

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

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This chapter contains background of the study, statements of the problem, objectives of the study, theoretical framework, scope and limitation of the study, significance of the study, and key terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

Reading is one of the most significant skills in learning a language. Through reading, people can expand their imagination and creativity. To quote from Charles W. Elio, “Books are the quietest and most constant of friends; they are the most accessible and wisest of counselors, and the most patient of teachers.” By reading books, people can understand more about the world without even going through the process of real experiences.

Novels as one of the genres in literature have a great popularity through centuries among people. Jeremy Hawthorn (1985: p.1) implies that even though the characters and actions in novels are imaginary, they are in some sense “representative of real life”. It means that by reading novels, people can learn many things which are related to their real life.

In most novels, there are moral values in the story. Esteban (1990:57) states that “Moral values are universal truths which man holds to be good and important; they are the ethical principles which he struggles to attain and implement in his daily life. They are the ideals which transcend all time

and space; those which are valid for all men regardless of race or religion; the ones which unite strangers, families, nation – all of humanity – with God.” Moral values can reflect on the real life. Moral values can give readers a reflection about life. Moral values can give additional appeal for the novel itself. They can find out the moral values in the novel only after reading and understanding it.

To Kill a Mockingbird is a novel by Harper Lee that was published in 1960. According to Irish Times and The Guardian news, it won the Pulitzer Prize and has become a classic of modern American literature. This novel is renowned for its warmth and humor, despite dealing with serious issues of racism, loss of children innocence and social inequality.

This story happens when black people in America become the lowest level in the society at that time and during the Great Depression era. It revolves around Atticus Finch as the main character of the story. He is a white lawyer who decides to defend Tom Robinson (the black man in the story). Tom has been suspected of raping a white woman, Mayella Ewell. Despite everybody’s opposition against him, Atticus Finch defends Tom because he knows that Tom is not guilty. He upholds his belief that justice is for everyone, no matter where he comes from or what his race is and that justice means everyone is presumed innocent until proven guilty. He treats everyone equally and teaches his children to have moral courage: to stand for what is right.

To Kill a Mockingbird is an exploration of human morality, and presents a constant conversation regarding the inherent goodness or evil of people. In this novel, the readers can analyze the character of each person that is represented in this life, on how people can perceive those traits to be a lesson for all of us. Though it was written in 1960s, this novel contains a plot that is fun and exciting yet deep and thought-provoking in the Great Depression era in the Southern state of Alabama. It is heart wrenching that racism, cruelty, prejudices and discrimination revealed in the book still exist until now and shockingly in the same ugly magnitude or perhaps in a more severe form. Thus being said, the writer believes this novel can be explored through the character of each person in the novel.

Lawrence Kohlberg was an American psychologist, best known for his theory of Stages of Moral Development. While Jean Piaget, Swiss psychologist, known for his work on child's cognitive development, Lawrence Kohlberg developed it further into stages. Using moral dilemma of Heinz, he believed that the choice and the reasoning of the participants define the "structure" of their morality. Understanding the stages of moral development should help in developing or improving upon one's morals or values.

After reading the novel, the writer is interested in analyzing the moral values found in *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee using Kohlberg's Theory. The writer hopes that the moral values of the novel can inspire

people to always stand for their beliefs. That in this life, no matter what anybody tells you, stand with your heart.

1.2 Statements of the Problem

According to the background of the study, the writer would like to analyze the moral values of the novel entitled *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The problems of this study are:

What moral values does Atticus Finch represent in the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* according to Kohlberg's Theory?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study is to find out the moral values in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* based on Kohlberg's theory of moral development. Furthermore, this study also attempts to find out how Harper Lee reveals those moral values through Atticus Finch as the main character of the novel.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used in this study is objective theory by Abrams and moral development by Kohlberg. According to Abrams (1953:26), "Objective orientation, which on principle regards the work of art in isolation from all these external points of reference, analyzes it as a self-sufficient entity constituted by its parts in their relations, and sets out to

judge it solely by criteria intrinsic to its own mode of being.” The writer will use Abrams’ objective theory to analyze the intrinsic elements of the novel such as plot, setting, character, and point of view.

Kohlberg and colleagues’ Moral Judgement Interview (1997:269) emphasizes, “Moral values tend to ‘pull’ for justifications of right and wrong”. He used hypothetical moral dilemmas to make the conclusion of the moral judgement. “The responses of subjects to the dilemmas and their subsequent responses to clinical probing are taken to reflect, exhibit, or manifest the *structure*” (1984:407). To get the idea of the whole moral values through Atticus Finch, the writer is going to use the moral dilemma and analyze the judgment of Atticus Finch in which stage of moral development he stands.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

In this study, the writer is going to analyze the intrinsic elements of the story and the moral values through Atticus Finch’s character in the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee. The writer will only focus on the published novel and will not cover the released movie.

1.6 The Significance of the Study

The writer hopes to give clear information about the moral values found in the novel and how, as human being, can perceive this information in their life. This way, the writer hopes that this study can inspire the

lecturers of the English Department in teaching literature especially about moral values, the students of the English Department who want to make further study on analysis of the moral values and also as a comparison or as a reference, and for the readers who enjoy the novel and want to understand the moral values in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The writer hopes that by reading this study, the readers will get more knowledge and values of the story.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid ambiguity and misunderstanding, some key terms used in this study are defined as follows:

- **Objective Theory**

Objective orientation, which on principle regards the work of art in isolation from all these external points of reference, analyzes it as a self-sufficient entity constituted by its parts in their relations, and sets out to judge it solely by criteria intrinsic to its own mode of being. (Abrams, 1953:26).

- **Moral Values**

Moral values tend to 'pull' for justifications of right and wrong. (Kohlberg and colleagues' Moral Judgement Interview, 1997:269)