THE IMPACTS OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION TOWARDS AMERICAN SOCIETY IN HARPER LEE’S TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD

AN UNDERGRADUATE THESIS

Presented as Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Sarjana Sastra in English Letters

By

TITUS DEWO BROTO

Student Number: 094214046

ENGLISH LETTER STUDY PROGRAMME
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LETTERS
FACULTY OF LETTERS
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Defended before the Board of Examiners

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Yogyakarta, November 7, 2016

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Pada tanggal 7 November 2016

Yang menyatakan,

Titus Dewo Broto
Real courage is when you know you’re licked before you begin, but you begin anyway and see it through no matter what.

(Harper Lee)
For my beloved parents

For my amazing brothers and sister

For all the people who support me during the hard times

For those who will never give up to chase their dream

For those who always believe in theirself

For those who fight for their dream
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Until we see each other again on top of the world!

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Titus Dewo Broto
# TABLE OF CONTENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TITLE PAGE</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPROVAL PAGE</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACCEPTANCE PAGE</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEMBAR PERNYATAAN PUBLIKASI ILMIAH</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOTTO</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF CONTENT</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>xii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRAK</td>
<td>xiii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study ...................... 1
B. Problem Formulation .......................... 5
C. Objectives of the Study ...................... 5
D. Definition of Terms ........................... 6

## CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL REVIEW

A. Review of Related Studies .................... 7
B. Review of Related Theories .................. 10
   1. Theory of Character and Characterization .. 10
   2. Theories on Racism ........................ 11
   3. Theory of Society .......................... 12
C. Review on Historical Background ............. 12
D. The Relation between Literature and Society .. 16
E. Theoretical Frameworks ....................... 19

## CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

A. Object of the Study ............................ 18
B. Approach of the Study ....................... 19
C. Method of the Study ........................... 20

## CHAPTER IV: ANALYSIS

A. Characters and Their Characterization .......... 22
   1. Atticus Finch ................................ 23
   2. Mr. Cunningham ................................ 26
1. Bob Ewell ................................................................. 30
2. Tom Robinson .......................................................... 33

A. The Impacts of The Great Depression to American Society
   1. Poverty ............................................................... 36
   2. Depression .......................................................... 40
   3. Racism ............................................................... 42

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION .................................................. 49

BIBLIOGRAPHY ............................................................ 52
ABSTRACT

TITUS DEWO BROTO (2016). THE IMPACTS OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION TOWARDS AMERICAN SOCIETY IN HARPER LEE’S *TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD*

Yogyakarta: Department of English Letters, Faculty of Letters, Sanata Dharma University.

*To Kill a Mockingbird* is a novel of Harper Lee that portrays the condition of American society during the Great Depression era. The novel is set several years after the stock market crash happened, specifically described how the society in southern America shaped during the crisis. Here, the writer focused on the impacts of the Great Depression to American society, especially in the southern America, Alabama where the majority of the residents are Farmer. Although the main story line of the novel is about childhood innocence but Harper Lee also brought the theme of the crisis to the novel which depicted by the economic condition of several characters thus the writer convinced to analyze about the impacts of the crisis to American society in this study.

To better understand this analysis the writer had formulated two problems. The first one deals with the analysis of the characters of the novel which directly related to the impacts of the crisis. In the second problem, the writer tries to analyze conclude what are the impacts of the crisis to American society seen from the novel.

In doing this study, the writer uses library research to get some data and books that were provided in the library, several journals related to the background of the novel also used for better analysis. Both problems deal with the historical aspects, thus the writer uses socio-historical approach in this study.

For the last part the writer would like to draw some conclusions from the analysis. The setting of the novel is happen during the Great Depression era. The Crisis clearly described in the novel from the condition of the society at that time. The Great Depression made the whole society of Maycomb plunged into poverty, all member of the society living under poverty line especially the farmers. The crisis hit hardest on the farmers, many farmers giving up on their farm and look for another job. The condition of the farmers affected the condition of professional jobs such as lawyer and doctor. During those desperate times there are several issues raised in the society which make the condition even worse. Finally, the writer concludes that there are three major impacts seen from the novel: poverty, depression, and racism. Those impacts are the result from the character analysis in the first problem. Several evidences from the novel and books about the historical background of the novel convinced the writer to conclude those three major impacts as the impacts of the Great Depression to American society in Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird*.
ABSTRAK

TITUS DEWO BROTO (2016). THE IMPACTS OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION TOWARDS AMERICAN SOCIETY IN HARPER LEE’S TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD
Yogyakarta: Jurusan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Sastra, Universitas Sanata Dharma.


Dalam melakukan penelitian ini, penulis menggunakan studi pustaka yang berguna untuk memperoleh data serta buku acuan yang terdapat di perpustakaan, beberapa jurnal yang berhubungan dengan latar belakang novel juga digunakan untuk analisis yang lebih baik. Kedua permasalahan berkenaan dengan aspek sejarah, maka dari itu penulis menggunakan pendekatan sejarah-sosial dalam penelitian ini.

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

Reading literary work may improve our knowledge of history. Readers can learn from what happened in the past and know what kind of social condition and the values that once existed in a society. Literary works can play their role as historical documents that record social realities which are portrayed by authors. The authors themselves can be the members of the society (Wellek & Warren, 1956:102). The authors of literary works are very close with the story they write and involved with the events in the story. For example, Harper Lee was the part of the 1930s generation, she wrote a novel which brings the theme of the great depression that hit the society of her time which she once experienced with it in the past.

Harper Lee was only a little girl when the Great Depression hit her society, and the novel To Kill a Mockingbird seems perfectly to describe the depression era from her perspective with a little girl as the narrator of the story. The novel main character and narrator was a little girl which represents Harper Lee’s experience when she was a little girl, the whole story in the novel based on her experience during childhood.

United States in the 1930s was one of the worst times in the American history, during those times American people experienced what is called the Great Depression. The Great depression was a severe economic downturn caused by stock market crash of October 1929. The event leads the American people into despair, poverty and homelessness until the early 1940s.
From the book titled *Change and Continuity in Twentieth Century America*, it is explained that The Great Depression hit United States after self-centered attitude by the American people during the 1920s that is called jazz-age which represents the prosperous time for the American after the World War I. Soon the consumptive style of the American become a massive economic problem and brings the worst economic crisis to the United States and its people. People are willing to invest their money in the stock market, believing that the rising prices of the stocks will soon give them a massive profit and that is why many people in America lives their life in a prosperous way instantly. A risky practice that is similar to gambling and a main cause of stock market crash. As the money stock fell, spending on goods and services declined, which in turn caused firms to cut prices and output and to lay off workers. The resulting decline in incomes made it harder for borrowers to repay loans. Defaults and bankruptcies soared, creating a vicious spiral in which more banks failed, the money stock contracted further, and output, prices and employment continued to decline.

According to *The Great Depression 1929-1939: A Curriculum for High School Students*, between 1929 and 1933, the quantity of goods and services produced in the United States fell by one-third, the unemployment rate soared to 25 percent of the labor force, the stock market lost 80 percent of its value and some 7,000 banks failed. (2007:13).

Unemployment during the Great Depression worsened, this condition made more American people living in poverty, many people became homeless and found themselves were unable to afford their homes caused by their economic condition. The condition even worst in the South, many people worked as a farmer and the crisis
hit them hardest, Farmers were left with no money to buy groceries or make farm payments. Many farmer lost hope and given up their farm, they moved away to take government jobs building roads and bridges. (http://www.livinghistoryfarm.org/farminginthe30s/life_01.html).

*To Kill a Mockingbird*, which was initially published in 1960, took place in fiction rural town called Maycomb, Northern Alabama during the 1930s. The 1930s were at the heart of the Great Depression, the atmosphere about the crisis and racial segregation were clearly revealed by the events of the novel. Claudia Durst Johnson in her book *Understanding To Kill a Mockingbird: A Student Casebook to Issues, Sources, and Historic Document,* said:

It is essential to understand the social and economic climate of the 1930s. The country was in what has been called the Great Depression. Millions of people had lost their jobs, their homes, their businesses, or their land, and everything that made up their way of life. In every American city of any size, long "bread lines" of the unemployed formed to receive basic foodstuffs for themselves and their families, their only means of subsistence. Many people lived in shanty towns, their shelters made of sheet metal and scrap lumber lean-tos. All over America it was common to see unemployed men and women riding the rails, looking for work, shelter, and food—for anything that offered some means of subsistence, some sense of dignity (Johnson, 1994:15-16).

Despite Harper Lee’s insistence that *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a work of fiction, certain places and characters bear a remarkable resemblance to those in Monroeville, Alabama, her hometown. Lee was born there in 1926, which would make her exactly Scout’s age at the start of the novel (Bloom, 2010:11).

The crisis that hit United States in that time was portrayed by Harper Lee through the condition of the characters as the members of the society in *To Kill a
Mockingbird, the author described the condition of American society in 1930s with the society of Maycomb in the novel. The characters which represent the society of rural town perfectly matched with the author’s idea about the economic condition in depression era.

Farmers lost their farms, and the great instruments of prosperity stopped playing. Many in the rural areas left for the cities, where they thought they could find work, or simply packed up everything they had left after losing their farms and headed down the road in search of work. Larger numbers of Americans than ever in the nation’s history were living in poverty. Families became desperate for just the necessities (McNeese, 2010:53).

Nevertheless, this novel not only concerned on the condition of the farmer during the Great Depression, there are other characters which has another kind of job such as lawyer, and doctor. The author concerned about the economic crisis which hit the society more than just about the economic crisis of the farmer during the crisis, it is revealed through some events that is related to the historical background of the novel.

In this study, the writer would like to give the description of the society that might be shaped through the time during the great depression and also its impact that shown towards the society of the novel.

The topic is chosen because it is important issue for the reader to be more comprehend to sensitive topic such as discrimination, racism, and alienation. Historical background of the novel is also worth studying because history holds many moral values, and The Great Depression, in particular, is an event that provides the opportunity to teach and learn a great deal about moral values.

This novel itself is chosen as literary study firstly because it is an interesting story and easy to understand. Secondly, as a successful social criticism, To Kill a
Mockingbird is said to be a masterpiece of American literature and it went to win the Pulitzer Prize in 1961. Thus, while enjoying reading the novel, the readers may at the same time learn about the history of American society in 1930s during The Great Depression era through some elements that are involved such as characters, setting, and historical background of the work.

B. Problem Formulation

Based on the reasons that the writer has stated above, there are two problems that are going to analyze. They are:

1. How is the American society in the 1930s described through the characters in Harper Lee’s To Kill a Mockingbird?

2. How is the impact of the great depression to American society which reflected through the condition of the society in Harper Lee’s To Kill a Mockingbird?

C. Objective of Study

Based on the problems formulated above, this thesis has two objectives. First, it is to analyze the condition of American society in 1930s through the characters in Harper Lee’s To Kill a Mockingbird. Second, it is to analyze the impact of the Great Depression to the American society in 1930s from the answer of the first problem formulation.
D. Definition of Terms

In this research, there are some terms which are frequently used. In order to understand them as close as possible to the meaning, the definition of those terms are presented here:

1. American Society

According to David Platt in his book *Radical: Taking back your faith from American Dream*, is that American society is vastly complex society that is composed by heterogeneous population of many different races, nationally, and ethnic groups from all over the world. The book explains that American society can no longer focus exclusively on white males who come from the old world. The scope of American society expands to pluralistic society that includes men and women, many multiracial breeds, and multicultural people since many people from different races and culture came to America and became the part of that society (1964: 2-4).

2. The Great Depression

Great Depression, according to *Encyclopedia Americana*, in economic history, are long period in which business activity in industrial nations remain in the lowest phase of cycle. Low production, low retail sales, mass unemployment, and a high rate of business failures mark a depression (1995: 747-749).
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In order to answer the problems formulated, some review of related studies and theories are provided below:

A. Review of Related Studies

As a masterpiece of literary work, *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee receives much acclaims and critics from the readers. They give their opinion either praise or criticism on Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Several criticisms which are found from the internet will be used in this analysis.

According to Wakeman, *To Kill a Mockingbird* is regarded as one of the greatest novels on its time. It was an immediate and triumphant success, both popular and critical. It also has subsequently been made into successful movie. For this work, Harper Lee was awarded several appraisals in 1961, such as Pulitzer Prize for the best novel of 1960. A Brotherhood Award and also several lesser prizes (Wakeman, 1975:850).

*To Kill a Mockingbird* is an impossible book not to like; you can reject its idealisms, but the portrait of Scout Finch will linger on in you anyway. There are palpable formulaic elements in the book; even its largest surprises seem predictable enough. Still, the book is refreshingly free of ideologies and of the need to revise history to suit some particular politics of the spirit. (Bloom, 2010:8)
Other reviewers also enjoyed the substance of the novel, but found fault with the style. In July 10, 1960 Frank H. Lyell wrote the following review entitled One-Taxi Town in The New York Times Book Review.

The praise that Miss Lee deserves must be qualified somewhat by nothing that oftentimes the narrator's expository style has processed, homogenized, impersonal flatness quite out of keeping with the narrator's gay, impulsive approach to life in youth. Also some of the scenes suggest that Miss Lee is cooing at least one eye toward Hollywood.

A third point of view on Harper Lee's style was reviewed by Leo Ward in the Commonweal Magazine, December 9, 1960. Leo Ward stated "Both the style and the story seem simple, but no doubt it is quite an achievement to bring them to that happy condition."

In the review quoted compares To Kill a Mockingbird with John Steinbeck's The Grapes of Wrath, as both novels has the same historical background during The Great Depression and the same style, both are admired novels in large measure for its powerful portrait of the plight of the poor and oppressed.

Several critics have cautioned against the temptation to see To Kill a Mockingbird as only a "sociological" novel. One teacher, Edgar H. Schuster writes his review in English Journal published in October 1963. As he said;

Students enjoy reading To Kill a Mockingbird, but my experience has been that their appreciation is meager. Over and over again their interpretations stress the race prejudice issue to the exclusion of virtually everything else (Milton, 1984:99).

Not everyone would agree with this point of view. For example, Leo Ward in the review quoted above compares To Kill a Mockingbird with John Steinbeck's The Grapes of Wrath - a novel admired in large measure for its powerful portrait of the
plight of the poor and oppressed. On the other hand, critics who tend to agree with Schuster that the novel is not so much about racial prejudice as about the universal experiences of growing up, have compared the novel with Carson McCullers' *The Member of the Wedding* and with Mark Twain's *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*.

Finally, in making up your mind about the novel's ultimate literary worth, keep in mind these comments from a British review. The reviewer agrees with those who think that *To Kill a Mockingbird* is mainly a story about growing up, not a "social problem" novel. On the other hand, he agrees with Leo Ward that sometimes readers do not appreciate the art that goes into creating a novel that seems simple and straightforward: "The innocent childhood game that tumbles into something adult and serious is a fairly common theme in fiction, but I have not for some years seen the idea used so forcefully... Pretty soon we are in the adult game, based on the same fear and fascination of the dark: the ugliness and violence of a Negro's trial for rape and the town's opposition to the children's father for defending him. Miss Lee does well what so many American writers do appallingly: she paints a true and lively picture of life in an American small town. And she gives freshness to a stock situation." — Keith Waterhouse in *The New Statesman*, October 15, 1960.

Another review by Claudia Durst Johnson about the historical context of the novels, as she said;

A study of the Scottsboro trials will sharpen the reader's understanding of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Both the historical trial(s) and the fictional one reflect the prevailing attitudes of the time, and the novel explores the social and legal problems that arise because of those attitudes. First, it is essential to understand the social and economic climate of the 1930s. The country was in what has been called the Great Depression. Millions of people had lost their jobs, their homes, their businesses, or their land, and everything that made up
their way of life. In every American city of any size, long "bread lines" of the unemployed formed to receive basic foodstuffs for themselves and their families, their only means of subsistence (Johnson, 1994:15).

From all the explanation and reviews above, the writer believes that the novel have a strong relation to economic depression that happen to American society in 1930s, and the writer believes that the impacts of the depression era are reflected in the society of novel. Furthermore in this study, the writer will analyze the impacts of the Great Depression to the society of the novels.

B. Review of Related Theories

1. Theory on Character & Characterization

According to M.H Abrams' *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, "characters are the person described in a literary work, who has the moral and natural qualities that can be identified by seeing what they say as in the dialogue and what they do as in the action." (1993: 23). Based on Abrams's definition of character, it is obvious that what the character say and do are essential in analyzing the character.

Through the action and speech, readers can also see the interaction of one character to other characters in the novel that determines what kind of person he or she is. "The method of characterization is seeing from how a character is revealed by thus aspects, such as his actions, his speech, his thoughts, his physical appearances, and what other character say or think of him." (1993: 24).

Based on theories of characters above, the writer concludes that character is a human being in narrative work that is described by the author. They can be described
as grumpy old man or compassionate young woman. The description of the character depends on how authors characterize the characters in their work.

According to the book *A Handbook to Literature* written by Holman and Harmon, there are three fundamental ways of characterization in fiction:

a. The explicit presentation by the author of the character to direct exposition, either in introductory block or more over piecemeal throughout the work, illustrated by the action.

b. The presentation of the character in action with little or no explicit comment by the author, in the expectation that the reader will able to deduce the attribute of the actor from actions.

c. The presentation from within character, without comment on the character by the author, of the impact of actions and emotions on the character’s inner self, with the expectation that the reader will come to clear understanding of the attributes of the character. (1985: 81)

2. Theories on Racism

Craig Donnelan in *Racial Discrimination issues for the nineties* implies that racism is treating one group of people less favorable than another because of color, religious belief, or ethnic origin. It was once widely held that human beings belonged to different ‘races’ of people, which were defined according to physical characteristics (1956: 1). Donnelan theory on racism perfectly fit in the accusation of Tom Robinson that also one of the main issue that analyzed int his study. The theory
itself explain that a certain character can be considered as the victim of racism if he or she is treated unfairly by the society due to skin color, religious belief, or ethnic origin.

To complete this theory, the writer also used the theory of racism from Peter I. Rose, he stated in his book *They and We: Racial and Ethnic Relation in the United States* that racism can be defined as a system of negative belief, feelings, and action orientation regarding a group of people (1964:113).

Rose theory views racism as a form of social system rather than how people act toward each other. Maycomb itself portrayed a negative social system that happen during the Great Depression, Tom Robinson itself is considered as the lowest group of people in terms of both economic condition and skin color. This theory will provide further analysis and understanding about the issue of racism in the novel, both Donnelan and Rose theories will complete each other in the analysis section.

3. Theory of Society

According to Kimball Young in his book *Personality and Problems of Adjustment*, a society is the broadest of people who possess a certain common set of habits, attitudes, and ideas, sufficient to hold them together, who live in a definite territory, and who are often set off from other societies by attitudes and habits of difference or antagonism (1945:125). Young added in his book that human personalities developed because of the influence of society and culture.

The individual is always born into a group (or a society made up of various smaller groups) which has a culture. In this sense society and culture are always antecedent to any particular individual. All the references of psychologists to Robinson Crusoe and to feral man to the contrary, actually
we know of no human personalities which have developed outside the matrix of society and culture (1945:124).

From Kimball Young’s statement above it is clear that the condition of society and culture have the influence to shape someone’s personality. Thus, whatever it is, the environment always shapes and influences someone’s life. The story itself provides a wide variant of habits, attitudes, and ideas among the people of maycomb.

In order to analyze the impacts of the Great Depression this study compared one character with others due to their condition, and Young’s theory will help the writer to have further analysis on how these character react to the Great Depression. Young’s theory also explain how the culture and the condition of one society can affects someone psychological condition, in this term the economic condition is influential to formed the attitudes and habits of all the characters in the novel.

C. Review on the Historical Background

The Great Depression was the worst economic condition which had ever happened in the history of U.S. The depression began in the late 1929 and lasted about a decade. The causes of the depression were so complex that economist argued about them. There were some conditions which helped to bring on the Great Depression or to make it worse (Bernanke, 2000:8).

The depression that crashed over 1930s in America bought economic, social, and political problems. Some families experienced conflict disruption during this time. In rural America Bankruptcies, foreclosures and abandoned farms remained grim
realities and a quarter of all farm families had to accept public or private assistance during 1930s (Boyer, 1990:902).

The unemployment slowly spread from 1930 to 1993. The people with high job status were impacted by the depression and yet the lower jobs like farmer were hit harder.

“In some cities the jobless rate soared far beyond the national average. Many American workers remained employed only by taking jobs below their level of training; college alumni pumped gas, graduates of prestigious schools sold furniture.” (Boyer, 1990:902).

Richard Current in *The Essentials of American History* stated, to some of the unemployed who had moved to cities, again they had to face difficulties in farming.

The price of the farm products was so low (1986: 268-269).

The Great Depression was a worldwide phenomenon. World War I destroyed many European industries. This condition made European countries have a lot of debts both domestically and internationally. These debts controlled international trade. Each country tried to sell as much as possible and buy as little as possible. For a time, USA could lend some money to other countries but when the countries could not pay their debts, the loans were completely stopped. Since then USA's trade fell rapidly (Ritchie, 1985:593-594).

Ritchie explained that a prolonged bad condition in agriculture was like cancer, undermining the economic life. During the crisis, American society as a consumer did not have enough money to buy manufactured goods and that means the factories had to reduce their production and that means the factories had to reduce their production on goods. The values of farms were declining because of that. Many farm workers lost their job and even the farm. The condition became worse because the banks could not give credit to farmers. (1985:594)
Labor saving machinery increased the production of the American Industries. In 1920s America made more goods than the market could buy. For a time, installment buying covered the overproduction. It means that the purchaser made a down payment and promised to pay the rest in regular interval over a period of time. However by the late 1920s installment buying created huge private debts. This condition also decreased people’s ability to buy things.

The speculation in the stock market did not cause the depression, but it did make the condition worse when the depression came because when the stock market crash happened many people went panic for losing their money that they invested in stock market and many people rushed to take their money from the bank and the bank went bankrupt because they failed to provide reserve money for the withdrawal.

Later in his book, Ritchie explained that billions of dollars that were allocated to produce new products were used to speculate in the stock market. When the stock market crashed, investor needed money to cover their loses. The demand for money increased. It caused strict control in credit. Indeed, the crash changed the mood of the U.S from optimism to fear. Many people with capital invested in the market became debtors (Ritchie, 1985:595).

The economic policies of federal government during 1920s surely played a part in bringing up the depression. It was government’s failure when they did not prohibit the stock market boom. So, when the stock market crashed, the effect was much more severe.

The government did not stop people from buying the stock on margin. To buy on margin, people put up a small percentage of the total cost of the stock and borrowed the rest from the stockbroker. It made people determine to speculate
in the stock market although they did not have enough cash to cover it (Ritchie, 1985: 596).

From the quotation above, it is obvious that the fault is not only on the government but also the American people itself, it is clear that consumerism and materialism has become the lifestyle during Jazz era and the people forget that there is great risks that could happen anytime.

Once starting, the depression created vicious circle. People who had bought cars and other goods on credit and who had bought stock on margin became debtors, and it became worse because some of these debtors later became unemployment and. People stopped buying luxury goods. Their ability to buy goods declined. The factories closed down or ran their plants only part time, thousands of labor became unemployment because the factories could not afford to pay their labor. They sent home thousands of workers and cancelled orders for materials that were used to support their production. Thousands of unemployed could not pay their loans. Banks that had lent them money were unable to continue their operation. Such chain reactions close down more and more factories, drove more and more firms and banks into bankruptcy, and put more and more American out of works (Ritchie, 1985:596).

D. The Relation between Literature and Society

Literature and society are two interesting aspects that intertwine each other, yet to understand their relationship the writer would need to put the statement from Rene Wellek and Austin Warren in The Theory of Literature as follows

The relation between literature and society is that the literature is an expression of society. It is assumed that literature at any given time mirrors
the current social institution ‘correctly’, it is false, it is the common place, trite, and vague if it means only that literature depicts some aspects of social reality (1956:95).

The relation between literature and society is that literature expresses life because an author of literary work is supposed to express life in his or her work. Yet, it does not mean that author must express the whole life of a given time but means her or his time completely, the artist is aware of the specific social, economic, political, and religious condition in his era, and he or she should be representative of his or her age and society; it is the artist’s duty to convey historical as well as social truths as a symbol of artistic values in literature.

Thus, literature can also be viewed as the essence, the abridgement, and summary at all history. Therefore the relation between literature and society is very close in which the reader can catch literature as an expression of the society as well as in the author’s era (Wellek and Warren, 1956:95).

E. Theoretical Framework

This thesis provides some theories to answer the problem formulation stated in the first chapter. The theories of character and characterization, used to answer the first problem formulation which is related to the analysis of characters in the novel. The writer used the book from M.H Abrams for the theory of character and characterization because the writer thinks that the theory from M.H Abrams perfectly fit to analyze the characters in the novel. The writer also used three fundamental ways of characterization by Holman and Harmon to complete the theory.
Theory of society is used to analyze the society of the novel, and how the Great Depression affects the society. The writer used the theory from Kimbell Young to find out the impacts of the crisis to society.

The theory of racism is used to know the meaning and the term of racism and further analysis on racial prejudice. The writer used both theories from Craig Donnelan and Peter I. Rose to reveal how the impacts of the crisis can lead to the racial prejudice. Several reviews and articles of historical background are used to help the writer for getting the information about the real social condition and historical facts of the Great depression in supporting the analysis. Therefore, these theories are helpful to the writer to answer the problems formulated in the problem formulation.
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the writer discusses the methodology that is used in this study. This chapter consists of three parts, namely Object of the Study, Approach of the Study, and Method of the Study. The first part describes a brief description of the novel. The second part explains the approach that is applied in this study. The third part explains the steps and sequences of analyzing the data.

A. Object of the Study

The object of this study is a novel of Harper Lee’s To Kill a Mockingbird. This novel was first published in New York by William Heinmann Ltd in 1960, this novel contains of 376 pages and it divided into 31 chapters. In this study, the book analyzed was published by Grand Central Publishing under Hachette Book Group in 1982.

Throughout the story in To Kill a Mockingbird, Lee presents the problem of poverty, depression, and racial prejudice as the impacts of the crisis in the United State during the early twentieth century, with The Great Depression as the background of the novel. In the novel, these ideas are explored by a young girl, called Scout. She passes many incidents which enters her to be more mature to see the reality of the society around her. (Johnson, 1994:9).

Since there is a close relationship between the society and the background of the novel, this study will discuss the impact of the Great Depression to American society as seen in Lee’s To Kill a Mockingbird. Poverty, depression, racial prejudice
are the major impacts that are seen from the characters of the novel and later will be analyzed by the writer in this study.

B. Approach of the Study

Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a novel that deals with the social condition of America during the Great Depression. It means, the society and the condition of America under the impact of the Great Depression become part of this novel. That statement can be a proof of Wellek and Warren statement that a work may be the result of author’s deep understanding about social problems around him (1956:95), in other words, a literary work may present social problems. Concerning those reasons, the writer believes that it will be very suitable to analyze the novel from socio-historical point of view.

“This approach involves social and historical elements. The sociology of literature is a study that analyzes relationship between the literary work to the society reflected in the work and to which they are addressed” (Abrams, 1981:178). “This approach considered suitable since it applies the basic thought that to discover the authenticity of the work is to find the relationship between the work and the civilization of which the attitudes and actions of certain group of people become the subject matters.” (Rohrberger & Woods, 1971:9). This shows that the creation of literary work becomes a reflection of and a commentary on social realities that take place in a society.

Socio-historical approach is applied in this study because this approach is the most appropriate one to answer the problem formulation which is related with society
and the history of the Great Depression in the 1930s. Using this approach, the writer wants to analyze and show the impacts of the crisis to the condition of America society from the characters and events found in the novel.

This approach is used to help answering the first problem which is about the society of the novel which has strong relationship with the social and historical aspects and the condition of society during the Great Depression. The second problem formulation is about the impacts of the Great Depression towards the society in the novel. Since the second problem formulation deals with the impacts of the crisis toward the society, this analysis focuses on the condition of the society during the Great Depression America in 20th century. This approach help the writer to answer the problems, while the sociology of literature aims to find the relationship between the work and the society reflected in the work, the socio-historical approach aims to see the relationship between the society in the work and historical background of the work.

C. Method of Study

In doing this research, the writer used library research to identify and locating several trusted sources from books and articles that were provided factual information or expert opinion. Other sources also found in digital form as licensed databases from the Internet. The data collected consisted of primary data and the secondary data. The primary data was the novel itself, and for the secondary data the writer used several supporting books and articles to help answer the problem formulated.
Doing this research the writer firstly began by reading the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the writer had to read again and again to understand and to comprehend the story because the novel was the primary source of this analysis.

The second step, the writer determined the topic of the analysis and arranged the problem formulations which later became the key concepts to do the analysis. In this step, the writer will analyze the elements of literary works, which were the elements of the novel itself.

The third, the writer just searched the secondary data according to the research problem. It could be about theories, which were related to this study, also could be many criticisms, essays, books, reviews or journal which was supported this analysis or any kind of data which was needed to solve the problem formulation.

The fourth, the writer collected any kind of fact and proof that would help to do the analysis from the primary and secondary sources. In this step the writer also formulated the data, fact and proves that were found, with the problem formulation that was going to be analyzed.

The last step, the writer started the analysis. Applying data, information, and theories of character, characterization, and also the socio-historical background of the United States condition in the post-war, the writer intended to analyze the problems and answered it. Then the writer also gave such conclusion for the complete fulfillment of this project.
CHAPTER IV
ANALYSIS

Based on what is stated in the problem formulation, this analysis part is derived in to two subchapters. The first part discuss on how is the American society of the 1930s described through the characters of the novel. The second part will discuss how is the impact of the great depression to the American society implied through the condition of society in the novel.

There are several characters going to be analyzed in the first subchapter, they are Atticus Finch, Walter Cunningham, Bob Ewells, and Tom Robinson. Those characters had been selected by the writer due to their connection to the main theme of this study, which is the Great Depression. The second problem analyzed the impact of the Great Depression conveyed toward the society of the novel.

A. Characters and Their Characterizations

In this part, the writer tries to find out the answer of the first question in problems formulation by describing several characters of the novel, these characters are chosen by the writer because they are significant to the Great Depression more than the rest of the characters found in the novel.

In describing the characters in this novel, the writer applies theory of character defined by Abram. This theory might help the writer to analyze the characters of the novel. The theory is written as follow:
“Characters are person described in a literary work, who has the moral and natural qualities that can be identified by seeing what they say as in the dialogue and what they do as in the action” (Abrams, 1993:23).

1. Atticus Finch

Atticus Finch is a single parent. He has two children, Jean Louise Finch (six years old) and his brother Jeremy Finch (eight years old). He sits on Alabama State Legislature and acts as Maycomb’s leading attorney. He has lost his wife when Scout was two years old. Atticus employed Calpurnia, the family’s black housekeeper who has looked after the family since the children lost their mother. Atticus is a well-known and wealthy person in his country, stated in the novel that the Finch “lived on the main residential street in town” (1982: 9). His ancestor, Simon Finch, was the owner of an industry in the country, as it is stated in the novel that Simon “lived to an impressive age and died rich.” (1982: 7).

Abrams stated in his book “moral and natural qualities can be identified by seeing what they say as in the dialogue and they do as in the action” (1993: 23), means that what the character say and do are essential in this analysis. Abrams added that to understand what kind of character he or she is, it is important to analyze “his actions, his speech, his thoughts, his physical appearances, and what other people say or think of him.” (1993: 24).

As seen in the story of the novel, it is revealed that Atticus is a figure that admired by the society and he is always get along with almost every members of Maycomb society. “He was Maycomb county born and bred; he knew his people, they knew him, and because Simon Finch’s industry, Atticus was related by blood or marriage to
nearly every family in the town” (1982: 8), that statement revealed that Atticus has a good relation with the townsfolk also because blood relation.

His good reputation in the society is noticed by both the white and black, that means Atticus is the kind of man that always kind to every people in town regardless their race or social class. Miss Maudie views Atticus as special men who willing to go in the dirt for the sake of Maycomb county, “I simply want to tell you that there are some men in this world who were born to do our unpleasant jobs for us. Your father’s one of them” (1982: 255). During the trial of Tom Robinson later in the novel, it is revealed that the black community of Maycomb respects him,

“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 passin’.” (1982: 251).

From the very early of the novel, the author has already introduce Atticus’s good attitude through several conversations between him and his daughter, in the third chapter of the novel, Atticus gives Jem a lesson on why he can always get along with almost all kind of people in town. As it is stated that he is always see things from their perspective, “You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view, climb into his skin and walk around in it” Said Atticus. (1982: 38).

As the lawyer, Atticus has various clients, from high class to the lowest class of Maycomb society. One of his clients is Mr. Cunningham, one of the very few farmers who is still struggling and not giving up their farm during the depression era. He is poor and paid Atticus with a sack of hickory nuts, load of stovewood, and crops
instead of money for the service, he did that because he got no money, and that is the only way he can pay Atticus. It can be shown from the conversation between Atticus and Jem: “Why does he pay you like that?” asked Jem, and then Atticus replied “Because that’s the only way he can pay me. He has no money.” (1982: 27).

From the conversation above between Atticus and Walter, the writer believes that Atticus represents rational man in a world of depressed people, he is stable and mature figure who is able to cooperate with different kind of country folks. Atticus understands the economic condition of Mr. Cunningham that the crisis hit them hardest as a farmer. Atticus did not worry about the money, and he continued to serve the people of Maycomb though he knew that there will be no money. “Mr. Finch, I don’t know when I’ll ever be able to pay you,” Walter said, “Let that be the least of your worries, Walter” Atticus answered. (1982: 27).

This circumstance happened to other professional jobs that can be found in the society, Atticus explained to her daughter Scout that the same condition also happened to a doctor. “Did you know,” said Atticus, “That Dr. Reynolds works the same way? He charges some folks a bushel of potatoes for delivery of a baby.” (1982: 28). Dr. Reynolds charges his clients with other things instead of money, this condition showed us that what happen to the farmers affected the society, it is because Maycomb is a rural country, and the stability of townspeople depends on farmers, as what atticus once said that professional people were poor because the farmers were poor, “nickels and dimes were hard to come for lawyers, doctors, and dentists.

A lawyer like Atticus whose Job is apart from the farm, also affected by the economic condition happened to farmers. “Atticus said professional people were poor
because the farmers were poor. As Maycomb County was far from country, nickels and dimes were hard to come by for dentists and lawyers.” (1982: 27), the best evidence that shows his economic condition in the story revealed during one of his conversations with Jem:

    Are we poor, Atticus?”
    Atticus nodded. “We are indeed!”
    Jem’s nose wrinkled. “Are we as poor as the Cunningham?”
    “Not exactly. The Cunningham are country folks, farmers, and the crash hit them hardest.” (1982: 27).

From this character analysis, the writer concludes that the presence of Atticus in novel related to the Great Depression is to show that poverty at that time affecting all kinds of society, it does not matter that you work as professional jobs or farmers, both were heavily affected by the crisis.

2. Walter Cunningham

Mr. Cunningham or Walter Cunningham is the father of Walter Cunningham Junior, Scout’s classmate. He is also one of the Atticus’s clients who works as a farmer, one of the very few fellow farmers that manage to keep their farm during the crisis. It is stated from the novel that Walter hardly ever had money and that is why he paid Atticus for his services in goods rather than money, because the only thing left from him is his farm. In the eyes of the Maycomb society, the Cunninghams may be the poorest folk in town, stated in the early novel that “He had probably never seen three quarters together at the same time” (1982: 26), but somehow he is respected by the society because he has a good attitude towards them.
Same as the analysis of character and characterization on Atticus, Mr. Cunningham moral and natural qualities revealed from his action and what other character say or think of him, the author does not describe him as much detail as Atticus, his character can be analyzed from what Maycomb society think of Mr. Cunningham. The Cunningham tribe known for his admired attitude despite their economic condition, they never took anything off of anybody and survive on what they have. “The Cunninghams never took anything they can’t pay back- no church baskets and no scrip stamps”. Scout said during her conversation with Mrs.Caroline. Atticus also said that “Mr. Cunningham came from a set breed of men” which means that Atticus respect him a lot (1982: 27).

It is revealed in the novel that farmers cannot rely on their farms because the crisis made the farmers during that time have to deal with so many obstacles such as the price drop, the prices on the crops during the crisis are mostly dropped to the lowest price compared to other goods, this condition forced the majority of the farmers to close their farm. “Entailment was only a part of Mr.Cunningham’s vexations. The acres not entailed were mortgaged to the hilt, and the little cash he made went to interest”; this statement found in the novel showed why so many farmers gave up their farm and be more realistic with the condition, most of them went to city to find a job, only few farmers that were persistent to keep his land.

The Great Depression is indeed a harsh time for a farmers, the crisis changed the lives of people who lived and farmed. Farmers were left with no money to buy groceries or make farm payments. Some farmers given up their farm to took government jobs building roads and bridges, except for Walter Cunningham who is
willing to run his farm even in the hardest time. Atticus stated that Cunningham is poor, but he is honorable farmer because he did not give up on his farm and go for the government job, he keeps struggling on his farm although when it is almost impossible to get money from there. “If he held his mouth right, Mr. Cunningham could get a WPA job, but his land would go to ruin if he left, and he was willing to go hungry to keep his land and vote as he pleased.” (1982: 27-28).

Mr. Cunningham willingness to keep struggling on his farm is what people of Maycomb admired and respect him. Mr. Cunningham gets along with what they have, even though they didn’t have much. His economic condition noticed by the society, but Mr. Cunningham has a lot of friends with the society because he is well known as respected farmer. He was also a friend of Scout’s father, and one also Atticus’s client. Mr. Cunningham was very poor, he had no money but his good relationship with Atticus, and also the rest of Maycomb society made him easier to survive the crisis. It is proven during his conversation with Atticus: “Mr. Finch, I don’t know when I’ll be able to pay you.” said Walter, “Let that be the least of your worries, Walter.” Atticus said. (1982: 27)

The conversation above also showed us the bad economic condition of farmers at that time. Walter Cunningham said in the conversation above that he does not know when he will be able to pay Atticus and that showed us how poor the farmers can be during the crisis, and it is because there is no certainty to the farmers, the prices on crops went lower and they barely get income from their farms during the depression era. Even though Mr. Cunningham had no money but his good reputation in the society made him received respects and get some help from the Maycomb society,
especially Atticus Finch. The Cunningham tribe is one of a kind of folks in Maycomb.

Cunninghams’s good reputation also known by little girl such as Scout, it is shown when Scout explain to the newcomer teacher that the Cunningham was poor, but they are honorable tribe.

“Walter’s one of the Cunninghams, Miss Caroline.”
“I beg your pardon, Jean Louise?”
“That’s okay, ma’am, you’ll get to know all the county folks after a while.”
“They don’t have much, but they get along on it.”
(1982: 26).

From the conversation above, the author tries to describe Cunningham through the eyes and opinion of Scout. Miss Caroline does not know that Walter came from poor family, because she comes from far-off land of northern Alabama and Jem tries to explain the economic condition of the Cunninghams to her. Here the writer concludes that Cunningham economic condition is well known by the society of Maycomb, which is shown that every member of the society is aware about the impacts of Great Depression to the Farmers. The author also tries to show the reader that this kind of folk is somewhat special, that he lives in the middle of depressed society yet still maintains his good attitude towards them.

The author tries to raise the issue of poverty in the story through him, to show the reader that the crisis hit hardest on farmers, yet their economic downturn also affected the whole society of Maycomb. The writer believes that Cunninghams may not have a big contribution to the main storyline but since this study analyze about the impact of the Great Depression then analyzing Walter Cunningham is essential to answer the second problem formulation.
3. Bob Ewell

Bob Ewell is the head family of the Ewells. He is considered as “white trash” by the Maycomb society, he lives in a shotgun shack out by the dump, a slum-like area in Maycomb. Atticus said the Ewells had been the disgrace of Maycomb for three generations. None of them had done an honest day’s work in his recollection. “He said that some Christmas when he was getting rid of the tree, he would take me with him and show me where and how they lived. They were people, but they lived like animals.” (Lee, 1982: 40).

From the theory stated Holman and Harmon that it is possible for the author to provide “little or no explicit comment” (81) to the character, the writer believes that the author wants the reader to understand Bob Ewell by his action towards the society, as also explained by Abrams in his theory that his moral can be revealed from what he say and he do in the society and the comments from other characters.

The Ewell is very poor family in the society alongside with the Cunninghams, These families are among the hardest hit of the white families during the Great Depression, but what separates them from the Cunningham is their reaction to the crisis that hit the town, people like Walter Cunningham willing to work to survive from the crisis, Walter’s reaction to the crisis is often admired by the townspeople, moreover because it is not easy to survive as a farmer during that era. In other hand, Bob Ewell reaction to the crisis is somewhat dishonored and even worrisome to the Maycomb society, his depression led to the lack of will to survive and cooperate with the situation, and even worse, he became an alcoholic and troublesome.
During the Great Depression, the government provides what it is called WPA or Works Progress Administration to reduce the amount of unemployment. The WPA provided jobs and income to the unemployed during the depression era. Both of families got financial help and also offered WPA Job by the Government. Mr. Ewell actually could maintain better live if he keep his Job at the WPA, but then loses it because of laziness. "Mr. Bob Ewell acquired and lost a job in matter of days and probably made himself unique in the annals of nineteen-thirties: he was the only man who was fired from WPA for laziness" (1982: 295). Mr. Ewell has no ambition to improve his life, or the lives of his children; instead, he spends his welfare checks on whiskey.

"...and it's certainly bad, but when a man spends his relief checks on green whiskey his children have a way of crying from hunger pains. I don't know of any landowner around who begrudges those children any game their father can hit." (1982:41).

The quotation above showed just how awful his life is, his main income rely only on relief checks and even worse that he decides to spend those checks for himself and for his own needs rather than use it to improve his economic condition and feed his kids. The author said in the novel that "relief check was far from enough to feed the family, and there was strong suspicion that Papa drank it up anyway, the younger children had perpetual colds and suffered from chronic ground-itch..." (1982: 216), that statement that acquired from Mayella Ewell during the interrogation in the court has say it all. It is revealed that relief checks was far from enough to feed his kids, Bob's knows that and the statement about how bad the physical condition of his kids shows that he is not concerned with them.
The difference of course is that the Cunninghams maintain dignity and respect despite their poor living conditions while the Ewells do not. Bob Ewell is happy receiving government checks and then spending it all on alcohol rather than use it to fulfill the needs of his family. The society allows the Ewells to do hunting out of season, even it is against the law. The Ewells had become an exclusive society in Maycomb, they can do whatever they want to do, and it is just because the society does not want to have any problem with the Ewell. Atticus himself said that “They were people but they lived like animals” (39), earlier Atticus described the Ewell that they were “allowed by the common folks” by “becoming blind to some of the Ewells’ activities” because it is better like that than to have a business with them. (1982: 38).

The same things happened Bob Ewell’s son, Burris Ewell. He’s been an exclusive student at school, he only went to school on the first day, he can go to school anytime he wants. “He said that the Ewells were members of an exclusive society made up of Ewells. In certain circumstances the common folks judiciously allowed them certain privileges by the simple method becoming blind to some of the Ewell’s activities. They didn’t have to go to school, for one thing. Another thing, Mr. Bob Ewell, Burris’s father, was permitted to hunt and trap out of season.” (Lee, 1982:41).

Mr. Ewell is the one who really hates Blacks. Because of many stereotypes planned in his mind about Blacks, he loses the humanity. He makes a fake confession by accusing Tom Robinson for raping her daughter, Mayella Ewell. “So I dropped m’load and run as fast as I could but I run into th’ fence, but when I got distangled I
run up to th’ window and I Seen... I seen that black nigger yonder ruttin’ on Mayella!” (1982: 231).

He is the kind of man that easily hates people and vengeful to anyone who ever has a problem with him before, Aunt Alexandra described him that “His kind’d do anything to pay off grudge” (259), and stated in the novel that he is often “threatened to kill” (258) anyone who gets in the way. During the trial of tomb robinson it is revealed that Bob always does bad things to his own daughter Mayella, he even says “you goddamn whore, I’ll kill ya!” (230), to her.

Racism is the only way that Ewell can feel superior to anybody. There is not a single white man in Maycomb who is above the Ewells in the society, so he makes effort to put anyone below him. The accusation of Tom Robinson is proof of his effort to gain sympathy from the society.

4. Tom Robinson

Tom Robinson is a black man in Maycomb County. He is one of victims of racial prejudice in Maycomb. As a victim of racial prejudice, he cannot do anything against the racism because he is Black, poor, and powerless. As a poor man in Maycomb, Tom lived in the slums, and his house is only part of the town dump where people usually leave garbage or rubbish. The town dump was dirty and smells bad. Tom Robinson is twenty-five years old. He had married and got three children. “Tom was twenty-five years of age; he was married with three children...” (1982:216). He is handicapped. He cannot use his left hand properly. He cannot stand normally like
anyone else, a crippled man whose arms are not exactly the same as what the novel described.

Tom Robinson’s powerful shoulders rippled under his thins shirt. He rose to his feet and stood with his right hand on the back of his chair. He looked oddly off balanced, but it was not from the way he was standing. His left arm was fully twelve inches shorter than his right, and hung dead at his side. It ended in a small shriveled hand. (1982:211).

It is stated from the novel that the physical condition of Tom Robinson possess physical disability, he had cripple left arm which hung dead and looked off balanced. His left arm was injured when he was a little boy in an accident: “caught in Mr. Dolphus Raymond’s cotton gin when he was boy...” (219) and because he came from a poor black family then he just let his arm like that until it is permanently paralyzed.

Tom Robinson is the outcast of the Maycomb society, he is very poor and even worse because he is black, he represents the black race in American society during that time. He is a victim of racism, which is used by the author to show the reader about the condition of the black race in the 1930s. He respects the people of Maycomb society, especially women, and never sees people based on his race or social class, as what the author states, “He would not have dared strike a white woman under any circumstances...” (1982: 227).

The living conditions for the Negroes during the Great Depression was terrible, as what Harper Lee described in the novel, “He lives in that little settlement beyond the town dump...” (Lee, 1982: 86). During the crisis many people went homeless, and if white people went homeless then the condition could be worse for the black. They were the first to be homeless and when there is a public shelter, they cannot just go there easily because the racism was intense at that time, white people were always
prioritized. Beside they have to survive during the hard times, they also have to face racism that happens towards them.

Despite of his economic condition and racism, he is described as a humble, honest, hardworker, and never takes any advantage for his own. Mr. Link Deas stated: "I just want the whole lot of you know one thing right now. That's boy worked for me eight years an' I ain't had a speck o' trouble outs him." (1982: 222).

B. The Impacts of the Great Depression to the American Society in 1930s

Literature as work of art has close relation with the society. According to Wellek and Warren in *Theory of Literature*, that literature is a social creation which represents life or social reality (1956:94-95). Literature reflects what happened in the past or even present time, the realities that happen in particular society is recorded by the author with the form of literary works. Further in their book, Wellek and Warren explain that literary work can play its role as a document, which records social realities which are artistically portrayed by the author (1956: 102).

It is clearly stated that when the work is made by the author, the condition of the society and the historical events which happened during the author’s life are recorded with the work itself (1956: 101). Sometimes the literary works does not merely imitate what happen in the realities and already interpreted with the author’s ideology and motive.

In this subchapter, the analysis also will be based on theory of society by Kimbell Young, which stated that society possess “habits, attitudes, and ideas” (1945: 125), which is why the writer will use the data that can revealed the habits, attitudes, and
ideas of the society to answer the second problem. The data acquired from the analysis of character and characterization. Kimbell also stated that the condition of society have the influence to shape someone personality and the writer will provide a qualified analysis about the characters’ attitude in the story and how the condition of society affect them.

From the analysis of the characters from previous sub-chapter, it is revealed about the condition of the Maycomb society during the Great Depression. Each of the characters has different condition during the hard times, and from those conditions the writer found three major impacts of the Great Depression to the American society.

1. Poverty

United States experienced one of the most prosperous times in nation’s history during the 1920s, and that was a time of economic success and glamorous way of life happened to American people, famously known as ‘Jazz age’ or ‘Roaring Twenties’.

Described from the book *Boom and bust: The Life History of the United States*, that The Jazz age closely related to public adulation of the automobile and utility magnates, movie stars and bootleggers, who were the heroes of the ‘20s. For the nation however, there was far more significance in the impact on American life of the business activities of these celebrities. The auto, for example, change middle-class American life more than any other invention or device except the building of the railroad. Families that never previously thought of taking a vacation now toured for two weeks in the summer. Even some became lax in church attendance in order to take Sunday drives. (May, 1974:107).
Americans were going into debt in order to pursue ‘American Dream’ and live their life in more prosperous way, and lots of them bought the product that they actually could not afford to buy but credit and installment buying plans made those products seems affordable, this complicated circle had triggered the stock market crash that will happen only in several years from the ‘Jazz age’, According to Handlin in America: in History,

The panic of 1929 brought a phase of close. It revealed the internal contradictions of the existing economic American History to and social order and created a complex and interlocked set of problems which would occupy the US in the ten years that followed. (Handlin, 1968:863)

The quotation above portrayed the famous event know as Black Thursday, October 23, 1929. That day the stock market crashed and made Americans people plunged into great debt. A lot of rich Americans lost their money in the market but what makes the Great Depression so great was massive unemployment and accompanying hardship, this was happen because many companies fell off and people that worked for these companies went jobless in no time.

During the Great Depression most people who live in America are below the poverty line, American economy during the depression years is reached the bottom. The working class becomes restless, millions were unemployed. The crisis hit hardest for the southern, most of the states in south were rural are, and when it comes to the impact of Great Depression, the impact become even worse for the farmer such as the Cunningham. “The Great Depression hit the South, harder than some other regions of the country, and in fact worsened the economy downturn that had begun in the south a decade earlier.” (Bernstein, 1987:31).
Poverty become the new way of life for the American people. Jobless people could not support their family and even her/himself and even worse for the Farmers because the farm prices kept dropping, and the combination with overproduction led their farms were foreclosed upon. The author tries to show these condition to the reader through the story of the novel, even though the main storyline is about grown-up little girl named Scout, but several characters in the novel revealed that Maycomb society is one of those American society that is affected by the Great Depression.

Maycomb was an old town, but it was a tired old town... People moved slowly then. They ambled across the square, shuffled in and out of the stores around it, took their time about everything. There was no hurry, for there was nowhere to go, nothing to buy and no money to buy with, nothing to see outside the boundaries of Maycomb county... it had nothing to fear but to fear itself. (1982: 9).

It is already stated in the very beginning of the novel about the condition of the society of Maycomb, the author describes the society early to the reader so that the reader can be aware of what happen in the rural-town, it shown from the quotation above that Poverty is one of the main issue in the society.

It is already stated in the previous chapters that the crisis hit hardest on farmers and Maycomb itself represents the rural town in southern America, most of the people there work as farmers and this means that during the crisis there was a serious economic problem in this society.

Harper Lee raises the issue of poverty with the Cunningham absence in the novel, Walter Cunningham works as a farmer, his condition was much worse than the rest of the county folks even though the crisis affected the whole Maycomb society. From the story, during the 1930s it is revealed that The Farmers were in a very bad shape,
the Great Depression was the harsh time for the farmers: “…the Cunningham are county folks, farmers, and the crash hit them hardest…” (Lee, 1982:27).

Later on it is revealed that not only the farmers who suffered the impacts of the Great Depression, but the professional people such as lawyer and doctor also have to struggle during the depression era. This could happen because Maycomb is a rural town, which means the economic condition of the society depends on the agricultural sector: “…Atticus said professional people were poor because the farmers were poor…” (1982:27). The impacts of the crisis was a domino-like effects, when the farmers are poor then the whole town is poor as well because the professional people like Atticus are paid by his clients which mostly are farmers. Atticus stated in the novel that there is no money in Maycomb, means poverty was the usual issue in the society, most people were poor even Atticus whose job is a lawyer. The farmers went poor, and they were unable to pay their daily needs with money because they got none. Doctors and Lawyers income affected by those condition. Professional people could not get any money during the crisis, the clients which usually a farmer could not pay the services with money but instead with the crops from their farm.

Atticus said professional people were poor because farmer were poor. As Maycomb Country was farm country, nickels and dimes were hard to come by for doctors and dentists and lawyers. (Lee, 1982:27).

From the quotation above, Harper Lee wants to say that the poverty issue in rural towns and villages was much worse compared to the larger cities. Almost all American society suffered from the poverty even people with professional job like Atticus and Dr. Reynolds. Here the writer concludes that the poverty become one of major impacts from the Great Depression, all the evidences has shown that the crisis
affected the agricultural sector so bad, this means that the farmers were the poorest during this time. Maycomb county represents American society especially those who live in rural town which its economic stability depends on the agricultural sector, once the agricultural sector hit by the crisis, the society will plunged into poverty.

2. Depression

The Great Depression was really depressing because the number of unemployment during that era, Americans must live in poverty where just few years before they live such a prosperous live during the ‘Roaring Twenties’ and it is even worse because these people once had a job and able to support their family at least him/herself but everything suddenly changed after the event of Black Friday.

So quickly after the crash did the crisis grow to such an appalling extent that its full dimensions resisted comprehension. When the unemployment rate ran to around a quarter of the workforce in 1932, about 11.5 million Americans had no work (Rauchway, 1995:40).

It is called the Great Depression because the amount of people who experienced depression during that time after the economic downturn, none of the Americans are prepared to face something like this and they have to lose almost everything they had during the ‘Roaring Twenties’, not just their job but luxury goods such as cars and television.

Massive unemployment that happen during that time has big social effects to the American people, some data revealed that the psychological effects of mass unemployment were devastating. It is stated in Peter Clements book The Great Depression and The Americas 1929-39 that “There are many cases of people pretending still to be in work, to go out early each morning with a briefcase or tool
bag, packed lunch and the like, to keep up appearances”, and suicide rates incredibly increased “Suicide rates increased from 14 per 10,000 in 1929 to 19.5 in 1932.”. That statement clearly showed the psychological effects to the unemployment during the crisis.

Throughout the novel, the writer believes that Bob Ewells is the character that represents American people that psychologically affected by poverty and unemployment. As already analyzed in the previous sub-chapter about character and characterization, Bob Ewells were as poor as the Cunningham but his attitude far from admiring, the author describe the Ewells as the worst person on the society, he is poor and yet his attitude is disturbing. Revealed from the novel that he will “spat, curse, and threatened to kill” (258), to any member of Maycomb society.

Bob Ewells represents those American people who cannot get along with the economic downturn during the Great Depression. He let the depression ruined his life, he let that depression changes his attitude towards the society of Maycomb and people around him, until the society itself labeled him as the disgrace of Maycomb, as stated in the novel by Atticus that “They were people, but they lived like animals” (1982:40).

From the novel, the writer believes that Bob Ewells’s attitude is a form of reaction to his current condition, more specifically about his economic condition. As described in the novel that and previous analysis that Ewells tend to spend his welfare checks on whiskey or any kind of alcoholic behaviors rather than try to provide something for his family, this thing can be seen as the act of giving up his life which is a common result of a depression.
The author also showed the comparison between Ewells and Cunninghams to the reader so that the reader will understand that this impact is not always happen to all American during the Depression era. Even though Mr. Cunninghams is very poor but he is able to survive and still manage to get buy and get something with the crops, and also his good relation with several folks in the society made it easier, in other hand Bob reaction to the crisis is the opposite, he turn his back from the society and doing prohibited things in the society.

During the Great Depression, unemployment soared more than 25 percent, jobless rate soared far beyond the national average, Bob Ewells represents those Americans who lose their job due to the crisis. Thus, the writers convinced that unemployed is one of the reason to Bob attitude towards society. From all the evidences and character analysis from the Ewells, the writer concludes that depression that triggered by poverty or unemployment is one of the major impacts of the Great Depression.

3. Racism

The Great Depression of the 1930s brought hard times to many people in the United States, and it was a harsh time especially to racial and ethnic minorities, most of them had never felt the prosperous times of the 1920s, yet they had to face the crisis. The Blacks is one of the minorities in the United States, and they had suffered from the racial prejudice the most during the crisis. Before the crisis happened, the condition was already worse for them, they were the last to be hired and first to be fired in the cities, their jobless rate is already high even before the stock market crash,
“85% per cent lived in the south, itself the poorest region in the USA. There was considerable migration to north looking for a job, but here too African-American faced discrimination in housing and employment.” (Clements, 2012: 27).

When the Great Depression hit the country, more people went unemployed, increasing the rate of poverty and homelessness, then the government started the new deal programs to provide jobs for the people, programs such as WPA, NRA, and CWA were made to help the people and recover the nation’s industrial sector, it is stated by Peter Clements in his book that: “The programs was hoped that expenditure on public works such as roads, dams, hospitals and schools would stimulate the economy of American society…” (2012: 91). But when it comes to the opportunity to get a job, the Blacks was the last option to be hired. The Depression worsened to the Blacks, and leave them with starvation and bare subsistence living, the Great Depression was a time for great segregation against the black.

Both White and Black America were affected by the Great Depression, but the people who were worst affected where the black Americans, they moved to the cities to find a better condition and to seek for a job but what they found was the discrimination and inequality, and there was also segregation which made the Blacks did not allowed to go into restaurant, movie cinema, or drink from water fountain because the color of their skin. Their condition was already depressed before the Great Depression and worsened during the Great Depression. “African-Americans out of work was four to six times higher than whites, and that poorly paid jobs traditionally reserved for African-Americans such as waiter were now offered to whites” (Clements, 2012: 51).
The new deal and programs that provided by the government to recover the nation’s economic condition has a good effect on the white but it does not help much for the black, it triggers more intense segregation and discrimination towards them. Poorly paid jobs such as waiters, servants, and construction workers are now also offered to whites, which before the Great Depression usually those jobs belongs to the African-American. They were now competing for the same jobs, inner anger towards the black because the white feels that they are now a competitor.

Poverty and depression both contributed to this condition, people such as Bob Ewell represents those people who is blaming the minorities such as black and everyone below him for his condition. Previously stated that depression can trigger racism very easily if the society allows it, as described in the novel that Maycomb county is one those racist southern-town means that even when “white-trash” like Ewell blaming the black, the society tend to support him rather than the black.

Discrimination also happened in the courts during the 1930s era of the Great Depression. Prejudice against racial and ethnic minorities often happen at that time, especially towards African American people. During that period, United States was under the Jim Crow Laws. That is the law which enforced racial segregation in the South, and disallow the Blacks to do things that White people can do.

Jim Crow Laws also allowed White people to do terrible things to the Blacks, such as brutal acts called lynching. Hundreds of lynching acts terrorized the Blacks throughout the 1930s of the Great Depression. Ronald L. Davis said in his essay Creating Jim Crow,
Segregation and disfranchisement laws were often supported, moreover, by brutal acts of ceremonial and ritualized mob violence (lynchings) against southern blacks. Indeed, from 1889 to 1930, over 3,700 men and women were reported lynched in the United States—most of whom were southern blacks. (www.hatborohorsham.org/cms/lib2/PA01000027/Centricity/Domain/374/Jim_Crow_Era-Lynching.pdf).

The African American people had to deal with this kind of situation while they also had to survive in the economic crisis. Harper Lee portrayed the condition of the Blacks during the crisis through Tom Robinson in the novel. In the novel, the black is often considered as being in the wrong place and in the wrong time. Tom had all the difficulties that African American people had during the crisis, racism, segregation, and discrimination worsened towards them, yet they had to survive the crisis. Racial prejudice was even worse in the South, they had to live separately from the Whites area, isolated and the lived in such terrible place like the slums, and the worst part of the town: “He lives in that little settlement beyond the town dump…” (1982: 86).

It is explained in the previous analysis that the Farmers is very poor during the crisis, but their condition is a lot better compared to the black people, this is simply because African American people had to deal with both the crisis and the intense racial prejudice, and they already on the lowest part of the society when the crisis hit.

The accusation of Tom Robinson portrayed the condition of African American against the unfair trial and the terror of lynching, and the accusation that based on hates and depression. When Tom Robinson held in jail due to the accusation, the lynch mob consisting of the farmers and the townsfolk gathers to lynch Tom Robinson for the alleged rape. The scene begins with Atticus Finch waiting outside
the jailhouse where the black man he is defending from the charge of murder is being held.

In ones and twos, men got out of the cars. Shadows became substance as lights revealed solid shapes moving toward the jail door. Atticus remained where he was. The men hid him from view.

"He in there, Mr. Finch?" a man said.

"He is," we heard Atticus answer, "and he's asleep. Don't wake him up."

In obedience to my father, there followed what I later realized was a sickeningly comic aspect of an unfunny situation: the men talked in near-whispers.

"You know what we want," another man said.

"Get aside from the door, Mr. Finch." (1982: 202).

The event above showed the hatred towards the black, and how intense the racism during the Great depression, the economic condition of the society is a massive factor that lead something like this to happen, as explained in the previous chapter about depression, these kinds of people are easily provoked.

During the Tom Robinson trial, it is revealed that Maycomb society was bound to believe that Tom Robinson did rape Mayella Ewell, the society rather believe one of their "trash", simply because Bob is white.

Already stated previously that racism also happen in the criminal justice system in Maycomb society, blacks and minorities, especially those convicted of victimizing whites receive harsher penalties. Tom Robinson sentenced to death penalty by the jurors, even though Atticus provides enough evidence to prove that Tom is not guilty with demonstrate that such an act is impossible for Tom Robinson to beat Mayella Ewell. Mayella got beaten on the right side of her face. Tom Robinson's left arm is completely crippled, which is impossible for Tom to beat Mayella, but it is not impossible for Mr. Ewell to beat her, because Atticus proved that he is left handed.
Her father saw it, and the defendant has testified as to his remarks. What did her father do? We don’t know, but there is circumstantial evidence to indicate that Mayella was beaten savagely by someone who led almost exclusively with his left arm. We do know in part what Mr. Ewell did: he did what any God-fearing, persevering, respectable white man would do under the circumstances, he swore out a warrant, no doubt signing it with his left hand, and Tom Robinson now sits before you, having taken the oath with the only good hand he possesses, his right hand. (1982:272-273).

The statement from Atticus is strong enough to prove that Tom is not guilty but In Maycomb, judge is not the one who has the right to decide that someone is guilty or not. The one who has the power to decide the final decision in the Maycomb court are the juries. A group of twelve men sit beyond the judge who has the power to give final decision in the court.

Judge Taylor is the one who responsible for leading Tom Robinson case, he is described as a good man, but even he want to do the right thing, he could not save Tom from the death penalty which is a final decision from the juries. The twelve juries were all white people and it does not fair for the defendant which is black skinned.

The same thing also happened in America during the Great Depression, almost all the juries were white people during those times, non-whites were systematically excluded from juries and courts. Atticus explained to Scout that, “In our courts, when it’s a white man’s word against a black man’s, the white man always win. They’re ugly, but those are the facts of life.” (1982:295). What Atticus means by saying that is about the absolute supremacy of white people in front of the black, and when it comes to the trial between black people and white people, it is clear who will win the trial and who will lose.
The juries already decided that Tom is guilty in the first place, even before the trial began, it simply because black people has no rights and they are always wrong in front of white people. Atticus already knew this condition from the beginning, he knew that it is almost impossible to win the case and release Tom from the accusation.

This remains the ugly fact of life in Maycomb, as well as in American society during the depression era. Racism runs deep in the society, especially in typical rural town in America. As one of the Major impacts from the Great Depression, Racial Prejudice made the hard times during the depression era became even harder for the African American people. Racism and discrimination in Maycomb society is one of the impacts from The Great Depression, as well as poverty and depression, it is all connected to each other. Poverty leads to depression, and at the end the black will always become a scapegoat for those who depressed.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This thesis analyzed Harper Lee’s novel entitled *To Kill a Mockingbird*. This book revealed the author’s experience during the Great Depression of the 1930s in America. The book depicted clearly how the people of America during the Great Depression through Maycomb society and its impacts on the people.

The analysis was done in two sections. The first section contained the writer’s analysis on the character which further in the analysis showed condition of American society in 1930s. Several characters are chosen due to their role in the society and how much their contribution to the story. Four characters are chosen by the writer because the writer thinks that these characters were essential for the analysis and to answer the second problem formulation. The data from the first problem formulation is used in the second section where the impacts of the Great Depression to the society of the novel revealed. Each character represents different impact to American society during depression era.

Review on the Great Depression of 1930s in the previous chapter was used to classify the impacts and how the crisis affected the American society of 1930s that implied by the characters of the novel. The story of the novel takes United States in the middle of the Great Depression in 1930s. The analysis of the characters explains the condition of American people during the hard times. The Great Depression raised several issues in the society, and through this study it is revealed that the crisis affects Physical, Racial and Economic aspects.
From the first problem formulation, the writer found three major impacts that can be revealed from the novel: Poverty, Depression, and Racism. From the novel it is clearly stated that Maycomb society is a rural town in Southern America and this society depends on agricultural sector. The Great Depression hit hardest on agricultural sector, the impacts are greater in Southern America. Farmers like Mr. Cunningham is very poor, other farmers even give up on their farm, and the crisis that happens to farmers also affects the economic condition for those whose work is professional jobs.

Unemployment is one of the main factors that leads to poverty and depression, the author raise the issue of depression through Bob Ewell. Bob showed us that unemployment and living under the poverty line for quite a long time can affects someone’s physical and mental health thus later will change his or her attitudes towards the society. Bob represents a depressed man who cannot deal with the crisis, lost his mind and become the “trash” of the society.

The Blacks is one of the minorities in the United States, and they had suffered from the racial prejudice the most during the crisis. Before the crisis happened, the condition was already worse for them, they were the last to be hired and first to be fired in the cities, their jobless rate is already high even before the stock market crash. As one of the Major impacts from the Great Depression, Racism made the hard times during the depression era became harder for the African American people. Almost in every aspects of life the Blacks had to deal with the discrimination, segregation, and the unequal justice system.
Bob Ewell take an advantage of the situation to get sympathy from the society, in purpose to clean his bad reputation in the society. The accusation and trial of Tom Robinson is one of the major events in the story and revealing racism that occurs in society of Maycomb. During the Great Depression, African-American often become the scapegoat of the whites, racism was intense and the great segregation happened in aspects of the American society.

Finally, the writer hopes that this study will be helpful for us to become more aware about the issues in our society and understanding social problem that occurs because of the crisis. Thus, we can learn from the past and find a better solution for the future. Poverty, Depression, and Racism are the issues that will always happen and occurs in our society, but learning from it will make us more aware and able to deal with every members of the society better than before.
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