ... guilty ... guilty ... guilty ... guilty ....” (214) Jem and Sout were shocked to hear this and Jem asked his father, “How could they do it, how could they?” (215) Atticus unveiled the bitter reality that this practice of injustice against the black and apartheid had been there since ages. He replies to Jem, “I don’t know, but they did it. They’ve done it before and they did it tonight and they’ll do it again and when they do it – seems that only children weep.” (215) He also reflects upon the attitude of the adults who have become immune to the atrocities of the system and in fact have become a part of it. Atticus talks about the partial attitude of the jury. He acquaints Jem to the prevailing biased, corrupt system and the seamy picture of the courts. “In our courts, when it’s a white man’s word against a black man’s, the white man always wins. They’re ugly, but those are the facts of life.” (223) Jem gets into discussion with his father and says that the jury misuses its power. “But lots of folks have been hung – hanged – on circumstantial evidence,” said Jem. (222)

Foucault opines, “To return to the problem of legal punishment, the prison with all the corrective technology at its disposal is to be resituated at the point where the codified power to punish turns into a disciplinary power to observe; at the point where the universal punishments of the law are applied selectively to certain individuals and always the same ones; at the point where the redefinition of the juridical subject by the penalty becomes a useful training of the

criminal ....”<sup>11</sup> The state in the form of prison exercises its power over Tom Robinson. In the prison he is under constant observation and is not even allowed to meet his wife. Tom lost hope and got tired of waiting for justice, so he thought of taking a chance and tried to escape from the prison but got killed. “ “They shot him,” said Atticus: “He was running: it was during their exercise period. They said he just broke into a blind raving charge at the fence and started climbing over. Right in front of them.” (238) In the eyes of the state Tom Robinson committed a double crime. First he raped a white woman then he tried to escape from the prison. So he was bound to get punishment according to the offence committed. “Exact relations are required between the nature of the offense and the nature of the punishment; he who has used violence in his crime must be subjected to physical pain; he who has been lazy must be sentenced to hard labour; he who has acted despicably will be subjected to infamy.”<sup>12</sup> The white man, could not see the subversion of their authority by the black. Atticus says, “Seventeen bullet holes in him. They didn’t have to shoot him that much.” (238)

The dominant public opinion again held Tom responsible for his death. The people of Maycomb do not show sympathy at the death of Tom Robinson but come out with these comments, “Typical of a nigger to cut and run. Typical of a nigger’s mentality to have no plan, no thought for the future, just run blind first chance he saw.” (243)

There were also some people like Mrs. Moudie, Atticus and Mr. Underwood who condemned the killing of Tom Robinson. Mr. Underwood in his newspaper compared the death of Tom with the senseless killing or hunting of birds. “Mr. Underwood simply figured it was a sin to kill cripples, be they standing, sitting or escaping. He likened Tom’s death to the senseless slaughter of songbirds by hunters and children, and Maycomb thought he was trying to write an editorial poetical enough to be reprinted in *The Montgomery Adventures*.” (243) Jem cogitates over this issue and comes out with the conclusion that the trial was just an eyewash “... but in the secret courts of men’s hearts Atticus had no case Tom was a dead man the minute Mayella Ewell opened her mouth and screamed.” (244)

The social system was not only biased against the blacks but also against the females. The male tries to exert his power and asks the female to toe his line. In the case of Mayella it becomes quite evident. Her father uses his power of being a male and thrusts his power on his daughter by raping her. She is sexually harassed by her own father. Atticus asks her questions regarding the sexual harassment of hers at her father’s hands but she didn’t speak, as she had no answer to it. Atticus asked her, “ ‘Did you scream first at your father instead of at Tom Robinson? Was that it?’ ” No answer

“Who beat you up? Tom Robinson or your father?” No answer.

“What did your father see in the widow, the crime of rape or the best defense to it? Why don’t you tell the truth, child, didn’t Bob Ewell beat you up?” ” (190)

It is not only Mayella who is the victim of the male power but Scout Finch too is asked to change her ways to fit into the patriarchal society. It is the demand of the patriarchal society that the girls should be submissive and not assertive. “Sexuality is seen as a primary locus of power in contemporary society, constructing subjects and governing them by exercising control through their bodies.”<sup>13</sup>

Scout was not allowed to wear breeches by her Aunt who was an agent of the social discourse.

Aunt Alexandra was fanatical on the subject of my attire. I could not possibly hope to be a lady if I wore breeches; when I said I could do nothing in a dress, she said I wasn’t supposed to be doing things that

required points. Aunt Alexandra's vision of my deportment involved playing with a small stove, Tea sets, and wearing the Add - A – Pearl necklace she gave me when I was born; furthermore, I should be a ray of sunshine in my father's lonely life. I suggested that one could be a ray of sunshine in pants just as well, but Aunty said that one had to behave like a sunbeam, that I was born good but had grown progressively worse every year. (86)

Mrs. Dubose too warns Scout not to wear boyish dresses, "What are you doing in those overalls? You should be in a dress and camisole, young lady! You'll grow up waiting on tables if somebody doesn't change your ways – a Finch waiting on tables at the O.K café – Hah!" (106) "We decided that it would be best for you to have some feminine influence." (129) Atticus is asked to be strict with Jean Louise.

Aunt Alexandra specially came to stay with Atticus because Scout is in growing stage, so that she may be molded by Aunt Alexandra in such a manner so that she becomes docile and adjusts well to the demands of the patriarchal society. Aunty when comes to stay with her brother, says, "...but you have a daughter to think of; a daughter who's growing up." (139)

Aunt Alexandra used to invite some ladies at her place and then they discussed some social issue over a cup of tea and snacks and went away. Aunt Alexandra wanted Scout to come and serve the ladies and then listen to their conversation. Scout says, "This was a part of her campaign to teach me to be a lady." (232) Her Aunt made her dress up like girls and asked her to sit among the ladies. Miss Maudie talked to her and gave a complement "You're mighty dressed up, Miss Jean Louise," she said, "Where are your britches today?" "Under my dress."

I hadn't meant to be funny, but the ladies laughed." (232) Scout is so much pressurized by the dominant discourse of the society to behave like girls that when Miss Stephanie asked, "Don't you want to grow up to be a lawyer?"

"Nome, just a lady" was the reply given by Scout. Aunt Alexandra does not like Scout to move in overalls or to play whole day like boys. Scout senses what the society expected from her. "Aunt Alexandra was fanatical on the subject of my attire. I could not possibly hope to be a lady if I wore breeches; when I said I could do nothing in a dress, she said I wasn't supposed to be doing things that required pants." (86)

Even her brother Jem as an agent of the patriarchal society tries to dominate her. Scout feels that even her brother exercises his power upon her not because she is younger but because she is a girl. She quotes Jem's thoughts, "Jem told me I was being a girl, that girls always imagined things that's why other people hated them so, and if I started behaving like one I could just go and find some to play with." (45) Jem and Dill looked down upon Scout and told her to go away. "When I joined them, as usual they said go away." (51) Jem too wants that Scout should behave like a girl. He commands her to listen to Aunt Alexandra. "You know she's not used to girls?" said Jem, "Least – ways, not girls like you. She's trying to make you a lady. Can't you take up sewin' or something?" (228) He being male threatens Scout, "Now I mean it, Scout, you antagonize Aunty and I'll – I'll spank you." (140) "If little girls should look pretty and be compliant and helpful while boys should be adventurous, assertive and tough, these social expectations are not unrelated to girls' and boys' future social destination within a patriarchal society."<sup>14</sup>

The society takes up the discourse from a certain source from where it originates. The image of woman created by the foot-washer Baptist in the Bible is not favourable. "Thing is

foot-washers think women are a sin by definition.” (49) If woman is considered to be a sin then naturally the man would like to curb this sin. He would like her to remain confined to the four walls of the house.

Religion had great power on the masses. The people strictly followed the words of the priest of the church. The life got moulded according to the religious ethics.

In fact religion became an institution of the state to make them toe the line which the state wanted. Traditionally in Western culture, political thinking was concerned with the just and good life. Practical reason sought to change character, as well as communal and political life, based on a larger metaphysical understanding of the ordered cosmos. Christian version, like those of Saint Thomas, was in a line with Aristotle. Thomas was concerned with an order of virtue that was anchored in an onto theoretical world view. Politics served a higher goal. This higher goal rested on a larger order, which could be known. Political thinking was that art which, in an imperfect world, led men toward the good life, an art which imitated God’s government of nature.<sup>15</sup>

Scout also talks about the power exercised by the church upon the individuals. When Jem and Scout went to church with Calpurnia, she observes how the priest talks about the sin and guides his flock to lead a pure life. “His sermon was a forthright denunciation of sin, and austere declaration of the motto on the wall behind him: he warned his flock against the evils of heady brews, gambling, and strange women. Bootleggers caused enough trouble in the Quarters, but women were worse. Again, as I had often met it in my own church, I was confronted with the Impurity of Women doctrine that seemed to preoccupy all clergymen.” (124) Scout observed that the clergyman was pointing at individual lapses. “Reverend Sykes used his pulpit more freely to express his vies on individual lapses from grace: Jim Hardy had been absent from church for five Sundays and he wasn’t sick; Constance Jackson had better watch her ways – she was in grave danger for quarreling with her neighbors; she had erected the only spite fence in the history of the quarters.” (124) From this we can see how an individual was subjected to the power of church or religion. Miss Maudie talks about the Baptists who consider everything to be a sin which gives pleasure to an individual. Miss Maudie said “Foot washers believe anything that’s pleasure is a sin. Did you know some of ’em came out of the woods one Saturday and passed by this place and told me and my flowers were going to hell?” “Your flowers too?”

“Yes ma’am. They’d burn right with me. They thought I spent too much time in God’s outdoors and not enough time inside the house reading the Bible.” (49) Miss Maudie comments upon Radleys and says, “There are just some kind of men who – who’re so busy worrying about the next world they’ve never learned to live in this one, and you can look down the street and see the results.” (50) Radleys were Baptists and they did not talk much to their neighbors. They remained inside the house. No body dared to go to their house as the door always remained closed.

The society exercised its power upon the individuals. Certain norms are expected to be followed by the individuals. “Power as a pure limit set on freedom is, at least in our society, the general form of its acceptability.”<sup>16</sup> Arthur Radley’s life got effected by the social discourse. His unacceptable behaviour became the talk of Maycomb for which his father felt insulted and made him stay indoors for the rest of the life. And what was crime committed by Arthur for which such a big punishment was given? “According to neighborhood legend, when the younger

Radley boy was in his teens he became acquainted with some of the Cunninghams from old Sarum, an enormous and confusing tribe domiciled in the northern part of the country; and they formed the nearest thing to a gang ever cussed by the town and publicly warned from three pulpits: they hung around the barbershop; they rode the bus to Abbottsville on Sundays and went to the picture show; they attended dances at the county's riverside gambling hell, the Dew – Drop Inn & Fishing camp; they experimented with stumphole whiskey.” (14) All this was a sin in the eyes of Baptist and Arthur's father being a Baptist could not digest the fact that his son was engaged in doing all this. “The doors of the Radley house were closed on weekdays as well as Sundays, and Mr.Radley's boy was not seen again for fifteen years.” (15) The parents too become the agent of social discourse and try to exercise their power upon their children. “Nobody knew what form of intimidation Mr.Radley employed to keep Boo out of sight, but Jem figured that Mr.Radley kept him chained to the bed most of the time. Atticus said no, it wasn't that sort of thing, that there were other ways of making people into ghosts.” (16)

Atticus, Calpurnia and Aunt Alexandra too exercised control over Scout and Jem to shape their lives according to the expectations of the society. Scout and Jem being motherless are taken care by their black housekeeper, Calpurnia. Atticus approves of Calpurnia's way of controlling his children. “Besides, I don't think the children've suffered on but from her having brought them up. If anything, she's been harden on them in some ways than a mother would have been... She's never let them get away with anything, she's never indulged than the way most colored nurses do. She tried to bring them up according to her lights, and Cal's lights are pretty good – and another thing, the children love her.” (139)

Scout does feel bad when Calpurnia tries to be strict with her. Scout opines that “She had always been too hard on me, she had at last seen the error of her fractious ways, she was sorry and too stubborn to say so.” (33-34) Scout feels the authority of Calpurnia and is unable to understand that what she is doing it is only to discipline her. “Calpurnia's tyranny, unfairness, and meddling in my business had faded to gentle grumblings of general disapproval.” (38)

Atticus too tries to influence and shape the lives of his children. He tries to discipline them and even gives punishment. When Jem could not bear, to hear something against his father he behaves rudely with Mrs. Dubose and spoils her plants, Atticus tells Jem, “Son, I have no doubt that you've been annoyed by your contemporaries about me lawing for niggers, as you say, but to do something like this to a sick old lady is inexcusable. I strongly advise you to go down and have a talk with Mrs. Dubose,” said Atticus. (108) He was even made to read for Mrs. Dubose as a punishment. Drefus interpreting Foucault opines, “Punishment would have succeeded when it produced “docile bodies.” The application of punishment was once again inscribed on the body, but its aim was no longer to crush, dismember, and overpower it. Rather, the body was to be trained, exercised and supervised”<sup>17</sup>

Atticus has control over his children because he has the power of knowledge which he gained by living life by holding his head high. “Drawing closely on Nietzsche, Foucault argues that ‘power and knowledge directly imply one another ... [Such] that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relation.”<sup>18</sup> Atticus sent his children to Mrs. Dubose so that they could see the real courage of an old lady who fought with her disease and came out to be successful. He says to Jem, “I wanted you to see something about her – I wanted you to see what real courage is, instead of getting the idea that courage 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 no body. She was the bravest person I ever knew.” (116)

Atticus has good knowledge and understands child psychology. He knows the nature of his children and this knowledge helps him to shape and mould the lives of his children. He makes Jack, his brother to learn certain things while dealing with children. “Jack! When a child asks you something, answer him, for goodness’ sake. But don’t make a production of it. Children are children, but they can spot an evasion quicker than adults, and evasion simply muddles ‘em. No,” my father mused, “you had the right answer this afternoon, but the wrong reasons. Bad language is a stage all children go through, and it dies with time when they learn they’re not attracting attention with it.” (92) Atticus is well aware of the nature of his children and how they will react to his social criticism. “I’m not worried about Jem keeping his head, but Scout’d just as soon jump on someone as look at him if her pride’s at stake ....” (92)

Aunt Alexandra tries to exert power over Jem and Scout and wants to mould them according to her standards. She is conscious of her class, of her family name and does not want Scout to mix up with the ordinary kids. Once she appears on the scene Scout’s individuality is threatened. Scout complains that she is unable to understand Aunt’s notion of heredity. “I never understood her preoccupation with heredity. Somewhere, I had received the impression that Fine Folks were people who did the best they could with the sense they had ....” (132) But aunt Alexandra opines that fine folks were those who had name and status in the society. Atticus also gets involved in Aunt Alexandra’s campaign of changing their way of living. “Your aunt has asked me to try and impress upon you and Jean Louise that you are not from run – of – the – mill people, that you are the product of several generations’ gentle breeding ....” (135)

Aunt has instructed Atticus to tell the children to line up to their family’s name and reputation. “She asked me to tell you, you must try to behave like the little lady and gentleman that you are.” (136)

Foucault too talks of class domination. He opines that in order to dominate other lower classes, the dominant class has to discipline itself. “In order for the bourgeoisie to establish its position of class domination during the nineteenth centuries, it had to form itself as a class. As we have seen, there was first a dynamic exercising of strict control primarily on its own members.”<sup>19</sup> Thus aunt Alexandra wants that Jem and Scout should not mix with the masses.

Where power operates, resistance is bound to be there. The subjects, who are being dominated, try to rebel and defy. “The very existence of power relations presupposes forms of resistance, not as an external effect or consequence of the exercise of power, but as an inherent feature of the power relation. If we accept the view that where there is power there is resistance, then it follows that just as power is present everywhere in the social network so is resistance.”<sup>20</sup> Tom Robinson, a Negro who has been implicated in a wrong case of rape of an English woman too shows his resistance by running from the prison. Though he got killed, but he resisted and tried to become free.

Atticus also shows resistance to the dominant discourse of the society He comes up as a model of courage, honesty and free life. The same qualities he wants to instill in his children. Atticus defends Tom Robinson in the name of justice. When all the whites of Maycomb were against, he took Tom Robinson’s case and defended him. Atticus could protect Maycomb from the mad dog but he could not protect innocent victim, Tom Robinson from their madness. In fact the whole of Finch family stands together against evil. According to R.A.Dave “It is the Finch family that pits itself against evil in defence of good. Jem Calways (sounds like Gem) and Scout are names that do not fail to evoke a sense of value and senseless service, whereas Jean, which is

a variation of Joan, distantly clicks into our memory that angelic girl, Joan of Arc, battling for a great cause.”<sup>21</sup> So the whole of Finch family shows resistance to the dominant discourse of the society.

To Kill a Mockingbird is indeed a criticism of life and that, too, the most disturbing criticism, but it too comes up with the moral of maintaining one’s integrity and honesty against all odds of life. One should not be the mute spectator of life, one should act and live life to the fullest.

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