

Tribhuvan University

Differentiated Parenting among Whites in Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this research entitled
“Differentiated Parenting among Whites in Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird*”
is my on original work carried out as a Master’s student at the Department of
English at Ratna Rajya Campus to the extent that assistance from others
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All sources used for the thesis have been fully and properly cited. It contains no
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is made in the thesis.

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “**Differentiated Parenting among Whites in Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird***” submitted to the Department of English, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Ratna Rajya Laxmi Campus by Mr. Santosh Poudel has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

This research is an analytical inquiry into Harper Lee's novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird* exploring the differentiated representation of parenting with reference to the American society of the 1930s. Though the novel is written in 1960, the story is set on the background of 1930s life of South American society and portrays the socio-economic situation prevailing at the confluence of the Great Depression-1929, the New Deal-1933 and the World War II 1939-1945. Indeed, it was the decade when the state had diverted all its attention to regain the earlier vitality of its economy. As the entire nation was politically turbulent in bringing about an economic momentum, it was consequential that the discussion over parenting policy would be back-grounded. At a period of time when the state lacked the presence of the state mechanisms for intervention and sustainable policies regarding parenting, the sole responsibility of parenting the child went to the parents. As a result, a huge gap is observed in parenting and childcare of American society and the Maycomb County has been depicted as a representative example.

The novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* has employed many child characters whose lives are highly influenced by their parents. Starting from the mouthpiece of the novel Scout to other minor characters like Dill, Boo and Walter, the lives of all the children are influenced by the temperament, social, economic, and academic status of their parents. Against one's anticipation, the black people seem rational as parents and in the contrary, the whites appear mediocre. Despite belonging to the same socio-cultural origin, the manner of parenting even among the whites in Macomb County as depicted in Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* seems incompatible among families. Therefore, the dissimilarity in parenting of innocent children has been seriously analyzed in this study.

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1. Parenting and the Contemporary Historical Context

The Great Depression

Parenting or child rearing is the process of promoting and supporting the physical, emotional, social, and intellectual development of a child from infancy to adulthood. Parenting practices in a certain period of time is directly shaped by the contemporary historical context. As the novel was set in 1930, it is important to understand the socio-economic situation prevailing in the corresponding era. The contemporary America marks the beginning of the Great Depression that would last until the industrial boom of 1941. The historical account made by Richard Ruland and Malcolm Bradbury reads, “With the crash of the New York Stock market in 1929, the decade of no tomorrows came to a frightening end, and Americans were stunned by the rapidity of their slide.” (Roland and Bradbury 317) They further report the impact of the economic crash in American households furnishing with numerical details:

What had come to seem an irreversible ride on the celestial railroad became perhaps the most serious challenge the American Dream had faced since the Civil War. Life savings disappeared overnight. Suddenly there were fewer jobs and lower wages for those that remained. In 1932, the average monthly unemployment total reached 12 million with wages at 60 percent of the 1929 level and industry operating at half its 1929 volume. Some 5,000 banks had failed and everyone knew the song, “Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?” In 1993, 2,000 rural schools did not open. There were 200,000 unemployed teachers and 2.3 million children without schools to attend. (317)

The statistical data reported on unemployment, failure of industries and banks, the closing of schools, idle teachers and children without schools to attend signify how gravely the economic crash had hit the American households. In fact, the economic situation has been compared to the challenge that America faced during the Civil War.

In such a time of crisis, when people had to spend all their earning just to procure a livelihood, a proper investment on childhood or childcare would be overshadowed. Thus, a constructive parenting that would result in overall development of the child could not be imagined as the utmost priority.

Even the literary history was affected by the Great Depression. Ruland and Bradbury, taking reference from the contemporary objectivist poet William Carlos Williams, claim that symbolism in poetry would be unacceptable due to the harsh problems of the era that needed an immediate solution. They symbolize the contemporary society terms of literary techniques and styles in the following ways;

No symbolism can be permitted to obscure the real purpose: to lift the world of the senses to the level of imagination and give it new currency. In the world of the Depression, of poverty, starvation and bread lines, descriptive documentary writing received renewed attention . . .

(qtd. in Ruland and Bradbury 287).

Ruland and Bradbury argue that 1930's is the era of such human troubles that symbolism would make the real purpose of writing unclear, as the sufferings of the people were practically harsh. They depict the contemporary America as the world of depression, poverty, starvation and breadlines. Owing to this fact, it was important for writers to describe the difficulties that the ordinary people were going through rather than

symbolizing human emotions. Therefore, they prioritized a descriptive documentary writing so as to combat poverty and starvation. While the major agenda of the government was to revitalize national economy and with all the parents either standing in a breadline or vying for jobs, there were higher possibilities for children to have a harsh childhood.

Throughout the novel, Lee displays poverty in respectable, poor, white farmers named the Cunninghams. Atticus introduces the Cunninghams to Scout saying, “the Cunninghams are country folks, farmers, and the crash hit them the hardest . . . acres not entitled were mortgaged to the hilt, and the little cash he made went to interest.” (Lee 21) Lee shows no matter how hard the Cunninghams try, they are only able to earn just enough money to survive. Even the children of these hardworking people suffer. In the first day of the school, Scout defines her friend Walter’s situation by thinking, “He didn’t forget his lunch, he didn’t have any. He had none today nor would he have any tomorrow or the next day. He had probably never seen three quarters together in his life.” (Lee 20) Due to the Great Depression, the hardworking Cunninghams have very little money, which leads to great debts and extreme financial burden and, ultimately to a flawed parenting and an incomplete parenting.

The Ewells, who are opposite of the respectable Cunninghams suffer the same fate in terms of their economic situation and employment. They lived in poverty by choice, as the father never makes any attempts to find employment. Scout explains, “No economic fluctuations changed their status – people like the Ewells lived as guests of the county in prosperity as well as in the depths of the depression.” (Lee 187) Most wealthy citizens feel compassion for low income citizens like the Cunninghams, but their

compassion for people like the Ewells is inconsistent. Atticus recognizes that people feel more sympathy towards the Ewell children than for Mr. Ewell himself. He tells Scout, “when a man spends his relief checks on green whiskey his children have a way of crying from hunger pains.” (Lee 34) All these evidences prove the poverty prevailing in the Maycomb County during the great depression.

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the New Deal

The great depression was characterized by starvation, breadlines and unemployment, and the only hope Americans could turn to was the President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Roosevelt took office amid a terrifying bank crisis that had forced many states to suspend banking activities. He acted quickly to restore public confidence. On his inaugural day, March 4, 1933, he declared that “the only thing we have to fear is fear itself.” (Vedder, et al. 128) Roosevelt was able to bring about significant changes in the lives of American people shortly after his inauguration.

On May 12, 1933, the Congress established a Federal Emergency Relief Administration to distribute half a billion dollars to state and local agencies. Roosevelt also created the Civil Works Administration, which by January 1934 was employing more than 4,000,000 men and women. Alarmed by rising costs, Roosevelt dismantled CWA in 1934, but the persistence of high unemployment led him to make another about-face. In 1935 the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act provided almost \$5,000,000,000 to create work for some 3,500,000 persons. The Public World Administration(PWA), established in 1933, provided jobs on long-term construction projects, and the Civilian Conservation Corps put

2,500,000 young men to work planting or otherwise improving huge tracts of forestland. For homeowners, the Federal Housing Administration began insuring private home improvement loans to middle-income families in 1934; in 1938 it became a home-building agency as well. (Beeman et.al.5)

The relief that the Roosevelt administration provided through various government agencies was one of the significant achievement of 1930's decade. Employment and housing were generated to great number to the people. The various plans and programs that were incorporated under the New Deal positively influenced the American households significantly.

One of the projects that came as a relief to the Great Depression and helped combat the prevailing hunger and poverty was the "Works Progress Administration" which was later renamed "Work Projects Administration". The WPA employed people directly: It was a typical project began at local level, with city and county governments assessing their needs and unemployment numbers. The Federal Works Agency has reported the rise in employment after eight years of its establishment:

The WPA program . . . During its operation it provided employment at one time or another for a total of about 8,500,000 different individuals. This means that during 8 years in which the program was in operation nearly one-fourth of all families in the United States were dependent on WPA wages for their support (Federal Works Agency 8).

The data shows how successful the WPA program was in generating employment but the unemployed whites in the novel are not able to benefit themselves by the WPA program. Though both the Cunninghams and Ewells are poor and are in an acute crisis, they have

not taken the job offered by the WPA. Mr. Cunningham necessarily does not want to lose the WPA job but he is afraid of entailment will make him lose his land. “Mr. Cunningham could get a WPA job, but his land would go to ruin if he left it, and he was willing to go hungry to keep his land.” (Lee 23) The fear of losing the land is keeping Mr. Cunningham unemployed despite the presence of the WPA program launched by the Roosevelt administration.

The insecurity of losing the land is what it renders Mr. Cunningham unemployed, which is relatively conceivable, if we try and walk on Mr. Cunningham’s shoes. But it is hard to believe that amidst the widespread unemployment the laziness of Mr. Ewell cost him a WPA job. At a time when employment is the major problem, one would make every possible attempt to save it, but Mr Ewell irrespective to his poverty and the nationwide economic crash loses the WPA job offered by the Maycomb County generated through the Roosevelt administration:

The first thing was that Mr. Bob Ewell acquired and lost a job in a matter of days and probably made himself unique in the annals of the nineteen-thirties: he was the only man I ever heard of who was fired from the WPA for laziness. I suppose his brief burst of fame brought on a briefer burst of industry, but his job lasted only as long as his notoriety . . . (Lee 273)

Bob Ewell, even after being aware of his poverty and the ongoing crisis, cannot practice resilience. As a result he has to resume his regular weekly appearances at the welfare offices so as to get his relief check.

Hitler and the Inception of World War II

One of the major historical events in the 1930's that influenced not only America but Europe and East Asia was the World War II. America had officially entered the war following the Pearl Harbor attack in 1941. However, the hints of war were spotted since the rise of Hitler in Germany. Along with the unprecedented loss of lives and property, World War II is significant for mass murdering of Jews. The prejudices Hitler had nurtured against Jews also led to a mass destruction. Emma Marriot elucidated the temperament of Hitler and the WWII.

Hitler used Mein Kampf to outline his political goals. He argued that the German race was superior to all other races and that Jews and Communists were the main threat to Germany. He believed that a Jewish conspiracy existed that was attempting world dominion and that it was up to the Germans to save humanity.

The Great Depression, which followed the Wall Street Crash of 1929, resulted in 6 million Germans being unemployed. The nationalist NAZI party, led by Hitler, promised to restore national pride and create jobs. . . .

(Marriot 133)

As a part of Hitler's "Final Solution," the genocide enacted by the regime was called the Holocaust. Hitler had built concentration and extermination camps where deaths and mass executions took place. Even though the majority of the Jewish were targeted, the other persecuted groups were Communists, Poles and Homosexuals. Kay further reports, "Estimates of total military and civilian casualties varied from 35 million to 60 million killed, including about 6 million Jews who died in the holocaust." (Marriot 134)

In the novel, Lee has introduced Hitler and the hint of the impending war through the conversation among school children. Introducing the current affairs to the students is one of the vital aspects of learning and Miss Gates seems well aware of it. She summarizes the current affairs: “Well anyway, Hitler’s started a program to round up all the half-Jews too and he wants to register ‘em in case they might wanta cause him any trouble and I think this is a bad thing and that’s my current event.” (Lee 283) The occupation of the Polish Jews and the rise of Hitler as discussed as the current affairs in the classroom provide enough ground to the pretext of WWII.

Contemporary Crisis and Investment in Child Development

Child rearing in broader sense is synonymous to investment which the parents/guardians and the state makes for the child. In 1995, Haveman and Wolfe highlighted, “One estimate of the average total cost of these investments per child is about 15 percent of the GDP annually.” (qtd. in Kilburn and Wolfe. 21) M. Rebecca Kilburn and Barbara L. Wolfe shed light on the importance of resources devoted to child development by families and society.

Resources are allocated to child development by the parents, the government, and others . . . In the United States, parents provide the majority of inputs into child development, including direct resources and time. This chapter has examined four types of resources that parents devote to young children’s development: purchased, time, psychological, and human capital resources. We argue that purchased and time resources are partial substitutes for one another, due to parents’ labor force behaviors that limit both the amount of purchased resources the family can

provide and the amount of time inputs the family can make to child rearing. (Kilburn and Wolfe 44)

The complex whole of resources needed for parenting that comprises purchased, time, psychological, and human resources as examined above was not possible in the 1930's context. Irrespective of the time and situation, only the Finch family is able to facilitate all these resources and the rest of the children were deprived of these investments.

In terms of making investments to the children, the finch family stands tall. Atticus has facilitated his children with purchased resources. He allots time to spend with his family, answers each of their queries and has employed a permanent mother substitute for his children. Quite opposite to the finch children, the Ewell and Cunningham children do not receive any of those resources. As both Mr Ewell and Mr Cunningham make no attempts to get a WPA job, it is impossible for their children to get purchased resources. Instead, Mr Ewell spends all his relief pay checks in green whisky. Making psychological and time investment in the part of the Ewells is possible, but Bob Ewell doesn't even care to provide his children the moral support he could. As a result the proper investment is not witnessed for child care by any of the families of the Maycomb County except the Finches.

2. Maternal Love and its influence on a Child's Overall Development

John Bowlby's Perspective on Importance of Motherly Affection

When it comes to parenting, the motherly love one garners as a child shapes a person or the kind of the person s/he is likely to be. So the maternal love and affection one receives as a child is the most important factor that enriches one's childhood and eventually results in a prosperous and successful adulthood.

In 1951 the World Health Organization gave John Bowlby the task of exploring the orphaned and homeless children. In understanding these children, Bowlby determined that “what is believed to be essential for mental health is that the infant and young child should experience a warm, intimate and continuous relationship with his mother (or permanent mother substitute- one person who steadily mothers him) in which both find satisfaction and enjoyment. It is this complex, rich and rewarding relationship with the mother in early years . . . [that we] now believe to underlie the development of character and mental health. (Bowlby 361)

Application of Bowlby’s vision on the child characters of the novel leads us to a conclusion that the children in the novel do not seem to receive sufficient motherly affection as they are deprived of the warm, intimate and a continuous relationship with their mothers. The mouthpiece of the novel Scout and her brother Jem do not have mother as she had died of heart attack. “Our mother died when I was two so never felt her absence. I did not miss her but I think Jem did.” (Lee 6) While the rest of the families are indifferent to the need of motherly love to children, the Finches have managed a permanent mother substitute for their children. This is the evidence which justifies that Finches more concerned about their children.

Application of Bowlby’s Perspective on Families of Maycomb County

Despite being motherless, Scout and Jem, the Finch children receive sufficient maternal love. Atticus has employed a cook named Calpurnia for them who treats them with motherly affection and also with strictness’ quite often. Calpurnia is portrayed as a mother figure for her firm but loving personality toward the Finch children. Both Jem and

Scout look up to Calpurnia, who acts as their surrogate mother throughout the novel.

Calpurnia not only cooks and cleans for the children but also teaches them important life lessons and offers them insight, which develops their perspectives for life.

After Scout rudely comments on Walter Cunningham Jr.'s poor eating habits, Calpurnia takes Scout into the kitchen and chastises her. Calpurnia tells Scout that it is wrong to criticize her guests and insists that she treat her company with respect. Calpurnia then gives Scout a smack and make her eat dinner in the kitchen. When Scout complains about Cal, Atticus tells her, "I've no intention of getting rid of her, now or ever. We couldn't operate a single day without Cal, have you ever thought of that? You think about how much Cal does for you, and you mind her, you hear?" (Lee 25) Atticus's comments reveal that Calpurnia is respected and admired in the Finch home. Overall, Calpurnia's firm but loving personality indicates that she is a positive role model and a mother figure to the Finch children.

Calpurnia's dictatorship is merely is a hide that she wears to keep the children disciplined. She is soft hearted by nature and loves the children by all means possible. When Scout starts school, she finds the house lonely and manages to make crackling bread just the ways Scout likes it and as soon as she returns home she expresses her affection towards her;

'I missed you today, 'she said. 'The house got so lonesome'long about two o'clock I had to turn on the radio.'

'Why? Jem'nmean't ever in the house unless it's raining'.'

'I know,' she said,'but one of you's always in callin' distance. (Lee 32)

Calpurnia's confession about how she felt upon the day long separation with the children represents her motherly affection for the children. In line with Bowlby's conclusion Calpurnia is the permanent mother substitute- person who steadily mothers them. In this regard the Calpurnia has furnished the lives of Finch children with warm, intimate and continuous mothering filling up the vacuum created due to their mother's demise.

While the character of Calpurnia substitutes for the housewife in the Finch home and, acts as the nurturer and teaches Jem and Scout good manners and reinforces correct behavior, it is Miss Maudie who performs the distinct maternal role of reinforcing the moral lessons that Atticus Finch wishes to teach the children in the heartfelt and sympathetic way that only a mother can. In short, she is the one who justifies to the rational statements and actions of Atticus Finch. For instance, it is Miss Maudie who explains Jem and Scout why their father has cautioned them not to kill a mockingbird:

Your father's right. . . Mockingbirds don't do one thing but make music for us to enjoy. They don't eat up people's gardens, don't nest in corncribs, they don't do one thing but sing their hearts out for us. That's why it's a sin to kill a mockingbird. (Lee 125)

Miss Maudie provides the comforting heart of the mother that softens the harsh rationality of their father. For instance, while they have overheard Atticus tell his brother that he could not face his children if he did not do all he can to defend Tom Robinson, they are yet confused but the harsh words of the townspeople. But, Miss Maudie puts everything into perspective, as a mother often can, by explaining the character of Atticus. The children overhear her say when she speaks with Aunt Alexandra:

Have you ever thought of it this way, Alexandra? Whether Maycomb knows it or not, we're paying the highest tribute we can pay a man. We trust him to do right. . . the handful of people who say a fair trial is for everybody. . . The handful of people in this town with background . . .

(Lee 261)

In fact, Scout and Jem have instilled in them the lessons of Atticus by means of the tender understanding of the motherly Miss Maudies as she simplifies the children about the harsh rationality of their father. Similarly, Miss Maudie through her convincing words makes the Finch children believe that their father is doing a good job though he is rumored to be a nigger lover. Her presence as a motherly figure has helped the Finch children enjoy the true essence of childhood. Furthermore, Miss Maudie consistently helps children develop gratefulness towards their father directly and indirectly. In this sense Miss Maudie generates a motherly overture to the Finch children.

In contrast to the Finch family, the Maycomb County hosts another white family i.e. the Ewell family. They have no money, no education, and no proper parenting. The only thing that elevates the Ewells at any level in the community is the fact that they are whites. Their backwardness makes it obvious that the children are highly unlikely to receive a good parenting and what make the situation worse is the fact that the Ewell children do not have mother resulting in Mayella to become the surrogate wife for her father and mother for younger siblings. The following inquiry made by Atticus in during the trial session reveals volumes about the upbringing Mayella received as an Ewell;

‘You the eldest?, The oldest?’

‘Yes.’

‘How long has your mother been dead?’

‘Don’t know-long time.’

‘Did you ever go to school?’

‘Read’n’writegood as papa yonder. (Lee 21)

The conversation during the trial in the excerpt above reveals that Mayella can't attend school because she has to take care of her younger siblings, especially when her father leaves on days-long drinking binges. She's involved in an abusive relationship, but she doesn't have anywhere to go or anyone to help her. Mayella's situation signifies how helpless the Ewell children are. Furthermore, the existence of mother, and the warmth, comfort and satisfaction of having a mother is an alien world to them. It is unimaginable for them to employ a mother figure as their father Bob Ewell is unable to assume any of the responsibility towards them. As a result, they are forced to lead a life of poverty with no essence of motherly love or a permanent substitute to it.

Ewells and Finch of the Maycomb County have two things in common; the first is that both of them are whites and the second is that their children do not have mothers.

However, they have responded to the situation differently. The former ones have made no attempts to fill the vacuum of motherly love whilst the later ones have made considerable effort to provide their children with maternal love which makes enough premises to conclude that the Finch family, particularly the father, is concerned and walks extra miles in parenting their children.

3. Paternal Love and its Influence on Child's Overall Development

Universally Accepted Model on Paternal Involvement

The impact of other people or society on the children is inevitable but the strongest influences, or lack thereof, belongs to fathers. Especially when the father is the only biological the children have. It is therefore consequential, whether they are godly or evil, the children would be highly influenced by their attributes. Hence, it becomes necessary to reflect upon the father's contribution and support so as to analyze the upbringing of the children. As research on fathering has proliferated, a perpetual concern is how father involvement should be defined. An influential model of father involvement was outlined by Lamb, Pleck, Charnov and Charnov (1985), who conceptualized three types of involvement:

For analytical purposes, it may be helpful to think of paternal involvement in terms of three components: interaction, availability and responsibility.

Interaction refers to the father's contact with his child through caretaking and shared activities. Availability is related concept concerning the father's potential availability for interaction, by virtue of being present or accessible to the child whether or not direct interaction is occurring.

Responsibility refers to the role father takes is ascertaining that the child is taken care of and arranging resources to be available for the child. For example, this might involve arranging for baby-sitters making appointments with the pediatrician and seeing that the child is taken to him/her, determining when the child needs new clothes, and so on.

(Lamb, et al.125)

With no any concrete policy and state mechanism to ensure a child's good upbringing, the only person to turn to is a father. The three components of paternal involvement is

ensured only in the lives of Finch children and the rest of the children in Maycomb County are living without knowing what paternal involvement looks like.

Application of Paternal Model on Families of Maycomb County

The novel employs the father-child relationship between Scout and Atticus, Jem and Atticus, Mayella and Bob Ewell, and Dill and his father. All these pair of father-child relationships are analyzed as per the three components of paternal involvement which helps us determine whether all of them meet this level of parenting or not. In case of Scout and Atticus, good moral guidance results in fine decisions and actions. Atticus instills a strong sense of morality and justice into Scout. Atticus always has a sense of doing what is right and tries to get Scout to do the same. When Jem starts to undergo puberty, he instructs Scout to start acting more like a woman, which irritates Scout. Scout looks to Atticus for some advice and tells Scout to “consider things from his point of view.” (Lee 39) Atticus understands that Scout is young but teaches her that people should not judge but try to be compassionate towards others by stepping in their shoes. Scout addresses her father “Atticus,” an action many people would see as a sign of disrespect, but they both love each other. It is shown that she loves her father when Cecil Jacobs tells Scout that Atticus “defends niggers”. However Atticus has his own rational way of handling the situation:

‘Do all lawyers defend n-Negroes, Atticus?’

‘Of course they do, Scout.’

‘Then why did Cecil say you defended niggers? ’He made it sound like you were running’ a still.’

Atticus sighed. 'I'm simply defending a Negro- his name's Tom Robinson. He lives in that little settlement beyond the town dump. He's a member of Calpurnia's church, and Cal knows his family well. She says they're clean living folks. . . (Lee 83)

Atticus is able to reason with his daughter's anger and makes her understand everything she wonders about. To her slightest curiosity Atticus opens himself up respecting her queries and makes her feel that all her queries worth an answer. He doesn't appear to neglect the queries made by his daughter that makes Scout feels that her concern has been valued and give her the sense of physical and psychological availability.

In like manner, Atticus is able to perform child care. He performs activities like reading, cuddling and hugging with the gracious and gentle touch possible. Each activity he performs is associated to better adjustment with parenthood and tend to fill the vacuum that is created due to his wife's death. Hence, Atticus is a caring father who is able to alter the conventional role of fathers:

He unhooked my overalls, leaned me against him, and pulled them off. He held me up with one hand and reached for my pyjamas with the other.

'Yeah, an' they all thought it was Stoner's Boy messin' up their clubhouse an' throwin' ink all over it an. . .

He guided me to the bed and sat me down. He lifted my legs and put me under the cover.

'An' they chased him 'n' never could catch him' cause they didn't know what he looked like, an' Atticus, when they finally saw him, why he hadn't done any of those things . . . Atticus, he was real nice . . .'

His hands were under my chin , pulling up the cover, tucking it around me.

Most people are, Scout, when you finally see them.’

He turned out the light and went into Jem’s room. He would be there all night, and he would be there when Jem waked up in the morning.

(Lee 309)

Atticus is performing various activities simultaneously like a mother would. He is reading a story to his little girl, conversing with her, undressing her to prepare to sleep and holding her with a great care. Similarly, he is all set to go his son Jem’s room who has been injured in an ordeal with Bob Ewell. Hence, it can be concluded that Atticus is an enlightened human being who has assumed his parental and paternal responsibility throughout the novel.

Bob Ewell, a white stereotype is contrary to Atticus Finch. He is a drunk, foul speaking and atrocious maniac. He tends to hurt everyone who comes in his way. Because of him, all the Ewell children including Mayella are forced to live in acute poverty. Mayella is forced to look after all her younger siblings. Mayella often falls victim to his bouts of rage. Bob hates niggers and unfortunately his daughter tries to molest a black man named Tom Robinson. As soon as he notices her daughter trying to tempt a nigger he beats her severely:

...I didn’t think so ; Atticus was trying to show, it seemed to me, that Mr. Ewell could have beaten up Mayella. That much I could follow. If her right eye was blacked and she was beaten mostly on the right side of the face, it would tend to show that a left- handed person did it. (Lee196)

The excerpt above proves that the scars on the face of Mayella Ewell were made not due to beating of Tom Robinson but by her own father. As Tom's right hand is physically impaired and he cannot use his right hand. But Mr. Ewell claims himself ambidextrous. Against all evidences he proves himself a victim.

Bob Ewell, by all means is a contemptible parent. He is also a single parent just like Atticus Finch. But the way he is nurturing his children is quite contrary. He hasn't even imparted the basic facilities and culture to them. As a result, their psychological, social and emotional development is unpleasing. Without vouchsafing any grace to the children, he is controlling and deteriorating so much of their happiness and rights. Mayella involuntarily reveals that her father still abuses her which is exposed to the town during the trial of Tom Robinson:

. . . Do you love your father miss Mayella?' was his next.

'Love him, whatcha mean?'

'I mean, is he good to you, is he easy to go along with?'

'He does tollable,'cept when-'

'Except when?'

Mayella looked at her father, who was sitting with his chair tipped against the railing. He sat up straight and waited for her to answer.

'Except when nothin', ' said Mayella. 'I said he does tollable.'

Mr. Ewell leaned back again.

'Except when he's drinking ?' asked Atticus so gently that Mayella

nodded. . . (Lee 202)

Through his ruthlessness, Bob has pillaged and terrorized his children. In the conversation during the trial, Mayella is changing her statement because of the terror her father has inflicted. She is not feeling free to give her statement. Instead she is aware of every move that her father makes and reads twitches in his face. The inconsistency that she shows in her behavior even during the short period of time is the proof that her father is terrorizing her and all the Ewell children have to pay a price for it. Her nodding to Atticus's question about her father going mad while drinking makes it clear that Mr. Ewell is a mediocre parent. All things considered, Bob Ewell seems far from the three levels of fathering. Neither he is emotionally nor physically accessible to his children nor is he assuming his responsibility as a father. Quite opposite to the attribute of an ideal father, he tends to use all his power to soothe his white supremacy.

Another important father-child relationship that the novel depicts is that of Walter Cunningham and his father Mr. Cunningham. Though they are a step above the Ewells, their living condition is miserable. They are poor and can never afford the legal remedy in money. "As the Cunninghams had no money to pay a lawyer, they simply paid us with what they had." (Lee 23) Mr. Cunningham seems available and concerned about his son Walter but he is not able to fulfill his basic needs, which is a reason that the Cunninghams are a step below the townspeople:

Walter Cunningham's face told everybody in the first grade he had hookworms. His absence of shoes told us how he got them. People caught hookworms in barn-yards and hog wallows. If Walter had owned any shoes he would have worn them the first day of the school and then

discarded them until mid-winter. He did have on a clean shirt and neatly mended overalls. (Lee 21)

The health condition of Walter Cunningham represents that the father is unable to ascertain that the child is taken care of and hasn't arranged resources to be available for the child. For example, he has neither taken Walter to the pediatrician nor has he bought him shoes. The unhygienic condition and the scarcity of resources that Walter faces is the proof of Mr. Cunningham's poor parenting.

Despite his poverty, Mr. Cunningham has made attempts to lynch Tom Robinson. Though he retreats eventually, he tries to maintain a white supremacy through this action. Similarly, the Cunningham tribe has set a rule among themselves. "They never took anything off anybody, they get along on what they have." (Lee 22) The ideology that they have inflicted among themselves doesn't even spare the children:

. . .and I tried again: '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 country folks after a while.'

The Cunninghams never took anything that they can't pay back – no church baskets and no scrip stamps. . .(Lee 23)

The explanation is an attempt made by Scout to make Miss. Caroline understand the Cunningham way of life in which Scout justifies the reason why Walter refused a loan from the teacher. What Miss. Caroline does is a simple gesture of humanity to a child who she thinks has forgotten his lunch. Walter is unable to accept the offer due to the unjust principle that has been inflicted upon him. In a sense, the Cunningham children are trapped in the shackles of poverty and the unjust Cunningham principles.

The other child character in the novel who is deprived of paternal love is Dill. Dill comes to Maycomb County to his aunt, Miss Rachel to spend the summer. He does not have a cherish-able childhood like his friends Scout and Jem. While his friends tell about their father confidently, he tends to conceal the identity or the existence of his father.

When Dill reduced Dracula to dust, and Jem said the show sounded better than the book, I asked Dill where his father was: ‘You ain’t said anything about him’

‘I haven’t got one.’

‘Is he dead?’

‘No...’

‘Then if he’s not dead you’ve got one, haven’t you?’

Dill blushed and Jem told me to hush . . . (Lee 8)

The reluctance shown by Dill to accept and acknowledge the existence of his father as depicted in the excerpt proves that he has not got the affection one gets from a father.

The indifference towards father that Dill exhibits by saying that he has not got a father is evident to the fact that his father is neither physically nor psychologically accessible to him.

Dill doesn’t have a father figure who he could share his childhood moments with. He tends to fill the gap of paternal vacuum by visiting his friends in the Maycomb County. Dill desperately runs away from his home in Meridian and lies underneath Scout’s bed. After he emerges from underneath the bed, he tells a fanciful story of his story from home

Dill recited this narrative: having been bound in chains and left to die in the basement by his father, who disliked him, and secretly kept alive on raw field peas by a passing farmer who heard his cries for help. Dill Worked himself free by pulling the chains from the wall. Still in the wrist manacles, he wandered two miles out of meridian. . .

, Just across the river from Maycomb. He walked the rest of the way.

(Lee 152)

A child with the support of a father would never run away from home. Though Dill has wild imagination about everything, it can be concluded that his relationship with father is either complicated or he is not getting any of the components of paternal love.

The paternal care by the father in the Maycomb County can be distinctly divided into two categories; the first one comprises of the Finch family and the second one comprises the Ewells, the Cunninghams and the other whites. The Finch family, particularly Atticus, fits into all three ideals of paternal components as he is accessible to the children, makes all attempts to have meaningful conversation with them and takes every responsibility to make his children's world a better place to live. Hence, it is evident that Maycomb County has nurtured a differentiated parenting out of the same soil in terms of paternal care and involvement.

4. Relation between Parenting and the Child's Educational Attainment

Perspectives on Parental Involvement and Child's Academic Growth

The academic growth of a child highly depends on the parenting and childcare they receive. Pia Rebello Britto, Allison Sidle Fuligni, and Jeanne Brooks-Gunn claim (2002) claim that activities such as reading, singing and playing, and hugging and

cuddling are all opportunities for parents to stimulate cognitive, social, physical, and emotional growth in their young children. Their research led them to a conclusion that;

Educational attainment appears to be a factor in parents' activities and routines with their children. Parents with education beyond high school are more likely to read, play, hug and cuddle, and keep to daily routines with their children. . . Parents need to be better informed, for example, that shared reading can help even very young children acquire rudimentary behaviors, such as handling a book and knowing how to turn pages –that are important to emerging literacy skills. (Britto, et al.138)

Hart and Risley demonstrate, “ There is the strong association between maternal education and reading and literacy activities in the home (qtd. in Britto, et al.138).” In like manner, Brooks and Gunn in 1996 reveal, “The links between children’s IQ scores and the quality of learning opportunities and emotional support in the home are stronger for children of more educated mothers than for children of mothers who have not completed high school.” (qtd. in Britto, et al.138)

Overview on Academic Attainment of Children of Maycomb County

The theme of education runs throughout the novel. As the novel is set in 1930s American society, it traces the preliminary phase of modernizing the education system. The novel even marks the investment in academic materials and approaches made by the state to develop education in the Maycomb County.

The remainders of my school days were no more auspicious than the first. Indeed, they were an endless Project that slowly evolved into a Unit, in which miles of construction paper and wax crayons were expended by

the state of Alabama in its well-meaning but fruitless efforts to teach me Group Dynamics. What Jem called me the Dewey Decimal System was school-wide by the end of my first year, so I had no chance to compare with other teaching techniques. . . (Lee 36)

Scout as depicted above is unwilling to attend school as she sees no point in spending the state fund to teach her Group Dynamics. She is also complaining that the system adopted by the Alabama State in education renders her with no choice but to choose Dewey Decimal System. Even though the nation is making attempts to educate the children, the attempt on the part of the parent as in the novel is missing almost in all the white families.

Most of the children in the novel are deprived of educational facilities. Even at receiving education, the Finch children stand tall and the rest of the white children do not have any proper facilities to education or are not able to utilize the resources invested by the state at its best. Scout is attending school for the first time in her life but she knows everything that she has to know that a first grader has to, as she inherits education from her father. Instead of being appreciated for the pre-knowledge she possess, she is considered a threat by her teacher Miss. Caroline. Upon Miss. Caroline's remark about her father's teaching she ponders;

I never deliberately learned to read, but sometimes I had been wallowing illicitly in the daily papers. In the long hours of church – was it then I learned? I could not remember not being able to read hymns. Now that I was compelled to think about it, reading was something that just came to

me, as learning to fasten the seat of my union suit without looking around,
or achieving two bows from a snarl of shoelaces . . . (Lee19)

Scout believes that learning came natural to her. She hasn't made any deliberate attempts to read. The fact that her father is an educated person and has exposed her to various reading materials has made reading as easy as fastening the seat of the union suit. "I had stared at them all the evenings in my memory, listening to the news of the day, Bills to be enacted into Laws, the diaries of Lorenzo Dow, - anything Atticus happened to be reading when I crawled into his lap." (Lee 20)

The most important thing that Atticus has done as a parent is that he has set a routine to read to her daughter. Scout's remark about her father was, "Jem and I found our father satisfactory: he played with us, read to us and treated us with courteous detachment." (Lee 6) Scout also loves being read to. In fact, it is one of the activities. Scout holds dear and gets afraid when Miss. Caroline urges her to stop being read from her father. She pours down the grievance to the father as in the conversation below:

. . . What's the matter?'

Bit by bit, I told him the day's misfortunes. -and she said you taught me all wrong, so we can't ever read any more, ever. Please don't send me back, please, sir.'

....Do you know what a compromise is? He asked.

'Bending the law?'

'No, an agreement reached by mutual concessions. It works that way,' he said. 'If you'll concede the necessity of going to school, we'll go on reading every night just as we always have . . .(Lee 34-35)

Atticus and Scout make an agreement by reaching mutual concessions. Atticus convinces his daughter that they would continue reading even ahead with letting Miss. Caroline know. “By the way, Scout, you’d better not say anything at school about our agreement.” (Lee 35) In this way Atticus has made enough ground for his child’s educational growth by following a daily routine of reading to them.

Unlike the Finch family, the educational growth in the children of Ewell family is backward. Mayella Ewell, the oldest of the Ewell children does not go to school as she has to take care of all her younger siblings. Burris Ewell, another child from the Ewell family goes to school but is not able to pass his first grade since three years. “Burris Ewell was flattered by the recital. ‘Been comin to the first day o’ the first grade fer three years now,’ he said expansively. ‘Reckon if I’m smart this year they’ll promote me to the second.’” (Lee 30) Burris and the other Ewells represent the backwardness of the American South of the contemporary America.

‘He’s one of the Ewells, ma’am,’ and I wondered if the explanation would be less as unsuccessful as my attempt. But Miss Caroline seemed willing to listen. ‘Whole school’s full of ‘em. They come first day every year and then leave. The truant lady gets ‘em here cause she threatens ‘em with the Sheriff, but she’s given up tryin’ to hold them...

... You’re supposed to mark ‘em absent the rest of the year. . . (Lee 30)

Burris and other Ewells as narrated to Miss Caroline attend the school only once a year. They attend the school only due to the obligatory provision made by the state. Likewise, they don’t even seem to be aware of making minimum attendance voluntarily as the Truant lady has to threaten them with the Sherriff. Instead of supporting the children’s

educational growth by reading to them or making arrangements for study, Ewells are totally indifferent to the academic growth of their children.

Like the Ewells another white family that appears indifferent to their children's education is the Cunninghams. One of the representative examples of the Cunningham tribe is Walter Cunningham. Walter is almost as old as Jem but goes to school with Scout in the first grade. During the midday lunch with the Finches he reveals Atticus about the reason behind his failure; "Reason I can't pass the first grade, Mr Finch, is I've had to stay out ever' spring an' help Papa with the choppin', but there's another'n at the house now that's field size." (Lee 26) Even the Finch children can figure out the differences between themselves and the Cunninghams. Jem questions Atticus "Well then, how do you explain why the Cunninghams are different? Mr Walter can hardly sign his name, I've seen him. We've been reading and writin' longer'n they have (Lee 250)".

The gap of educational attainment between Finch and other White children like Ewells and Cunningham cannot be ignored. The only parent with education beyond high school who is more likely to read, play, hug and cuddle, and keep to daily routines with their children is Atticus Finch and the impact of his support is marked from the very first day of Scouts school. Contrarily, the rest of the children, particularly from Ewell and Cunningham family are looked upon with distaste by their counterparts. Therefore, analyzing the children's academic progress also leads to the conclusion that the parenting and childcare in the Maycomb County is not uniform.

5. Social Skill of Children and Parenting Practices

George and Main Perspectives on Young and Abused Children

Along with the physical educational, physical and mental development of a child, the social development is equally necessary. The social development can only be expected when they develop a habit of adapting themselves with other people including their peers. In 1977, Carol George and Mary Main, (Dept. of Psychology, University of California) conducted a research on twenty toddlers through observation during social interactions with their caregivers and peers during the day care settings. All the children were from the families experiencing stress, among which the first ones were abused and the remaining ones were matched controls. They observed that the abused children more frequently physically assaulted their peers. They ‘harassed’ their caregivers verbally and non-verbally, and they were the only children who assaulted or threatened to assault them. After the observation they drew to the conclusion that;

The social behavior of this sample of children does resemble that of relatively rejected children found within normal samples. The results reported in the study affirmed our expectation that Compared with their matched controls, we found abused children aggressive, inhibited in approach and avoidant in response to friendly overtures. (316)

The another conclusion their observation led to was, “ In broader aspects, the abused children bear some resemblance to their parents.” (316) In fact, the children with whom evil has been done, do evil in return. In other words, the abuses they go through or witness at home is reflected during their social interactions.

Comparison between Social Skill of Finch and other White Children

The social behavior of the children in the novel is highly different. The interaction skills are deeply rooted in what they witness at home or have been through. The Finch

children are rarely abused. They are not administered any kind of physical and psychological punishments. As a result, they have developed a sense of gratitude to everyone who love them and tend to speak their mind without any hesitation.

...I said in surprise. "He hasn't taught me anything, Miss Caroline.

Atticus ain't got time to teach me anything," I added, when Miss Caroline smiled and shook her head. "Why, he's so tired at night he just sits in the living room and reads." Miss Caroline asked good-naturedly. 'Somebody did. You weren't born reading *The Mobile Register*.'

'Jem says I was. He read in a book where I was a Bullfinch instead of a Finch. Jem says my name's really Jean Louise Bullfinch, that I got swapped when I was born and I'm really a -. . .(Lee 19)

Scout, in the very first day of school is able to explain her teacher Miss Caroline that her father is so busy that he has got no time to teach her. She tries to defend her father at the same time. Similarly, she also explains the funny remark that her brother made about her name to the teacher with a full confidence. She has made an impression among everyone and also poses threat to the teacher through her imagination. "Miss Caroline apparently thought I was lying. Let's not let our imaginations run away with us, dear." (Lee 19) All things considered, Scout has developed a positive social behavior as she is expressive about her thoughts, puts forward her ideas confidently and is positive to the friendly overtures of her teachers and friends.

A remarkable dynamism in judgments and behavior is seen in Scout as she matures. As Scout grows, she learns forgiveness and makes attempts to fix the errors she made in the past with a benevolent conviction. Scout would take pride in assaulting

Walter in her earlier days. “Catching Walter Cunningham in the schoolyard gave me some pleasure.” (Lee 25) But as she ponders, she regrets and wants to settle the differences. A solemn sense of introspection is represented in her as she thinks rationally about Walter Cunningham:

I remembered the distant disastrous occasion when I rushed to young Walter Cunningham’s defense. Now I was glad I’d done it. “Soon’s school starts I’m gonna ask Walter home to dinner,” I planned, having forgotten my private resolve to beat him up the next time I saw him. “He can stay over sometimes after school, too. Atticus could drive him back to Old Sarum. Maybe he could spend the night with us sometime, okay, Jem?” (Lee 246)

Scout names her act of grabbing Walter in the schoolyard disastrous, and makes plan to ask Walter to a dinner. Hence, her social behavior is growing relatively positive and acceptable. Scout was once disgusted by Walter’s table manner. “But he’s gone and drowned his dinner in the syrup. I Protested.” (Lee 27) Walter is the same person who she wouldn’t even consider a company despite they were in the same class. “He ain’t a company, Cal, he’s just a Cunningham.” (Lee 27) But the reasoning she has developed later makes her a better human being. Scout’s plan to call Walter Cunningham home for dinner, spending nights together and asking father Atticus to drive him back to his house , are the evidences of change in her attitude and also that of her positive social behavior and an appreciative response to friendly overtures.

The social interaction of other whites i.e. Ewell children in the novel is exactly opposite the Finches. The eldest Ewell is Mayella. Mayella, a young girl who has

not received any motherly affection, has been through atrocities of her abusive father Bob Ewell. Mayella is an example of abused children who bears many resemblances to her parent. As she is consistently abused by her father, she wants to blame someone for her misfortunes. She is not receptive even to the genuine concerns of any people near her. To the concern Atticus shows about her by asking if she would like to reconsider her testimony, she responds, “ You want me to say something that didn’t happen?” (Lee 206) Besides her distorted interpretations of Atticus’s questions, she curses and tries to avoid the further revelation of the reality.

I got somethin’ to say an’then I ain’tgonna say no more. That nigger yonder took advantage of me an’ if you fine fancy gentlemen don’t wantafonothin’ about it then you’re all yellow stinkin’ cowards, the lot of you. Your fancy airs don’t come to nothin’- your ma’amin’ and Miss Mayellerin’ don’t come to nothin’, Mr. Finch-.”

...Then she bursts into real tears. . .(Lee 207)

The use of harsh words at like yellow stinkin’ cowards’ inside the courtroom shows her lowly social interaction skills. She is not even ready to accept the decency shown by Atticus. Instead, she belittles the decent words like Ma’am and Miss Mayella used by Atticus to address her. The abusive language she uses to Atticus and other people she uses in the courtroom proves that she is has been through harsh childhood that had abuses that has turned her into a bitter human being like her father. Through social interaction she exhibits, she seems to have been frequently abused physically and mentally that has resulted in her aggressive, inhabitant and avoidant personality.

Another child who shares the same faith as Mayella does is Burris Ewell. Like other members of his family, he also lacks personal hygiene as Miss Caroline notices lice in his head on the very first day of the school. "I was just walking by when it crawled out of his hair." (Lee 28) Burris is not only the representative of the Ewell family in terms of hygiene but also in terms of his disregard to the people and the abusive nature he inherits from his father.

Miss Caroline said, "Sit back down, please, Burris," and the moment she said it I knew she had made a serious mistake. The boy's condescension flashed to anger.

"You try and make me, missus."

Little Chuck Little got to his feet. "Let him go, ma'am," he said. "He's a mean one, a hard-down mean on. . . (Lee 30)

Burris Ewell challenges Miss. Caroline to make him sit which is a total disregard of the teacher. His action leads harassment to the teacher. He further worsens the situation when he doesn't show any respect even to the school authority. When Miss Caroline tells Burris that she would report his disobedience to the principal his anger intensifies further.

Safely out of range, he turned and shouted: "Report and be damned to ye! Ain't no snot-nosed slut of a schoolteacher ever born c'n make me do nothin'! You ain't makin' me go nowhere, missus. You just remember that, you ain't makin' me go nowhere!" (Lee 31).

As Burris Ewell leaves the class yelling and insulting Miss Caroline for no particular reason, it is conclusive that he is the outcome of Bob Ewell's abusive parenting that has rendered him aggressive, inhuman and irresponsible to friendly overtures.

6. Conclusion

This research basically compares the parenting received by the children of the Maycomb County. The contemporary era of the 1930's was a time of hunger, poverty, breadlines and in general, the era of the Great Depression. A job was the most fortunate asset one could possess. The only job holder father in the Maycomb County is Atticus Finch. Hence, the only family that is not affected by the economic crash is the Finch family. While Atticus Finch earns well enough to raise his children, the other white fathers do not have any job. Bob Ewell is described a unique person, not in a sense that he has lofty prerogative but in a sense that he is the one to lose a WPA job amidst the economic crisis. Similarly, Mr. Cunningham is unable to take the WPA job as he is afraid that entailment of his land will make him lose his land. Mr Ewell and Mr Cunningham neither have job nor do they make an attempt to save or get one. This shows that they are indifferent to the needs and requirements of their children. They are unable to compromise or maintain resilience for their children. As a result, Cunningham and Ewell children are notorious in the County for their unhygienic appearance and difficult childhood.

The motherly affection that the children get in the novel is also different among each others. Both the Finch and the Ewell children do not have mothers. Scout does not know much about her mother but Jem does. Both of the children are not accustomed of the affection of a biological mother. However, the Finch family has made arrangement of a permanent mother substitute in the form of Calpurnia. Besides, the Finch children are continuously mothered by Miss Maudie Atkison, which proves that the Finch family is highly concerned about the need of mother in a child's life and have made attempt to

nurture them with motherly affection. Quite contrarily, the Ewell children are forced to live in atrocious environment without the warm, intimate and rewarding affection the mother. Moreover, the Ewell family is neither capable nor is interested in finding the Ewell children a mother substitute. The comparison between the Finch and Ewells leads us to a conclusion that parenting is not only about the circumstances that one is surrounded with, but is also about the commitment that works against all odds and evidences. The Finch family even in the absence of mother is able to nurture their children with sufficient care and affection while the Ewells are totally indifferent to it.

Atticus is the only father in the Maycomb County who fits perfectly in three levels of paternal care: availability, interaction and responsibility. In fact, he is able to alter the role of a father because along with ascertaining his children with what they need he performs childcare activities like cuddling, reading and allotting time for them. In other words, Atticus is an exemplary father. Besides fitting into the three models of paternal care, he sets examples for his children to follow. He does not exercise his aggression even when he is spat on. Atticus makes a stand, and his children are eager to follow in his footsteps. Atticus teaches his children to handle conflict by being analytical, rather than emotional. As Atticus well knows, emotional reaction is particularly dangerous in a racist society where it can quickly lead to violence. Through a meaningful conversation, he tries to put the rumor about him about being a nigger-lover into rest.

Scout, simply by the nature of the work, every lawyer gets at least one case in his lifetime that affects him personally. This one's mine, I guess.

You might hear some ugly talk about it at school, but do one thing for me

if you will: you just hold your head high and keep those fists down. . .Try fighting with your head for a change. . .(Lee 83)

While Atticus makes attempts to be a good father through every possible means, there are other white fathers in the Maycomb County who struggle just to procure basic livelihood. Some of them are Ewells and Cunninghams. The hygiene and appearance of Walter Cunningham is the representative of his father's irresponsibility. Walter may not have been subjected to the psychological atrocities but the scarcity he faces as a child is failure of his father's parenting. The most unfortunate children in the Maycomb County are the Ewells. Mayella, Burris and the other Ewell children are those children who are sympathized by the townspeople as their father Bob Ewell is irresponsible and takes no responsibility towards his children. The observation of the lives that the white children lead in the novel makes premises to the conclusion that the paternal care is received only by Jem and Scout, and the rest of the children are utterly deprived of it.

The childrens' educational attainment is one of the tools that help us analyze the nature of parenting. Both the state and the parents invest for the educational development of a child. But the proper utilization of the investment entirely depends on the parents. In the Maycomb County, only the Finch children are able to make a considerate impression regarding academic progress. Scout, a seven year old is capable of reading because of the academic environment she gets at home as the resources that her father avail her with at home makes a great difference. In the novel, only Scout and other urban children have their access to newspapers, and it is a challenge for the rural children to remain updated with the current affairs:

Once a week, we had a Current Events period. . . .The idea was profound , but as usual, in Maycomb it didn't work well. In the first place, few rural children had access to newspapers, so the burden of Current Events was borne by the town children, . . .(Lee 269)

The resources that are availed to other white children like Burriss Ewell and Walter Cunningham at home and their classroom attendance are poor which eventually results in poor academic performance. As a result, both of them have been repeating the first grade for many years. Such a failure would not have happened if both the parent/s of the Ewell and Cunningham families had organized enough academic resources and had cultivated the habit of learning at home. Therefore, the failure of children in attaining education at school denotes the failure of parenting at home.

The most important factors that help a person socialize are his/her social interaction skills. The interaction skills include verbal and non-verbal communication, gesture, facial expression and so on. "Parental warmth—touching, holding, comforting, rocking, singing, and talking calmly—can help children manage their emotional experience (Martin et. al. 26)." Considering this perspective the only children who have been talked with calmly and are supported to manage the anger are the Finch children. Since the other children of the Maycomb County, particularly Burriss Ewell and Mayella Ewell possess no proper interaction skill, it can be concluded that they do not have the ability to cope with stress and eventually respond negatively with friendly overtures. They tend to burst into anger and resort to abuses to any threat they encounter. Burriss's misbehavior with Miss Carolin in the very first day of the school and Mayella's overwhelmed reaction to Atticus during the trial are the examples of their poor

interaction skills. “Children in families experiencing hardship or poverty often witness stress, in the form of sadness and anger, from their parents and don’t get the nurturing they need.” (Martin et. al. 28) The anger that Mayella and Burriss exhibit during their conversation is not their own. In fact, those undesirable emotions are the product of what they witness at home. The only things that the Ewell children have witnessed are poverty, sadness and the rage of their father Bob Ewell. The communicative impediment that the Ewell children suffer is not the fault of their own. Instead all these degradation in their behavior is the result of the abusive nature of their father. Once again the Ewells fail in ascertaining virtuous parenting.

This research has analyzed the parenting and childcare in the Maycomb County, as represented in the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* through five perspectives. They are; Investment in Children, Paternal care and its Impact, Maternal Care and its Impact, Parenting and its relation with Child’s Educational Attainment, and Parenting and its Influence on Child’s Social Interaction. Evaluating the childhood as depicted in the novel leads to the conclusion that the parenting and childcare in the Maycomb County can be divided into a distinct dichotomy; the first one comprises the Finch Family and the second comprises the rest of the white families like the Ewells, the Cunninghams and the Radleys. The former family has ensured investment, paternal care, maternal care, conducive academic environment; both at home and school, and social interaction skills. Eventually, the help and support that has been availed to the Finch children have brought significant influence on their social and emotional well-being. Contrarily, the Ewell and Cunningham children are not able to attain their academic growth, fail to perform meaningful conversation, prone to depression, either are abusive or suffer from low self-

esteem. Altogether, they are lagging in every aspect of their social, emotional and academic growth. All things considered, the backwardness in their overall development is result of flawed parenting of their parents. As a final point, it can be claimed that irrespective of the common racial origin and culture, the Maycomb Soil has cultivated two different types of parenting and child care that are in opposition with each other.

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