

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

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## **Abstract**

The research is a qualitative study applying the content analysis method. The object of this study is Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The data collected are words, Phrases, clause and sentences related to the racial prejudice presented in the novel. The result of the study covers four major points. They are racial prejudice in the novel, the causes of the racial prejudice, the importance of racial prejudice, and racial prejudice in the novel reflecting the real condition of racial prejudice in Alabama.

Racial prejudice things are expressed through the attitudes like showing dislike or distrust of certain racial group or people and addressing black people as niggers. That is based on fear or false message rather than on reason or experience. Racial prejudice was a crucial problem in early twentieth century. It has been a problem all around the world. As a social issue, racial prejudice has a correlation with literature because literature is a kind of documented social product and it takes place in the society. And the novel "*To Kill a Mockingbird*" talks about racial prejudice with a deep thought.

Harper Lee's *To Kill the Mockingbird* tries to talk about the racial prejudice and discrimination. The author wants to show her reader that racial prejudice is seen everywhere and every time in social life. Probably even we all sometimes become the actor of racial prejudice in society consciously or not, even when we do it toward our neighbor in the next door.

Humans are observers of their environment and watch over every social event which inspires them to criticize, analyse and protest against social condition in society.

Harper Lee is a humanist. She uses contemporary characters and social issues to portray or convey the message of her novel. She uses interesting mix of characters to make the point that race should have nothing to do with the way persons choose to act toward others. But racism is practised by people all around.

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Harper Lee shows that racism is practiced in hidden way even in judicial courts. When people were in the court all the white people got seats to sit downstairs where it was cooler, while all the black people had to sit upstairs and felt hot. People` like judges or juries seemed to support their injustice against the blacks.

Some people who refused racial prejudice and who used straight against this criminal action like Atticus kept struggling their role to achieve racial justice. Atticus Finch, a country lawyer in Maycomb, took the risk by defending Tom Robinson. Atticus had to suffer much for this. And on days defending blacks were called as shame. And this case made Atticus labelled as "Nigger- lover" by his own people. Most of the Blacks disagreed against the practice of racial prejudice in Maycomb. This case strengthened white people's opinion that black people were trouble-makers.

To Kill a Mockingbird become a mirror of racial prejudice condition in Alabama. Many events happened in Alabama that became the inspiration for Harper Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird. There were unfair treatments in a lot of places because they were black people.

Racial prejudice can happen to anybody, everywhere and every time. It can happen in society, because many people in society cannot accept differences between one another. Yet this is one common thing that difference will always be in human life because nobody is created similar. Actually difference is everywhere. People just need to to accept the difference in society and need to tolerate each other.