

# COURAGE IN HARPER LEE'S TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD

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**Abstract** : This research is entitled *Courage In Harper Lee's To Kill A Mockingbird*. The aim of this study is to find out the courage in the novel. Objective approach is applied in analysing the data to find out the courage in the novel. Qualitative research is descriptive. The data collected are in the form of words and pictures rather than numbers. The objective approach is applied because the analysis only focused on the novel itself. The results showed that the portrait of courage is detected through the reflections of the way that Atticus dare to defend blacks, and Atticus' attitude and actions who worked diligently and painstakingly to prove Tom Robinson's accusations untrue, This novel tries to demonstrate how the world and the people in it live a harmonious life together, through basic moral attitudes and actions, namely treating others with respect and kindness.

**Keywords** : *Courage, Character, Harper Lee, Novel.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Literature always reflects about the social and cultural phenomenon that happened in society. Sabudu Delli (2020:3). Life is the most beautiful gift given by God to humans to be thankful for. But life is not as easy as saying it. There are many problems that everyone must solve because everyone has problems and has a different outlook on life and way of thinking. There are problems which are easily solved and there are also problem which are difficult to solve. Therefore, one needs to be courageous to deal with them .

As in the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* there were many courage in this novel and Atticus Finch is one that has the courage. Atticus is a lawyer who defends black people so it requires a lot of courage for Atticus to do the right thing human beings although it dangerous for him because courage is one of the most important components in humans and with the courage of people dont be afraid to do something.

Courage is so important for people because with courage people will have a strong stance for doing something. According to Samuel John, courage is the greatest of all the virtues because if you do not have courage, you may not have an opportunity to use any of the others, Raymond E Beckham (2006:91).

According to Maru, (2013:4) Literary text provides learners with real world experiences, relationships between society and people where the target language is spoken, even if they are fictions. "Courage is the ability to do dangerous or to face pain or opposition with out showing fear and Courage to do something that you know is dangerous or difficult". Courage is indeed very important thing and people must have courage because it can influence the success of them. Everything will lose without courage.

According to Gelven in Mufid James Hannush (2002: 107) "courage is an ability to withstand a tension between opposing

forces of attraction or repulsion". What drives the fear of pain away and what attracts it is the appeal of significance and wholeness. From the above theory, the researcher concludes that courage allows a person to engage in life's challenges and problems, storms and pressures despite fear, imperfection and weakness without losing existential value. Courage is directly confronting and dealing with anything dangerous that is difficult or painful, not by pulling from it.

Novel Harper Lee *To Kill a Mockingbird* this novel was successfully published in the United States and became the best selling novel at that time. In the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* the current situation of the people is in the country economic situation which is very alarming and makes the country's economic improve the economy that occurs in the United States. The state of society at that time occurs because of differences in race and people who considered themselves better than others. Atticus Finch, Scout, Jem, Dill, Boo and Tom are all characters who show the quality of courage, they also made clear the idea that courage does not have to be associated with the risk of physical hazard but it is often better defined with the aim of expressing justice and truth because courage in this novel is defined to reveal what is true so that it must have great courage to do so

In this study, researchers focused on courage in the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Researcher found that there is a lot of courage that is portrayed by the characters in the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Researcher was interested in this topic because it tells about courage of several characters in the novel. Seeing circumstances and problem that occur in the novel. Researcher decided to conduct research on courage in the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee.

Researcher focuses on courage in the novel because in the novel there is a lot of courage that depicted in characters that have meaning or something in the novel. Atticus, Jem, Scout, Dill, Tom, Boo, Calpurnia and Dill Harris are all characters who show courage in the novel. Harper Lee shows that no matter what you look like and no matter how horrible you are treated, the trust

courage is shown in the way that you present yourself and are kind despite everything else.

The researcher is interested in this topic because it tells how to do things for the right thing. Atticus, Tom and Scout are main characters who are very important in the novel. They convey it in various ways but they all have a true heart and defend what is right without thinking about the risks that will be faced. True courage is not only able to stand and fight as we already know but someone with a sincere heart and good intentions will get something good. Harper Lee illustrates this in the novel and we must all learn to act in a bold way like the characters in the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Since the data in this study is in form of word, the researcher used qualitative research. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992:30) "Qualitative research is descriptive. The data collected are in form of words and pictures rather than numbers". The written results of the research contain quotations from the data to illustrate and substantiate the presentation.

Bogdan and Biklen state that a human is being able to interpret the existing meanings or message that cannot be reached by other instrument. The data was collected by the author by reading the novel repeatedly to interpret the meaning or important part associated with the problem and the purpose of the study. After reading the novel, the data collected by making notes.

In compiling this study the researcher uses two forms of data collection, namely: 1. Primary source, the source of information from the novel itself, *To Kill a Mockingbird* 2. Secondary source, the sources that help the researcher complete the research through books, articles and the internet.

The researcher first reads and understand the contents of the story of the novel to be investigated and records important matters concerned with the purpose of the research to be made. Then look for sources that

support the research so that it can be proven and accounted for.

### **Data Analysis**

In analyzing the data, the researcher focused on analyzing the courage in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Therefore the researcher uses objective approach. "Objective Approach, which on principle regard the work of art in isolation from all these external points of references analyzes it have a self entity constituted by its part in their internal relations, and set out to judge it solely intrinsic to its own mode of being". Abrams (:26)

The writer applied the theory above in this research that means the researcher was analyze the novel only based on the intrinsic elements of the novel. Objective approach is an approach that analyzed the literary work itself.

### **3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

"Character is person who inhabits a story. Therefore they cannot be expected to have all attribute of real human beings Kennedy" (1983:45). According Wiesje Erna Sekeh, Donal Ratu, Ferry Mandang the value of character education in the little prince by Antoine De Saint-Exupery. That "character is a set of interrelated personal values and virtues that usually guide behavior" p(69).

Character is one of the most important things that appear in the novel. Here the author creates the character and uses it as an instrument to voice what he or she wants to convey in the story. In this study, a character is a person who is created by an author to from a story through his or her feeling, action and expression.

According to Elmes (2012: 56) "courage is something to maintain calm senses and clear understanding and to put us in a condition to receive true intelligence and to make calculations of dangers and state correctly what we do. Loss is the loss of something valuable such as someone, property or something else".

Courage is the ability or trait to deal with fear, pain uncertainly and danger of

something. Courage is most important in human life, moral courage is the ability to act rightly in the face of popular opposition, scandal, shame and discouragement. Generally the feel of courage is effort of people after they are loss, despair and failure. People want to get something by doing things that make him get a rise more than that.

Courage is a trait to defend and fight for what is right and able to face all forms of danger that can prevent it because they believe in the truth and someone who has courage will be able to act wisely without being overshadowed by fear. That is the reason why courage can influence a person in living his life because courage is one form of attitude that a person must have, especially if he wants to express what on his mind. Dare to express what you are feeling and thinking in public in words is an example of courage and therefore it is said that courage can affect a person's life. Courage in everyday life can be manifested by indicators of being brave to be courageous to defend truth and justice no matter how bitter it is, and to dare to admit mistakes.

Courage is the ability or willingness to use strength to get one's way. However, the novel makes it abundantly clear that this understanding of courage is immature at best and is possibly wrong altogether. Instead, the novel proposes that courage isn't about winning. Instead, its about thinking about something and choosing to do what's right, even if doing so is difficult or guaranteed to fail.

In *To Kill a Mockingbird* courage is demonstrated though what the character believe in and if they stand for their beliefs the surrounding people will question their previous thoughts. This is shown Boo, Atticus and Dubose who in their own ways are courageous. Courage in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Atticus, Boo, and Dubose are the characters that are incredible courage in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Atticus defended the black man, Dubose tried to stop the morphine addiction and Boo Radley saved Jem and Scout from Boo Ewell. Courage in the novel Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

## Atticus's courage to defend Tom Robinson

Atticus accepted a case in defending of a Negro accused of raping a white girl. Atticus knew he would not win the trial and would be booed by the public but he boldly and confidently took the case.

*"A lawyer defends a black man, his name is Tom Robinson. He lives in a small place outside the city dumpsite. He belongs to the Calpurnia church, and Cal knows his family very well. He says they are clean people. Scout, you're not old enough to grasp a few things, but there's some hot talk around town saying I can't do much to defend this guy. It's a strange case so it won't be tried until the summer session. John Taylor was kind and gave us a delay, you shouldn't stand up for that guy but why are you doing it anyway? and Atticus answered, for a reason. What's important is that if I didn't do it I wouldn't raise my head in this city. I won't be able to represent this area even in the legislature I won't even be able to tell you or Jem not to do something like I do anymore. You mean, if you didn't stand up for that black guy Jem and I wouldn't make a fuss of you anymore? yes that is very true. Why? Because I won't be able to ask you to take care of me anymore. Every lawyer gets at least one case in his life and I pick that case and that case that affects him personally and this one is mine." (To Kill a Mockingbird, 1982: 100-101*

Atticus explains to Scout what to deal with in the current situation that he might not win in that case, but that won't stop him from providing a solid defense for Tom and his children. Atticus is a courageous man. However, he believes that real courage is not manifested in "a man with a gun in his hand". Although he once has been the best shooter in the town, his children never saw him using a gun before the dog incident. He is a lawyer at Maycomb. Atticus is a proponent of racial equality and a lawyer defending a Negro man accused of raping a young white woman, Mayella Ewell. In that City the white people disagreed with Atticus for taking on Tom's case especially when he explained his intention to defend Tom Robinson as best he could. He is also a kind

and honest person, he tries to help everyone he can help.

Moreover, Atticus is too courageous and righteous to abide by the norms of the pride white people in his town. He defends a black man. Tom Robinson accused of raping a white young girl, against his white opponent. Atticus believes from the very beginning that he is to lose his case. However, he withstands people's insults to himself and his children for the sake of the color-blind law he aims to achieve.

Atticus courage when he defended Tom Robinson, the man accused of raping a woman. The problem is that Tom is black and defending a black man who is accused of guilt is an act that the citizens of Maycomb and Atticus cannot accept to courageously defend Tom because for Atticus, however justice must be served. This incident had an impact and became a reaction for Jem and Scout and the surrounding community who accused them of Atticus' courage in taking a case that was not possible at that time. Atticus' courage was evident when he spoke to the entire courtroom audience in his calm manner.

The climax occurred in court at the end of Tom's trial and the jury's verdict was delivered. At the trial, Scouts and Jem sneak in and sit down with the black audience, even though Atticus forbids them from attending. In his defense, Atticus courageously defended Tom and stated that Tom was physically unable to attack Mayella. And actually Tom was trapped by Mayella. And when Mayella's father, Bob saw them together, he hit Tom. Atticus struggled to defend Tom over accusations made for him, but the jury said that Tom was guilty. But in his calm manner, Atticus spoke up for the audience and witnesses. When questioning Mayella about her family's plight, Atticus paints a darker and more troubling portrait of Maycomb than previous descriptions of the city. Despite Atticus' defense and the judge's implied belief in Tom's innocence, the jury convicted Tom. Later, Tom is shot dead while trying to escape from prison. The incident underscores how much the justice system has disappointed Tom and the black Maycomb community.

The resolution comes when news spreads that Tom Robinson has been shot when he tries to escape from prison, Jem struggles to come to terms with the injustice of the trial and Tom Robinson's fate. Bob Ewell, who felt he had been humiliated by Atticus in court, then made various threats against Atticus and his family. Bob Ewell attacks Scout and Jem as they walk home from a Halloween party at school one night, but Boo Radley saves the kids and without Boo understanding he stabbed Bob Ewell. The sheriff who knows that Boo will be misunderstood and possibly punished in court, protects Boo by saying that Ewell stumbled and fell on his own knife. After all the tension ended then Atticus explained to Jem about Boo who was a symbol like a mockingbird.

Mockingbird is a kind of harmless bird that only whistles in the morning. It is a sin for humans to shoot mockingbirds. Scout finally came face to face with Boo Radley, which had been the curiosity of the kids. Scout drove Boo to his house. And Scout hadn't seen Boo Radley since that night.

### **Scout's courage to the person he feared of**

The following is a statement in the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* which states that Scout was courage when he spoke to his teacher on behalf of Cunningham, while Cunningham himself was silent and afraid without saying anything when asked by his teacher. And the courage that Scout Finch had when he ventured into the person he was afraid of, Boo Radley. And in the end Scout is bold to the person he feared this time is Boo Radley.

*"I rise gracefully on behalf of Walter. Ah Miss Caroline?" What's wrong, Jean Louise? That Miss Caroline is a Cunningham. I sat back down. What is Jem Louise? I think I've made things clear enough and already clear enough for all of us. Walter Cunningham who was sitting there and with his head down nd he didn't forget his lunch and he didn't have. He has done it, neither today nor will he have tomorrow or the next day ". You may hear some nasty talk about it at school but do one thing for me if you will. You just raise your head and keep it from fitting. No matter what*

*people say to you and try to fight your mind for a change, it would be great even if it refuses to study. (To Kill a Mockingbird, 1982: 26)*

From the conversation between Scout and his teacher above, it is clear what the Scout character is depicted in the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Scout is a child who is a tomboy and who is afraid of his teacher because on the first day of school, he found out that his teacher didn't like him and in the end Scout is full of courage to get rid of his fear of his teacher. And the story begins in the summer when Dill comes to Maycomb to live with his aunt and become neighbors to Jem and Scout. They then become friends and feel curious about the Radley House which looks gloomy And the courage that he does is when he dares the person he has been afraid of, namely Boo Radley who has always bothered him. Scout Finch is also the child of lawyer that is Atticus Finch. Jean Louise "Scout" Finch, as an adult. She shows about her adult life which reveals that she doesn't try to change herself just to please those around her. He is aware of human nature and racism in his city. She was confused by some of the words her father said, such as "lover-negro." Being only six years old, Scout didn't know how he would handle such a situation, so he tried to solve the problem by fighting, or by talking to Atticus about what he had heard from other people.

The courage of this novel is as a sign of Atticus to represent both her children. But Atticus teaches to Scout to do the right thing does not necessarily mean to be together with others. Atticus tries to teach Scout the importance of viewing from the point of view of others. And in the end Scout is bold to the person he feared this time is Boo Radley.

### **Jem's Courage to the person he feared of**

Jem has a courageous that is recognized by the experiences he has experienced and which the narrator describes. The courage shown by Jem appears at the beginning of the story when he is challenged by his friend Dill to touch the Radley House which the children fear because it is mysterious and has caused rumors for a long time.

*"Jem is feeling bright. Just touch the house. That's all! Dill nodded and confused. Are you sure that's all? And now. I hope you won't scream and things are no different once I get back. Yes, okay, that's all. "Dill said. He will definitely come out of the house after you come in and when he sees you in the yard".*

From the quote above, it is explained that Jem proves to be a man who has the courage when accepting his friend's challenge to go to the Radley house which is a mysterious place for children and in the end Jem is full of courage into Boo Radley's house which is always dark, lonely, creepy and not. never seen people leave the house and Jem's courage is when he is no longer afraid of the person he has been afraid of, namely Boo Radley, who in his image Boo is a bad person.

Jem was Atticus's son and Scout's four-year-old brother. Jem's development into adulthood is evident throughout the novel. He is among those who have a better understanding of the obstacles in his way than his younger brother. Jem told Scout a lot of things and explained things Scout didn't understand.

### **Tom's courage while testifying for the truth**

Tom Robinson is a black man who is accused of breaking into a woman's house and raping her. He is considered as public trash because he is black and below is a quote of courage by Tom who admitted in court that it was true that he did enter the woman's house but did nothing to the woman and he was only accused.

*"Tom is a Negro guy who whites don't like and he doesn't gleam but soft black velvet. and when I was going past the Ewell house where Miss Mayella was on the veranda as she said. The house was very quiet and there was only Mayella, and I don't really know why that was. I was studying why and I was just passing by and at that time he asked me to come over there and help him for a while "(To Kill A Mockingbird, 196-197)*

Tom Robinson is a Negro who is black and he is the victim of alleged rape of white women. The courage shown by Tom when he courageously testified that he had indeed entered Mayella Ewell's residence with the aim of helping her. Maybe Tom knows that helping without paying is dangerous and he also realizes that he is a Negro who is considered trash by society. But on the basis of the kindness possessed by Tom, without expecting to be harmed he entered Mayella's trap. Tom is a black man. He was accused and tried for the rape of a white woman. Atticus was appointed to assist and defend him. Tom testified in court that he indeed often helped Mayella by helping with household chores because he felt sorry for Mayella and her difficult family life but it turned out that he was being framed without realizing it.

### **Dubose's courage to break his addiction to morphine**

Atticus holds up Mrs. Dubose as the ultimate definition of courage, as she finds against her morphine addiction in order to be free from it before she dies, even when she knows she will die in the process. Here the quote from Atticus toward Jem and Scout about Mrs. Dubose:

*"The man is dead, boy, said Atticus's word. And Jem said that the man had died a few minutes ago, and said Atticus was all right then. He would no longer suffer and He's been sick for quite a while. Long time, son. Don't you know What she wanted before her death. Jem was confused and shook his head. Mrs. Dubose was a morphine addict, said Atticus. She had thought of morphine as her painkiller for years she wasn't. And the doctor didn't tell him that then he would spend the rest of his life on it. And he died without so much suffering but he was too contradictory and he died without using morphine anymore. Dubose he will leave this world without being attached to anything and anyone. And Jem when you're sick like him it's okay to take anything to make it easier. but it's not good for him. He said he intended to destroy himself before he died and that's what he did. "*

Atticus says this to Jem after the death of Mrs. Dubose, the woman to whom Jem has

been reading aloud for the past month. Dubose is an old, grumpy and racist woman who lives near the Atticus. Although Jem believes that Mrs. Dubose is a thoroughly bad woman, Atticus admires her for the courage with which she battles her morphine addiction and because of his strong desire to escape the morphine he had to consume for years. He showed courage when he died without using morphine. It was his best courage to break his addiction to morphine.

Mrs. Dubose is an old woman who has a bad nature and has a rough mouth. Dubose's character is very brave because of his strong desire to stop and regardless of morphines that for years have been consumed and he has been dependent. He showed his courage when Dubose died without using morphine again, not death that became his best courage but by destroying his addiction and his dependence on morphine.

### **Boo's courage while helping the children**

Boo Radley or Arthur who is better known as Boo by the children is Jem and Scout's neighbor who lives at the Radley house.

*"It was a scary house and very sad. I remember Arthur Radley when he was a child and He even always spoke well to me and didn't care what people said about what he did. Speak as best he knows how" (45-46).*

During his life, he was a mysterious person and chooses to stay in his house. Boo Radley is a terrible and scary man. She is a lonely man. Scout and Jem fear of Boo Radley and Jem begins to have a different understanding of Boo. And Scout finally meets him when he saves the lives of children from Bob Ewell. He looks like pale, thin hair and hairy and gray eyes almost as if he's like a blind man. Scout imagine what it feels like he's like Radley. And when Bob Ewell tried to kill the children of Finch, no one saw what happened and only Radley who helped and helped the child.

But he is known for having a very brave disposition when he helps Jem and Scout from the attack carried out by Mr. Ewell on

Halloween's party night. The bravest thing Boo did was when he gave the children's lives back when he was attacked. This is evidenced at almost the end of the story when Mr. Tate learned what Boo was doing to help the children.

### **Calpurnia's courage when she took the children into her church to break people's eyes on skin color**

Calpurnia is the Finch family's cook, a black woman, and a mother figure to Scout and Calpurnia is a stern disciplinarian and the children's bridge between the white world and her own black community and she also had courage and took the children to church without fear.

*"I told him what happened in detail and in clarity about our trip to church with Calpurnia, and when everyone came back from the Calpurnian church and that day, that Sunday Jem said it was true 'yes' he did take us, Atticus. I'll be going again next Sunday if that's okay. Is that so? Calpurnia told him, he will come and get me even if you get off in the car. You shouldn't say Aunt Alexandra told him. I turned and startled then turned to Atticus in time for a quick glance at him but it was too late. I said and I didn't ask you. For a large man Atticus could get up and down from a chair faster than anyone I've ever known. He's up. Apologize to your aunt he said. I didn't ask him I asked you, Atticus turned and pinned me against the wall with his sharp eyes. Her voice was deadly. First apologize to your aunt. I'm sorry Auntie I muttered. Now he said. Let us be clear you do what Calpurnia tells you to do what I tell you to do, and as long as your aunt is in this house you will do what she tells you to do. Understand? I understood pondering for a moment, and concluded that the only way I could retire with a little dignity was to go to the bathroom, where I was staying long enough to make them think I should leave. Returning, I lingered in the hall to hear the fierce discussion taking place in the living room. Through the door I could see Jem on the sofa with a soccer magazine in front of his face, his head turned as if the pages were a live tennis match." (To Kill A Mockingbird, 1992 36-37)*

The narrator's statement reveals that Calpurnia was brave and treated Atticus's children well. Calpurnia is an African-American housekeeper with the Finch family, who is close to the children. He is an important person in the life of the Finches including the Scout, he teaches discipline and love to children. She is also like a mother to children after their mother's death. Calpurnia is one of the few blacks and it is she who teaches Scout writing.

Calpurnia also showed another form of courage when she took the children into her church to break people's eyes on skin color. Calpurnia invited the children to enter a special black church despite having some challenges due to the dislike of some congregants for the presence of Jem and Scout, but that did not make Calpurnia resign. She remained courageous and fearless in her spirit to show the children the other side of her.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the previous discussion, it can be concluded that the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* can be seen from the response made by Atticus by defending Negroes who become public trash, are ridiculed by people, and are considered an insult for doing something that was not right. When in fact they are just accusations or slander from white people. Through this novel the writer takes the theme of courage which is described through an intrinsic approach seen from the characters, plot, and settings contained in *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Some examples in this novel show attitude and courage, such as: Atticus verbally punishes his children for meddling in other people's business, then Atticus actually shows his kindness and respect for Mrs. Dubose (Finch family neighbor), even after the woman clearly shows his dislike for Atticus' work of defending black people, and the attitudes and actions of Atticus who worked diligently and painstakingly to prove the allegations against Tom Robinson were untrue.

#### Suggestion

The writer suggest to all students of English Education Department to read literary works because not only being inspiration but we can get many lessons from it. The novel *To Kill A Mockingbird* not only entertains readers, but also has a specific purpose, namely to convey moral messages that educate and inspire to have a soul of good character. This novel tries to demonstrate how the world and the people in it live a harmonious life together, through basic moral attitudes and actions, namely treating others with respect and kindness.

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