



## Dialectical Study of Class Division in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*

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### ABSTRACT

This study employs Marxist analysis to the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, focusing on the portrayal of class divide within the story. The examination of social stratification is a prominent subject in Marxism, and Marx himself asserts in the Communist Manifesto that the progression of all societies throughout history is characterized by conflicts between different social classes (Marx & Engels, 1969). Marxism is a prominent literary criticism theory that examines issues such as injustice, exploitation, class separation, and alienation. Marxism posits that the primary purpose of literature is to foster class consciousness and incite a revolution among the working class (Beteillie, 2007). The study is characterized by its qualitative nature and employs an interpretive methodology. The story is analyzed using a dialectical approach, revealing that class separation serves as the fundamental source of injustice, social discrimination, and exploitation. The study demonstrates that American society was fragmented based on both social class and race. In America, race not only served as a means of categorization but also contributed to the split between the privileged upper class and the economically disadvantaged and marginalized class.

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## 1. Introduction

*To Kill a Mockingbird* is a widely acclaimed American novel that revolves around the issue of racial injustice and discrimination. The novel, written by Harper Lee, is widely read by individuals of all ages in the United States and around the world (Haggerty, 2010). The novel is included in the curriculum of several states in the USA and appeals to school students due to its use of a child narrator. Harper Lee received the Pulitzer Prize in 1961 and garnered numerous additional accolades and commendations for her groundbreaking novel. The novel underwent dramatization, and the subsequent film adaptation garnered three Oscar honors in 1962. Following the completion of this novel, Harper Lee entered a self-imposed state of prolonged inactivity and emerged only in 2015 with the publication of the sequel to this novel, titled "Go Set a Watchman." *To Kill a Mockingbird* revolves around the narrative of the Finch family. The tale takes place in the fictional city of Maycomb. The novel is narrated by Jean Louise Finch, who is commonly referred to as Scout. The narrator, now an adult, reminisces about her childhood experiences from 1932 to 1935, when she was between the ages of five and six. Lee's choice of an adult narrator is intended to convey to her audience how youngsters learn good moral attitudes from adults (Stiltner, 2002). According to Stiltner (2002), the adult narrator is a crucial and efficient means of conveying the message of empathy. Some critics argue that the novel contains narrative errors. The narrative is presented via the perspective of an adult Jean Louise Finch as she reminisces about her upbringing, occasionally depicting the events as witnessed by her younger self, Scout Finch. The narrative takes place during the time span from summer 1932 to fall 1935. The era in American history is characterized by the detrimental consequences of the Great Depression.

The Great Depression was a devastating and harrowing era in American history, characterized by the collapse of the stock market and widespread suffering, resulting in significant loss of life, property, and employment for millions of individuals. Lee portrays the image of individuals experiencing the distress of the Great Depression when Atticus informs Scout that Mr. Cunningham, a rural farmer, is unable to settle his debts due to the market fall. The Cunningham estate was encumbered by a mortgage. The situation was equally dire in both urban and rural areas. While the story explores the topic of the Great Depression, its primary focus is on a specific tiny town in Alabama. It is clear that individuals experience significant suffering, as expressed by Lee when he states, "Maycomb country had recently been informed that it had no reason to be afraid except for fear itself" (Lee, 1960).

The work also fictionalizes the renowned Scottsboro trial in American courts. This trial has gained significant popularity in the United States due to its association with racial injustice and the exploitation of individuals based on their skin color. While the Trial of Tom Robinson bears similarities and shows clear influence from the Scottsboro trial, Harper Lee refutes any connection between the two. Nevertheless, she acknowledges that both might serve as illustrations of the South's stance on race and justice. In his biography, Shields (2007) explains that the Scottsboro boys cases had a nationwide impact, whereas the trial of Tom Robinson in this story is confined to a tiny town. The Scottsboro incident transpired in March 1931, when about nine African American adolescents unlawfully accessed a freight car. Within the compartment, a smaller assembly of Caucasian adolescents, accompanied by two Caucasian females, were already in transit. Subsequently, both factions engaged in a conflict, resulting in the loss of the white group. However, upon reaching the subsequent location, white ladies purportedly accused black lads of rape, leading to their incarceration. The situation deteriorated and the trial took place in the little town of Scottsboro, resulting in the conviction of all nine black lads. Eight lads were condemned to capital punishment. Roy Wright, who was only 13 years old, was sentenced to life imprisonment. However, Eugene Williams, who was also 13 years old, received a death sentence. The Scottsboro trial was a grave miscarriage of justice. The women who were claimed to have been raped were purportedly sex workers and had fabricated the entire incident in order to evade their own apprehension. The lawyers were unable to provide a legal defense for the black lads due to the biased nature of the white jury. Nevertheless, the Scottsboro trial was reversed by a majority of 7-2 in the United States Supreme Court. During the retrial, four boys were found not guilty, while the remaining five were convicted and sentenced to various lengths of imprisonment. The Scottsboro Boys trial has persisted as the most contentious trial in the United States. Similar to the Scottsboro trial, the trial of Tom Robinson was similarly a mockery of justice. The jury consisted exclusively of Caucasian males. Tom was unjustly penalized for a crime he was innocent of and ultimately met his demise. The narrative portrays his death as a representation of the loss of innocence.

The term "dialect" originates from Greek and refers to the process of engaging in discourse to reconcile conflicting and contradictory perspectives in order to develop novel truths. Hegel proposed three laws that control the processes of dialectics in this particular environment. The three laws encompassed are: The law of quantitative transformation into qualitative, the law of the union of opposing forces, and the law of negating the negation. Marx and Engels adhered to the principles of Hegel's laws, which underwent certain modifications. K. Marx (1954) states My own dialectic method is not only different from the Hegelian but is its direct opposite. For Hegel.. the thinking process is the demiurge (creator) of the real world and the real world is only the outward manifestation of "the ideal" with me, on the other hand, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind and translated into terms of thought (p.67). Marx brought the concept of materialist worldview to the world. This perspective is embedded inside a novel conceptual framework, wherein our thoughts and perceptions are solely influenced by the tangible and societal aspects of our reality (Woodfin, 2014). Marx and Hegel diverge in philosophy under this particular circumstance. Marx adopts a materialist perspective, while Hegel, in contrast, embraces an idealist viewpoint (Lashari, Mahar, Solangi, Buriro, & Chang, 2023). Marx and Engels were the first to introduce dialectical materialism, which liberated philosophy and life from the influence of mysticism and metaphysics. Marx argues that individuals acquire natural resources from the environment and engage in the processes of production and exchange in order to obtain things that are essential for meeting their basic wants. Human labor is exerted by man to convert raw materials into finished items. Human labor encompasses the acquisition of diverse

talents and the utilization of machinery. The combination of human labor and skill is referred to as productive force. Through the utilization of productive force, individuals engage in productive relationships.

K. Marx (1954) posited that alterations in the forces of production result in corresponding modifications in the relations of production. This individual has undergone a lengthy journey from a state of basic communism to slavery, feudalism, and presently capitalism. The objective of life is to dismantle capitalism and instigate a bourgeois revolution. According to Marx, productive relations give rise to two opposing and conflicting classes: the exploiters and the oppressed. In the opening statement of the Communist Manifesto, Marx asserts that the history of all societies currently in existence is essentially the history of conflict between different social classes (Karl Marx & Engels, 2023). In their analysis, Malik and Batra (2014) argue that Marxism is connected to historical and cultural matters that are deeply entrenched in dialectical materialism. They assert that all these matters revolve around the economic class struggle, and the resolution of this struggle leads to additional conflicts among different classes within a certain social environment. According to Malik and Batra (2014), Marxism has a significant impact on various domains and disciplines such as history, economics, sociology, cultural psychoanalyses, and literature. Although Marx's writings largely focus on economics and politics, they may also be applied and prove useful for analyzing social situations and cultural studies. Marx frequently held the belief that philosophers should not merely interpret the world, but rather actively strive to bring about its transformation. Marx, as a pragmatic philosopher, thoroughly examines several philosophies ranging from Kant and Hegel to Mill, Smith, and Ricardo. He introduces novel notions to the world, such as appropriation, alienation, Praxis, creative labor, and value, among others. Marx establishes a connection between his conceptions and theories with the tangible aspects of society, politics, culture, history, and economics.

### **1.1. Statement of the Problem**

The objective of the study is to invoke Marxist analysis to examine Harper Lee's novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, specifically concentrating on the depiction of social stratification within the storyline. The research explores how the novel tackles themes such as injustice, exploitation, class division, and alienation, using Marxist theoretical frameworks that emphasize the importance of social stratification in explaining historical development. Based on the Communist Manifesto's claim that societal progress is driven by conflicts between different social classes, this study employs a qualitative and interpretive approach to examine how class division acts as a fundamental cause of injustice, social prejudice, and exploitation in the narrative. Moreover, the research examines the consequences of social class and race in the American context, demonstrating how these elements contribute to the division of society. The study argues that in America, race serves as both a means of categorization and a factor that intensifies divisions between the wealthy upper class and the economically poor and marginalized class.

## **2. Literature Review**

The literature review for the current study is categorized into three headings, namely: Marxism, the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and the dialectical examination of class division.

### **2.1. Marxism**

Marxism is a socio-economic theory and political ideology that was developed by Karl Marx. It focuses on the analysis of class struggle and the critique of capitalism. In his essay "Marx's Materialistic Interpretation of History," Lowith (1968) examines the underlying causes of class distinctions. He argues that as the global market expands, the bourgeoisie aggressively pursue resources and exert control over populations in various regions through enslavement, colonization, and subjugation. They advocate their purported concepts of civilization and compel the global community to embrace the capitalist way of production. The global community experiences the full impact of its lifestyle and economic practices. They exercise dominion over the methods of manufacturing and exploit the general populace. However, in this endeavor, the capitalist bourgeoisie falls victim to the relentless expansion of overproduction and loses control over the wealth it has generated. Marx predicts that if the working class becomes organized, politically educated, and develops class consciousness, they have the potential to overthrow the powerful bourgeoisie and bring about a revolution that

benefits the proletariat. The weapons that the bourgeoisie use will ultimately be turned against them, making the working class a significant threat.

Mahmood (2005) posits that Marx's historical materialism represents an economic interpretation of history, serving as a source of inspiration for the working class in their pursuit of an ideal communist society. Industrial capitalism has resulted in the emergence of a distinct social hierarchy known as the proletariat, which has brought numerous challenges to the world. The proletariat has significant hardship due to population increase, unchecked urbanization, and widespread unemployment. Marxism, on the other hand, provides a solution to these problems by employing the philosophy of history and conducting a dialectical analysis. K. Khan (2012) elucidate the unpredictability and uncertainties inherent in capitalism as depicted in Steinbeck's (1902-1968) novel *The Pearl*. The work exposes the plight of the Proletariat, who endure immense agony inflicted by influential capitalists, rendering their lives devoid of value and happiness. The narrative centers around an impoverished fisherman who was unable to afford medical care for his son due to his inability to pay the physicians' fees. Nevertheless, upon discovering a valuable pearl, Kino soon realizes that this seemingly priceless gem brings him misfortune and even puts his life at risk. The story extensively explores the plight of the proletariat as they strive to attain prosperity and success in life, only to have their aspirations and economic advancements thwarted by the aristocracy. The story implies that the proletariat, being the have-nots of society, are subconsciously exploited, considering it as an established pattern and tradition of life. The existence of economic inequality renders the poor susceptible and disinclined to resist, as any attempt to do so will result in their subjection and greater exploitation. In their study, Quratul-Ain (2013) examined the Marxist aspects of class stratification, socio-economic inequalities, and their consequences of oppression, fear, and terror in the lives of the lower class shown in Victor Hugo's (1802-1885) classic "*Les Misérables*". They determined that the contemporary capitalist economic system traps impoverished individuals and significantly diminishes their quality of life. Hugo exemplifies the Marxist concept that the privileged upper class, known as the Bourgeoisie, obstructs the advancement, development, and success of the lower class. The work graphically reveals the society's double standards, as the underprivileged are exploited due to deliberately constructed economic traps set by the upper class.

## **2.2. To Kill a Mockingbird**

The novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* explores racial concerns and highlights the injustice prevalent in society. However, it also delves into the hidden themes of courage and compassion, which are influenced by social class divisions (Duke). According to analyst Michael Pearlman, the classist structure in Maycomb is determined by social prestige and cultural affiliations rather than financial standing. It indicates that in Maycomb, individuals were segregated based on social, cultural, and socioeconomic factors. In Maycomb, we observe a diverse population consisting of individuals from different racial backgrounds, including both black and white individuals, as well as individuals from varying socioeconomic statuses, ranging from affluent to impoverished. Not just color, but also social status was a significant factor in causing the variances (Pearlman, 1995). Jolley (2002) proposes that *To Kill a Mockingbird* transcends being merely an examination of the influence of race and justice in our lives; rather, it imparts historical knowledge with the intention of enhancing our moral character.

## **2.3. Dialectical study of Class Division**

The term "dialectics" originates from the Greek word "dialogue," which refers to the process of debating or studying through speech. In the classical era, dialectics were employed to establish truth by identifying contradictions and counterarguments in the opponent's arguments. This was based on the belief that inconsistencies and counterarguments in thought aid scholars in discovering the truth. The examination of Karl Marx's work revolves around the principles of Dialectical and Historical materialism. Marx drew upon Hegel's ideas in the field of dialectics, and his materialistic perspective was shaped by his examination of Feuerbach's work. Marx explicitly asserts in his writings that his dialectics and materialism diverge from those of Hegel and Feuerbach. Dialectical Materialism is Marx's method of examining the natural world and its phenomena. Dialectical materialism is named as such due to its dialectical approach and materialistic theory of interpretation. When applied to the study of social life, including the ways of social life and historical events that shape it, this approach is referred to as historical materialism (Stalin, 1942).

The fundamental principles of the Marxist dialectical method are:

1. The interconnectedness and determinism of nature need the comprehensive study and perception of natural phenomena, without isolating them. In order to comprehend it, we must analyze it within the framework of the surrounding circumstances. The interconnectedness and interdependence of different aspects of nature necessitate studying them holistically.
2. Nature is in a perpetual state of flux and constant movement. Nature is dynamic and constantly evolving, perpetually generating new advancements. Therefore, objects deteriorate in order to give rise to new objects. Dialectics examines phenomena through the lens of temporal progression, encompassing motions, alterations, and advancements.
3. Quantitative changes lead to the emergence of qualitative modifications. Dialectics posits that as things develop and change, not only do quantitative changes occur, but these quantitative changes also give rise to qualitative changes. It signifies the transformation of objects from a state of simplicity to complexity, and from lower levels to higher levels.
4. Inherent contradictions exist within nature. Within all aspects and manifestations of nature, there exist inherent internal conflicts and oppositions, such as the presence of negative and positive elements. Hence, a perpetual conflict arises between antiquity and modernity, correctness and fallacy, past and present, virtue and malevolence. Lenin (1902) asserts that growth represents the conflict between opposing forces.

All these concepts of dialectics indicate that it opposes metaphysics and the divine rule. Marx's dialectical materialism demonstrates that there are no enduring principles or divine laws that justify private property, the exploitation of the poor, or the subjection of peasants and workers by landlords and capitalists. Marxism, as a dialectical science, defines class based on the social relations of production. It posits that in capitalist societies, there is an inherent antagonism between two classes: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. In society, the powerful class that exploits the weaker class is known as the bourgeoisie, while the exploited class is referred to as the proletariat. Marx asserts that a dominant class consistently governs and sustains its authority by instilling a fabricated awareness in the oppressed class, leading them to accept their exploitation as an inevitable aspect of their destiny. Consequently, the exploited class adheres to this exploitative ideology without any inclination to resist it. Marx urges the attention of the oppressed class to reject their mistaken beliefs and cultivate a new awareness of the class conflict in order to resist exploitation, oppression, aggression, and intellectual dominance. Hence, revolution arises as the ultimate solution for the problems of capitalist society, and this battle requires the solidarity of all those who are oppressed to come together and resist the dominance of capitalist authority (Slaughter, 1975).

In his influential work, the Communist Manifesto, Marx calls upon the proletariats to form a cohesive class and challenge the dominant authority of the bourgeoisie. This can only be achieved when the proletariats unite and rise up against the formidable bourgeoisie. The working class, also known as the exploited class, must acquire class consciousness. To do this, they require training to effectively deal with tyranny, exploitation, oppression, violence, and abuse. In order to do this, it is imperative for individuals to recognize both their own strengths and vulnerabilities, as well as those of the ruling and exploiting elite, by employing political, intellectual, and power strategies. In the absence of comprehensive understanding of these factors, the efforts of the working class will not be fruitful, since the dominant capitalist class employs various institutions and tactics to maintain the working class in ignorance and subject them to a distorted perception of reality (Azad, 2005). In his work, Bottomore (2001) revisits the issue of class conflict and argues that in the 20th century, class conflict extends beyond the traditional conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. It encompasses the confrontation between different social groups, where some groups hold power and dominate others, exerting economic and political control. The researcher has examined the characters in this work as embodiments of distinct social classes. In addition, American society was separated into racial classes, specifically Black and White. Within this division, there were influential white individuals who economically and politically exploited both Black individuals and impoverished white individuals. This class stratification exposes the vacuity and fragility of

American capitalism, which fails to provide any substantial benefits to the disadvantaged impoverished population. During the investigation, a new observation has emerged suggesting that race and racial disparities may be attributed to a misguided sense of social class awareness, in which capitalists exploit economically disadvantaged individuals based on their skin color in America.

### **3. Research Methodology**

The present investigation is of a qualitative nature. Bryman, Clark, Foster, and Sloan (2004) defines qualitative research as a form of research that is conducted using words, where the researcher establishes a relationship between theory and study through an inductive approach and creates theories. In this form of research, the researchers analyze the social sphere in order to uncover a deeper understanding of social reality. The study approach is hermeneutic. Bryman et al. (2004) asserts that the interpretive process involves a comprehensive analysis and study of a specific text, followed by the discovery of novel meanings Lashari et al. (2023) and understandings that align with the perspectives of the writers (Lashari et al., 2023; Lashari & Umrani, 2023). The work is analyzed invoking the Marxist approach of class division, commonly referred to as the Dialectical study of class division.

#### **3.1. Textual Analysis**

The Marxist approach to studying and investigating history and facts is founded on dialectical ideas. In the field of dialectics, truth is determined by the process of presenting and refuting arguments (E. Khan, Lashari, & Iqbal, 2022). Marx advocates for the use of the dialectic technique to uncover the truth about social reality. Marxism is sometimes referred to as a science because of its dialectical methodology. Marx, as a scientist, held the belief in material dialectics and applied this concept to various social arenas, as well as to diverse aspects of human nature, history, and the evolution of civilization. This application is referred to as historical materialism (Stalin, 1942). The scholar has employed a dialectical approach to effectively identify and analyze the components of class separation in the novel. The primary tenet of the Marxist dialectical approach is rooted in the interconnection and inevitability of natural phenomena. According to this principle, nothing in nature or event in history is considered or observed independently. Upon analyzing the text, we discovered that the instances of racial discrimination and class separation were not isolated occurrences, but rather had deep historical roots and interconnectedness with past and concurrent events. The work portrays the doctrine of white supremacy, which is firmly ingrained into its narrative. Children receive instruction in various settings, such as the home, school, or religious institutions. Consequently, the youngsters acquire the knowledge of animosity and prejudice. Prior to the commencement of Tom Robinson's trial, Scout and Jem received instruction from their Aunt Alexandra regarding the supremacy of their social class and the practice of discrimination against black individuals. In chapter 13, Scout expresses her thoughts explicitly.

"She consistently seized opportunities to highlight the deficiencies of other tribal groups, with the intention of enhancing the reputation of our own" (Lee, 1960).

In addition, she consistently disapproved of Scout and Jem's visits to Calpurnia. When Scout sought permission from Atticus to visit Calpurnia's house, Aunt Alexandra intervened.

'You may not'

Aunt Alexandra said it (Lee, 1960).

The instruction imparted to children at home by the dominant and influential white elite compels them to exhibit negative and disparaging behavior in schools and subsequently in other areas of society. When Cecil Jacobs ridiculed Scout by referring to his father as a "nigger defender," it was a direct consequence of the influence of his family on him. The white youngsters were indoctrinated with the notion of their superiority over black children. Over time, these emotions become solidified and result in situations such as the trial of Tom Robinson. African Americans endured a life marked by constant peril, apprehension, and exploitation. The trial and subsequent miscarriage of justice against Tom Robinson exemplify the mindset of white individuals and the white jury in Maycomb. However, this entire incident

is intertwined with the systemic racial discrimination and exploitation of black individuals throughout the entirety of America. The denial of justice to Tom constitutes a denial of justice to every African American in the United States. In order to comprehend the essence of Tom Robinson's unjust treatment and exploitation, it is imperative to thoroughly examine all instances of racial discrimination and exploitation depicted in the novel. This is because the Marxist dialectical method explicitly asserts that no natural occurrence can be fully understood in isolation. In order to comprehend them, it is necessary to analyze them within the framework of the surrounding circumstances. The previous explanation has provided evidence to support the claim that racial prejudice and class inequality have been long-standing issues in American society, dating back to the era of slavery. The second principle of Marxist dialectical method pertains to the perpetual motion and alteration of nature.

According to Stalin (1942), nature is perpetually in a condition of constant motion. Throughout this period of natural movement, numerous transformations, novel advancements, and evolutionary processes occur. The history of human civilization and evolution is the outcome of the ongoing movement of nature. This novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, demonstrates the process of class stratification undergoing transformation. The novel portrays Cunninghams as agriculturalists. They pertain to underprivileged white individuals; nonetheless, throughout the trial of Tom Robinson, we witness a notable and constructive transformation occurring. When Scout inquired Atticus about the prolonged deliberation of the Jury in reaching a verdict for Tom's conviction, Atticus spoke to them.

" 'An inevitable verdict, may be but usually it takes 'em just a few minutes. This time he broke of and looked at us. 'You might like to know that there was one fellow who look considerably wearing down – in the beginning he was raring for an outright acquittal.

He was one of the Cunningham's'" (Lee, 1960).

The inclusion of disadvantaged and marginalized individuals in prestigious organizations signifies the occurrence of transformation. Throughout the novel, there are several notable occurrences that indicate favorable societal improvements, such as Scout and Jem's visit to the black church, Atticus's defense of a black individual, and the evidence provided by Mr. Link Dess in support of Tom Robinson. Within a society characterized by extensive exploitation and racial discrimination, these few examples serve as adequate evidence of forthcoming good transformations. The third principle of the Marxist dialectical method suggests that gradual quantitative changes can result in a significant qualitative transformation. This principle can be applied to the attitudes of white individuals towards black individuals. The novel presents numerous instances of animosity towards individuals of African descent. Aunt Alexandra disapproved of Calpurnia due of her racial background. African Americans were prohibited from accessing educational institutions. Each group had their own distinct places of worship; all of these occurrences ultimately resulted in the unjust killing of justice in the trial of Tom Robinson. The few instances of racial exploitation compelled black individuals to live a marginalized existence. This exploitation gave rise to a formidable Civil Rights movement in America during the 1960s.

The work effectively portrays the transformation of the white mindset via the characters of Atticus and his children. The collective efforts of Reverend Skyes, Aunt Calpurina, and other black individuals resulted in significant transformation in America. Following the civil rights fight, African Americans achieved unity and subsequently saw the inauguration of their first black president, Barack Obama, in the White House. The principle of contradiction in nature is the fourth and pivotal component of the Marxist dialectic method. Marx maintains that contradiction is inherent in nature, as all natural entities and phenomena possess dualistic characteristics, encompassing both positive and negative aspects. Hence, in the world, the presence of darkness is always accompanied by light, death is always followed by life, and the past is inevitably connected to the present. The opposing forces of nature perpetually contend with one another. Hence, the conflicting forces engage in a struggle, disintegrate, and then generate fresh forces. Marxism offers new prospects for the downtrodden, oppressed, and disenfranchised people. Throughout the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, we observe this paradox occurring in numerous occurrences. Blacks and whites are engaged in a perpetual conflict, elders and young individuals hold contrasting

perspectives, the principles of justice and the principles of discrimination clash, and the interests of the impoverished and the influential are in contention. These inconsistencies give rise to novel modifications, advancements, and revelations. As an illustration, the white population prevented black individuals from accessing education, yet Caplurina managed to acquire literacy skills. She subsequently imparted this knowledge to her son and other others within the black church.

“‘They can’t read.’ ‘Can’t read? I asked. All those folks?’ ‘that’s right, Caplurina nodded. Can’t but about four folks in First Purchase read.... I’m one of’em’. ‘Where’d you go to school Cal?’ asked Jem. ‘Nowhere’”(Lee, 1960).

Marx, although he acknowledged certain aspects of the Hegelian dialectic technique, emphasized the importance of contradictions. He believed that contradictions are beneficial in eliminating erroneous and poor explanations of the world (Woodfin, 2014). Marx concurred with Hegel's elucidation of contradictions, wherein the initial concepts of a phenomena are referred to as the thesis. Theses often contain inherent contradictions that challenge the main argument. This phenomenon is commonly referred to as antithesis. When the thesis and antithesis engage in a battle, conflict, and confrontation, there inevitably arise novel advancements, fresh discoveries, and emerging phenomena. The process of combining different elements to create something new is referred to as synthesis. Hegel believed that the process of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis would persist until the attainment of Absolute Truth. Marx, as a materialist, proposed that the synthesis would serve as the thesis over time, perpetuating an endless chain. In the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, white supremacy is shown as the central theme that underlies American culture. The portrayal of whites depicts them as a dominant, privileged, and economically prosperous bourgeoisie with unrestricted authority. The presence of weak, marginalized, and economically poor blacks serves as the opposition to this compelling thesis. The dominance of the white race is contested by the less powerful black race, prompting white individuals to make every effort to marginalize and deny them. Their intention was to restrain and annihilate them. However, it is possible that they were unaware of the fact that every thesis must confront its antithesis. The opening chapter of the narrative illustrates the dominance of the white Finches.

“‘So Simon.....bought three slaves and with their aid established a homestead on the banks of Alabama River some forty miles above Saint Stephens. Simon lived to an impressive age and died rich’” (Lee, 1960).

The narration implies that Simon Finch established himself in Alabama and achieved prosperity through the labor of his enslaved individuals. Slaves were mostly individuals of African descent who were owned and employed by their owners. The paragraph demonstrates how Finches maintained their dominance while embracing contemporary practices in the present era.

“‘Yet the tradition of living on the land remained unbroken until well into the twentieth century, when my father, Atticus Finch went to Montgomery to read law, and his younger brother went to Boston to study medicine’” (p.4).

Finches were considered to be the superior white families, whereas the Ewells and Cunninghams were regarded as impoverished white families. The state of impoverished Caucasians was exceedingly wretched during that time. The manifestation of Cunningham's characteristics is seen in Scout's description in chapter 2.

“‘Walter Cunningham’s face told everybody in the first grade he had hookworms. His absence of shoes told us how he got them. People caught hookworms going barefoot in barn – yards and hog wallows. If Walter had owned any shoes he would have worn them the first day of school and then discarded them under mid-winter. He did have on a clean shirt and neatly mended overalls’” (Lee, 1960).

The destitute individual lacked footwear, adequate attire, and sustenance. Ewells faced a similar situation. They resided in a landfill and were not suitable for any employment or constructive endeavor. Even individuals with a well-regulated temperament, such as Atticus, referred to them as refuse. However, it is worth mentioning that trash was considered superior



to a well-regarded black individual. In this scenario, it is evident that white dominance and superiority were prevalent ideologies in American society. In relation to this idea, blacks served as the opposite or contrasting element. Racism was the fundamental problem within American culture, whereby individuals were assessed, treated, esteemed, acknowledged, and degraded based on their racial identity. The primary social division in American society was indeed based on race. The combination of this concept with its complete opposite resulted in the emergence of a novel synthesis. This composition embodies a fair-minded individual who upholds the principle of equality for all, regardless of race, and even pays tribute to the black community. He taught his children to follow in his footsteps, even in a country with strong racial discrimination. Despite this, he entrusted a black woman to raise his children. Atticus symbolizes contemporary America and his appearance marked the beginning of a transformative period that will unfold throughout the entire nation in the future. Atticus is a highly equitable and well-proportioned individual. He possesses the qualities of bravery, rationality, and honesty. In a moment where the entire Maycomb community was against him, he bravely defends a black individual. He is labeled as a supporter and defender of African Americans, using derogatory language. However, he possesses his own justifications for it. He considers individuals of African descent, sometimes referred to as "niggers" or "blacks," to be human beings as well. It is imperative to afford them equal treatment as citizens. Upon being questioned by Scout:

"Do you advocate for African Americans, Atticus?" The user's text is a single quotation mark. I inquired of him during the evening.

'Certainly, I do.' Scout, it is inappropriate to use the racial slur "nigger".

"That is the consensus among all my peers at school."

"Henceforth, there will be everyone except one individual," (Lee, 1960).

He is indifferent when it comes to defending someone, regardless of their race. The term "nigger" is considered offensive, so he cautions his daughter against using it. He instills in his children the value of equilibrium and treating all individuals with impartiality. In order to empathize with others, it is necessary to comprehend their perspectives and circumstances. It is imperative to demonstrate respect for others' perspectives, since this will effectively dismantle any forms of discrimination and divisiveness. He instructs Scout.

"First of all" he said, "If you can learn a simple trick, Scout, you'll get along better with all kinds of folks. You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view-----." "Sir?" "—until you climb into his skin and walk around in it" (Lee, 1960).

Atticus was honored and revered by both white and black individuals due to his genuine, compassionate, and truthful disposition. Despite the absence of substantial proof, Tom's conviction prompted the black individuals in the courtroom to give Atticus a standing ovation.

"I looked around. They were standing. All around us and in the balcony on the opposite wall, the Negroes were getting to their feet. Reverend Sykes's voice was as distant as Judge Taylor's:

'Miss Jean Louise, stand up. Your father's passing'" (Lee, 1960).

Therefore, Atticus positions himself as the amalgamation in American racial culture. He is a herald of a new, more progressive and democratic America that will actively oppose racial injustice and advocate for justice for black individuals. In addition to addressing racial injustice, the story also emphasizes social inequity and stratification based on class. The dominant social class opposes the less privileged and emotionally burdened segment of society. The novel's characters can be categorized into two primary groups. The first class pertains to bourgeois ideology and encompasses individuals of Caucasian ethnicity. This class includes the following characters.

Aunt Alexandra

White jury  
Ewells  
Cunninghams  
and all remaining white characters

Conversely, there exists a group of individuals who are socially and economically disadvantaged and face marginalization. This class is subject to social injustice, segregation, and deprivation. The characters mentioned in the novel are included in this class.

Tom Robinson  
Calpurina  
Reverend Sykes  
and all the black characters

This classification of social groups is established based on the act of taking advantage of others. The white characters in the narrative are portrayed as the most dominant and influential. They wield influence in the bureaucracy, market, and court. Bob Ewell, despite his apparent economic weakness, abuses and accuses Tom Robinson, a marginalized figure, as part of the dominating class. Despite Atticus successfully proving Tom Robinson's innocence, the white jury, who belonged to the dominant class, chose to accept the false evidence presented by Mayella Ewell, another member of the dominant class. The ruling class demonstrates its influence and authority in all aspects of society. The black community experiences marginalization and is subjected to social inequity, segregation, and marginalization. Even within courtrooms, we observe that this marginalized group is relegated to the back seats and are denied the opportunity to sit with members of the respected dominating class. They were granted permission to enter the courtroom once the influential white individuals had occupied their seats.

"The Negroes, having waited for the white people to go upstairs, began to come in. 'Whoa now, just a minute; said a club members, holding up his walking stick. 'Just don't start up the stairs yet a white'"(Lee, 1960).

Now, let's examine the level of resistance exhibited by the marginalized class. Marx contends that unless the underprivileged and marginalized class unite and demonstrate resistance, they will persist in enduring suffering. In the opening of the Communist Manifesto, he articulates it with clarity:

"The history of all hither to existing society is the history of class struggle.

Freemen and slaves, patricians and plebeians, lord and surf -, guild - master and journeymen in a word oppressor and oppressed stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of the society at large or in the common ruin of me contending classes" (Karl Marx & Engels, 2023).

In the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, we also observe the manifestation of resistance from the subordinate and marginalized social group. Aunt Caplurina acquires literacy skills and imparts them to her son, despite the limited educational alternatives available to black individuals.

"Cal, did you teach Zeebo?"

'Yeah, Mister Jem, there wasn't school even when he was a boy. I made him learn, though'"(Lee, 1960).

Furthermore, when the class becomes aware of their marginalized status, they join and engage in coordinated actions to ensure their survival. This is a manifestation of praxis and is crucial for survival. This resistance revitalizes monotonous and exploitative modes of existence. These future smaller actions result in incremental changes since Marx's dialectical approach posits that quantitative changes ultimately lead to qualitative transformations in life.

“You all know of Brother Tom Robinson’s trouble. He has been a faithful member of First Purchase since he was a boy. The collection taken up today and for the next three Sundays, will go to Helen his wife, to help him out at home” (Lee, 1960).

In the fiction, the researcher identified two distinct social classes. The primary ruling class abuses the subordinate and marginalized class. The thesis of American society is the dominance of the white class, which is opposed and challenged by the less privileged and marginalized black class as the antithesis. The conflict and inherent opposition between the thesis and antithesis result in the emergence of a novel synthesis embodied by Atticus Finch, who serves as a representation of a harmonious and well-rounded individual. He is devoid of racial biases and serves as a beacon of hope for individuals of African descent. He imparts the teachings of mutual respect, human dignity, and universal love to his children as well. He informs them:

“As you grow older, you’ll see white men cheat black men every day of your life, but let me tell you something and don’t you forged it - whenever a white man does that to a black man, no matter who he is, how rich he is, or how fine a family he comes from, that Whiteman is a trash” (Lee, 1960).

#### **4. Findings and Conclusion**

The analysis and textual evidences in this study substantiate the novel's affirmation of Marx's perspective on class stratification. In the Communist Manifesto, Karl Marx and Engels (2023) explicitly stated that "The history of all previously existing societies is the history of class struggle" (p.02). 1. In this novel, we observe a fierce battle for existence between two prominent social groups, segregated on the basis of race. We possess a formidable and dominant elite group that derives pleasure from indulging in opulence and adhering to societal standards. Conversely, marginalized black individuals suffer from estrangement, segregation, exploitation, deprivation, and isolation. They are compelled to reside in impoverished urban areas, devoid of access to decent living standards and even deprived of education. Their church is in a state of severe dilapidation and distressing condition. The influential group shown a complete lack of regard for the black church. In chapter 12 of the novel, Lee (1960) vividly illustrates this predicament with the following words:

*The initial establishment of the African M.E Church took place in the Quarters, located beyond the southern boundaries of the town, and situated across the tracks of sawmill. African Americans worshipped in the building on Sundays, while white males engaged in gambling activities on weekdays (Lee, 1960).*

In addition, the black population was deprived of the opportunity to receive an education. They were illiterate, unable to write or read. Only a few number of individuals have the ability to read and write, and they acquired this skill via their own diligent endeavors, similar like Aunt Calpurina. The classification of individuals based on unfounded racial prejudice exacerbated the disparity in social equity and finally led to the tragic demise of the blameless Tom Robinson.

The dialectical examination of class stratification in the novel demonstrates the enduring existence of racial prejudice towards African Americans in American society from its inception. Slavery was legalized in America upon the country's independence, but it was subsequently abolished by Abraham Lincoln. Nevertheless, the eradication of slavery did not result in the attainment of equal rights for impoverished black individuals. They were subjected to legal segregation and were even deprived the suffrage. The racial discrimination and segregation led to significant injustice, with black individuals consistently being denied justice in cases involving white individuals. Within this work, the situation of Tom Robinson epitomizes the most egregious instance of this injustice. Marx, being a materialist philosopher, used dialectics to demonstrate that this injustice is both material in nature and created by humans. No theological doctrine advocates for prejudice and injustice. Marxism asserts that the activities of the powerful bourgeoisie class are responsible for all forms of exploitation and injustice. They exercise complete authority over all governmental institutions and economic resources. They manipulate the legal system, the concept of fairness, and even religious beliefs to gain control over vulnerable proletariats. This story depicts a scenario where the

white population exercises dominance over the legal system and manipulates the law to oppress the vulnerable black community. The story exemplifies (Gramsci, 1971) theory of hegemony, which posits that a dominating class secures its economic and political advantages by exerting influence over subordinate groups through a potent ideology.

To sum up, examining "To Kill a Mockingbird" from a Marxist standpoint demonstrates a strong correlation with Marx's viewpoint on social class hierarchy. The work effectively depicts the persistent conflict between social classes, which is seen in racial divisions, socioeconomic inequalities, and the manipulation of power hierarchies. The analysis of the marginalized black community's predicament, the deprivation of education, and the injustices encountered by characters such as Tom Robinson highlight the widespread influence of class and racial bias in American culture. The narrative effectively exemplifies Marxist doctrines, emphasizing the impact of the ruling class in molding legal systems, maintaining exploitation, and strengthening social inequalities.

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