

CHAPTER THREE

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the social conflicts of Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, I found some issues in relation to racism. In this chapter, I would like to draw some conclusions.

There are four conflicts which I discuss in Chapter Two. The first social conflict is between Atticus Finch and his sister, Alexandra Finch. They have a conflict because Atticus wants to help an African-American named Tom Robinson, who is accused of raping a white woman. Alexandra does not want Atticus to help Tom Robinson because she thinks that Atticus will be disgracing their family. The second social conflict is between Atticus and Bob Ewell, a white man who has accused Tom Robinson of raping his daughter. The trigger of this conflict is the truth about Tom Robinson's case. Atticus believes that Tom Robinson is not guilty whereas Bob Ewell accuses that Tom Robinson is guilty. The third social conflict is the conflict between Atticus and Mayella Ewell, the daughter of Bob Ewell, who claims that she is raped by Tom Robinson. This conflict is about the truth. Mayella claims that Tom has seduced and raped her.

However, Atticus believes that it is Mayella who has seduced Tom. The last social conflict is between Scout, Atticus' daughter, and Francis Hancock, Alexandra's grandson. This conflict starts when Francis mocks Atticus as a "nigger lover." As a child, Francis actually does not understand the meaning of "nigger-lover" but he still says it because he just imitates the elder generation. Scout as Atticus' daughter, who really loves her father, does not agree that Francis mocks her father as a "nigger-lover" even though Scout does not understand the meaning of "nigger-lover." She just does not like the way Francis utters the words.

Firstly, it is clear that the social conflicts experienced by Atticus is caused by the prejudice of the majority of racist white people at that time towards African-American people. Moreover, they think that African-Americans are lower than white people. Thus, their actions of racism will be considered normal and acceptable. The majority of white people are racist mostly because they feel superior. With that feeling, they treat African-Americans in such unfair ways so that African-American people experience unfairness in law and also in many other aspects. They are often accused of doing bad things, blamed for something they never do, and they also have to deal with so many kinds of prejudice. Unfortunately, the racist white society does not regard their action as inappropriate or inhuman. For example, African-Americans are not regarded as human when a white person can blame an African-American for a crime that the white person has committed.

Secondly, I argue that in the novel there are probably white people who actually do not accept the unfair idea, but since there are only few of them, there is nothing they can do about it. The racist white people at that time would not

accept anyone who assists African-American people even if that person is white. A white person who assists African-American people is considered to be someone who disgraces his or her family. Atticus and Scout are examples of a few people who try to stand up for the truth and to defend humanity, but as a result, they are mocked and treated as outcasts by the society.

Thirdly, I also notice that children of the white society become the victims of the racist people around them. I think the white children at that time imitate the racist behaviour of the older people, even though they do not actually understand the issue of racism. They just do what the elder generation has done. As a result, they are influenced to act like a racist.

In conclusion, the purpose of Harper Lee in writing the novel and describing the social conflicts experienced by Atticus Finch and Scout when fighting against the racist white society at that time was to show the racist situation in 1930s. I can relate this idea to the fact that Harper Lee herself has had a personal experience toward a racist situation at that time. The plot and characters in this novel were based on her observations of her own family and neighbours. She was also inspired by an event that occurred near her hometown, Alabama, in 1936 when she was 10 years old. She chose Alabama as the setting of *To Kill a Mockingbird* because a lot of racist actions toward African-American people happened here, especially around 1930s. Moreover, Scottsboro Boys interracial rape case in 1931 also became her observation and became an inspiration for her novel.

Having reached a conclusion, I am of the opinion that Harper Lee has conveyed his purpose successfully. Personally, I think the social conflicts in this

novel belong to the most appropriate literary element to convey the purpose of the author in the novel, because social conflict is an element which, in my opinion, best illustrates a controversial issue such as racism. Finally, I can say that *To Kill a Mockingbird* has made myself understand how terrible the situations of the African-American people in 1930s. In such situations, even if some white people had attempted to defend humanity, they would have failed, which is disappointing for the people who are against racism at the present time. Therefore, I would like to suggest that the most important thing for all the people in the world now is they should try and give their best to change those unfavourable situations in order to have a better life.