

## **GENDER, RACE, AND CLASS IN GO SET A WATCHMAN AND TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD**

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### **Abstract**

Gender, race and class studies explain how societies establish and maintain inequalities in different settings. When it comes to exploring moral dilemmas and social justice, American literature continues to be among the most influential bodies of works. This paper examines the complex relationship between gender, race and class in Harper Lee's novels *Go Set a Watchman* and *To Kill a Mockingbird* through the lens of intersectionality theory coined by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw. The use of intersectionality theory in the context of these works is notable due to its focus on how intertwined, multiple identities interact to form characters' experiences of privilege or oppression. In order to demonstrate those instances, the analysis aims to examine struggles characters in the novels face in navigating their intersecting identities within the confines of their social environment, particularly the Jim Crow era and the Civil Rights Movement. By using particular excerpts from the novels, this research pays special attention to power relations and social dynamics in the fictional Maycomb County where plots are set.

**Keywords:** intersectionality theory, Harper Lee, gender, race, class, identity, social dynamics.

## **ROD, RASA I KLASA U ROMANIMA „ČUVAR MORALA“ I „UBITI PTICU RUGALICU“**

### **Apstrakt**

Analiza roda, rase i klase istražuje načine na koje se nejednakosti stvaraju i održavaju u različitim kontekstima. Američka književnost se smatra jednim od najutjecajnijih književnih korpusa koji se bavi temama socijalne pravde i pitanjima morala, što posljedično pruža uvid u ključne perspektive o ovim kategorijama identiteta. Vođena teorijom intersekcionalnosti Kimberli Viliijams Krenšo, ova teza istražuje složene interakcije između roda, rase i klase u romanima Harper Li "Čuvar morala" i "Ubiti pticu rugalicu". Intersekcionalna analiza romana je značajna jer se fokusira na načine na koje višestruki identiteti, međusobno povezani, zajedno djeluju kako bi oblikovali iskustva ugnjetavanja ili privilegija likova. Analiza nastoji istražiti kako se likovi snalaze u svojim višestrukim identitetima unutar ograničenja svog društvenog okruženja - konkretno, ere Džima Kroua (rasna segregacija) i Pokreta za građanska prava - tvrdeći da kombinacija identiteta koje utjelovljuju određuje njihov društveni položaj i iskustva. Posebna pažnja posvećena je dinamici moći i društvenim



odnosima u izmišljenom okrugu Mejkomb, s naglaskom na to kako ove sile oblikuju društvene uloge i individualno djelovanje. Konačno, teza naglašava kako djela Harper Li doprinose širim raspravama o rasizmu, rodu i pravdi u američkoj književnosti, oslanjajući se na konkretne primjere iz oba romana.

**Gljučne riječi:** teorija interseksionalnosti, Harper Li, rod, rasa, klasa, identitet, društvena dinamika.

## INTRODUCTION

American literature is distinguished by its abundant exploration of various identities within human beings. It encompasses, and transcends, themes such as (anti)racism, gender, class, power dynamics, and social justice. The literary criticism addressing these themes in *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Go Set a Watchman* by Harper Lee is significant. However, the problem is that even though the works received critical attention, relatively little research has focused on how multiple different factors intertwine in shaping characters' experiences and identities.

This paper sets out to examine gender, race, and class, intersectionally, in Lee's works. The intersectional analysis of these novels takes into consideration a broader spectrum of circumstances, viewing them as interconnected elements.

Intersectionality represents a modern approach in dealing with racism, discrimination, and other social inequalities. In the years that have passed, the notion of intersectionality has shown itself to be fruitful and has been used in a variety of academic fields, including feminism studies, ethnic studies, queer studies, legal studies, literature, philosophy, history, sociology, and anthropology. Thus, it provides the most suitable framework for this analysis.

The concept itself is introduced by Kimberle Crenshaw, an American civil rights advocate. Crenshaw articulates her ideas in her seminal article titled *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics*. Kimberle Crenshaw initially focuses on the experiences of Black women. However, the principles of intersectionality theory have since been applied to other members of marginalized groups, as well.

The paper includes a thorough review of the intersectionality theory, depiction of the American South thus offering insight into the novels' cultural and historical background, and, at its core, it examines the identity negotiation of two female characters: Jean Louise Finch and Calpurnia, and investigates power relations and social dynamics within the fictional Maycomb society.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The implementation of intersectionality theory in close reading analysis of excerpts from the novels provides a new, broader viewpoint on Lee's books, the one lacking in currently available research. The aim of this paper is to demonstrate how characters' experiences are shaped by the combinations of their gender, race, and class rather than just one of these factors alone. Accordingly, it addresses the

following research question: What is revealed about the ways female characters negotiate their identities when examined through an intersectional reading?

When one focuses on how characters deal with these intersections, deeper insight into difficulties of navigating identity in such society is gained. Thus, the paper hypothesis proposes that the negotiation of identity for female characters Jean Louise Finch and Calpurnia is influenced simultaneously by gender, race and class, and cannot be understood properly if these factors are analysed in isolation.

Investigating how racism affects marginalised communities and addressing gender inequality in middle class society are among the objectives of the paper, as well as the investigation of the clash between established norms of behaviour and individual preferences, especially in female characters. To achieve the objectives, the research employs a qualitative approach to compare and analyze selected works.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

During a time of profound societal upheaval in the twentieth century, intersectionality emerged. Long-standing systems of domination ended with the Cold War conclusion, the rise of the worldwide women's movement, and civil rights campaigns in multicultural democracies (Collins, 2019, p. 1).

Kimberlé Crenshaw's 1989 article focused on Black feminist criticism, thus introducing what would become an impactful theory – intersectionality (Carbado, 2013, 811). The study primarily reflects Crenshaw's effort to contribute to Black feminism. She aimed to illuminate the negative effect that not regarding race and gender as separate categories has on individuals' social realities (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 1). Thus, in her work, she transcended the "single-axis framework", and pointed out the multidimensional nature of experiences Black women face in their everyday life. Crenshaw further advocated that the multiple oppressions and subordinations Black women experience cannot be fully analysed without relying on the principles of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 2).

The concept of intersectionality represents the way multiple oppressions are experienced. In her article, *Intersectionality's Definitional dilemmas*, Patricia Hill Collins emphasized the emerging difficulty in defining intersectionality. Since its inception, intersectionality has been applied across a diverse range of practices, interpretations, methodologies, and political orientations. Collins provides critical insight into the concept, arguing that race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, nation, ability, and age do not operate as mutually exclusive entities, but instead interact to create complex social realities that produce profound social inequities (Collins, 2015, pp. 2-3).

The term intersectionality has gained methodological and theoretical significance in feminist studies, critical anti-racist education, cultural studies, and various additional fields over the past thirty years (Mojab & Carpenter, 2019, p. 2). However, Delia D. Aguilar reminds us that when Crenshaw first coined the term, she did not expect it becoming a theory or even a methodology (Aguilar, 2015, p. 208). Since then, intersectionality has been elaborated by postmodern and poststructural feminist

scholars focusing on identity and subjectivity (Mojab & Carpenter, 2019, p. 2). The rapid and global growth of intersectionality theory has led to debates over its fundamental principles, with concerns about misunderstanding and misuse. It is even considered to be misunderstood and misused as addressed by Ange-Marie Hancock in her book *Intersectionality: An Intellectual History* (2016, p. 4).

Intersectionality shares its commitment to addressing systems of power and oppression with several other theories, including feminism, Critical Race Theory (CRT), and Marxism. In order to promote systemic change across multiple levels of identity and social structure, these theories not only cover but also go beyond particular identity categories (Sumi, Crenshaw, & McCall, 2013, p. 788). Nonetheless, although initially proposed by Black feminists, the idea of intersectionality aimed to challenge antiracist and feminist ideologies that failed to “accurately reflect the interaction of race and gender” (Smith, 2013, p. 3), and additionally, intersectionality practitioners have urged white feminists to put an emphasis on understanding the intersecting issues of race, gender, and class (Carastathis, 2014, p. 304). In summary, intersectionality theory has been influenced by feminism and CRT, but it transcends these two fields. The same applies to Marxist theory and practice, which seeks to bring together those oppressed by capitalism and economically exploited. It is supported and enhanced by the intersectional approach (Smith, 2013, pp. 11-12).

## **CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE AMERICAN SOUTH**

Harper Lee set the plot of her novels in the state of Alabama, her homeland, during her childhood years. Her first published novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, was released in 1960, although it was written latter. The narrative is set in Maycomb, a fictional town in Alabama, during the Great Depression and the Jim Crow era in 1930s. The second novel, *Go Set a Watchman*, was written before *To Kill a Mockingbird*, in 1957, but serves as a sequel, following Scout as an adult returning to her home in Maycomb. It was released in 2015 and the plot is set two decades after the events of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, effectively placing it in the 1960s, the same time *Mockingbird* was published.

Harper Lee included instances from her real life in her fiction, with characters in the book said to greatly resemble important figures from her own experiences. Additionally, the setting and background of the novels closely mimic the reality of the American South during the time they were written and published.

The circumstances African Americans faced in the Deep South, changes in their legal rights, and the volatile racial relations at the time the books were written and set all contributed to the novels’ profound impact. These were the years of the most significant moments in the history of civil rights, many of which took place in Alabama and provided the historical context for the novels.

There are several important historical events to consider when examining the background of Lee’s novels *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Go Set a Watchman*. First

and foremost, it is crucial to understand the economic and social circumstances of the 1930s, a period marked by the Great Depression. Claudia Durst Johnson highlights in her book *Understanding To Kill a Mockingbird: A Student Casebook to Issues, Sources, and Historic Documents* that the Great Depression further exacerbated tensions between black and white people (Johnson, 1994, p. 16).

Additionally, events such as the Montgomery bus boycott, Martin Luther King's rise to leadership, and Autherine Lucy's attempt to enroll in the University of Alabama graduate school, all relating to a broader issue – racial segregation, also known as the Jim Crow era, influenced the novels (Johnson, 1994, p. 86). This separation was a way of life in the South. White and black people attended separate churches (as seen with Calpurnia and the Finches in the novel), lived in separate neighborhoods, and ate in separate restaurants. The circumstances described were just part of the unsafe and unstable atmosphere in which *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Go Set a Watchman* were situated.

A complete appreciation, and true comprehension of Lee's work depends on recognizing the events that took place in Alabama during the 1930s and 1950s (Johnson, 1994, p. 12). This multi-layered social and legal environment gave rise to the story of a black man facing false accusations of rape in the former novel, and in the latter novel, it depicted Jean-Louise's struggles to cope with the pervasive racism embedded at every level of society.

### **Identity Negotiation and Intersectionality**

Negotiating one's identity in diverse social contexts is affected by various factors, as studied by numerous researches. Stella Ting-Toomey developed what is known as "Identity Negotiation Theory". She argued that individuals' identities are numerous and multi-layered, including, and surpassing, aspects such as culture, religion, social class, sexual orientation etc. (Ting-Toomey, 2015, p. 1).

Ting-Toomey's view of individuals having "multifaceted identities" is in agreement with the idea of intersectionality asserting the existence of multiple intersecting identities. Consequently, understanding that a variety of factors influence one's identity reveals how relative it is. This notion is similarly expressed in the introduction of the interdisciplinary study edited by Yasser Fouad Selim and Eid Mohamed *Who Defines Me: Negotiating Identity in Language and Literature*: "...identity is – and always has been – unstable and mutable, which is to say that identity is constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed, only to be deconstructed and reconstructed again and again, ad infinitum. Time and place are variables" (Selim & Mohamed, 2014, p. 1). Furthermore, a sense of identity of an individual may be impacted by changes in the prevailing social standards. In the United States, for example, feminism and the civil rights movements altered social cultural expectations for African-Americans and women. In order to sustain peace and mutual relationships, people follow a number of identity negotiation concepts (Swann & Bosson, 2008, pp. 463-466).

Harper Lee's works reflect these changes in the relationships between characters. The identities of characters belonging to different race, class, or gender are

influenced by multiple background factors that intertwine and shape their experiences and interactions. The following pages will provide an in-depth analysis of two significant characters – Jean Louise (Scout) Finch and Calpurnia.

### **The Character of Jean Louise**

At the core of the novels is Jean Louise's struggle to negotiate her identity and reconcile it with the norms imposed by her environment regarding race, gender, and class. In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, she is an eight- and nine-years old girl primarily raised by her father Atticus. Besides her father, she spends much of her time with her brother Jem, friend Dill, and Calpurnia, a Black made. Growing up predominantly surrounded by male figures significantly impacts her struggle to accept conventional gender roles. Thus, her manners are perceived as tomboyish (Hakala, 2010, p. 13).

Atticus Finch, her father, is her main role model, and the most important male figure in her life, in the novel described as "the most potent moral force" for Jean Louise (Lee, 2015, p. 117).

He has the greatest influence on Jean Louise through his instillations of principles such as equality, fairness, and critical thinking in her. Jean Louise's beliefs are influenced by his progressive views on ethics and race (Markey, 2010, p. 165).

It is her father who demonstrates a more thoughtful and respectful approach toward Black people, in stark contrast to the prevailing attitudes in their community, by showing respect to Calpurnia and deciding to defend Tom Robinson. For instance, when asked to dismiss Calpurnia from her duties in their house, he strongly denies and emphasizes the significance of her role in their household (Lee, 1989, p. 28).

Over the course of the novel, Atticus is dedicated to justice and urges his children to reject institutionalized customs that promote inequality, advising his daughter to "keep her head up and fist down" (Afzal, Dar, & Hussain, 2023, p. 330). Over time, she internalizes her father's values and adopts them as her own ideals. Her consciousness becomes intertwined with his, and she begins to use his principles as her moral compass. Consequently, in *Go Set a Watchman*, Jean Louise is deeply enraged and feels "betrayed" when she realizes her father is a member of a racist organization (Lee, 2015, p. 113).

Additionally, her conflict with her father extends beyond race, illuminating her insecurities regarding her gender identity.

Why in the name of God didn't you marry again? Marry some nice dim-witted Southern lady who would have raised me right? Turned me into a simpering, nearly-mouthed magnolia type who bats her eyelashes and crosses her hands and lives for nothing but her lil'ole husband. At least I would have been blissful. I'd have been typical one hundred percent Maycomb; I would have lived out my little life and given you grandchildren to dote on; I would have spread out like Auntie, fanned myself on the front porch, and died happy (Lee, 2015, p. 249).

In the excerpt, Jean Louise satirically critiques the conventional, idealized image of a Southern lady, thus expressing her disdain for this gendered stereotype of women as “simpering, mealy-mouthed magnolia type” who live blissfully ignorant lives confined to their homes. She imagines a parallel existence where she conforms to this ideal, much like her Aunt, who adheres to societal norms. This instance critiques the restrictive roles that hindered women’s individuality and independence in the South. While Jean Louise acknowledges that conforming to this stereotype might have led to a more “blissful” life, her rejection of it emphasizes her desire for autonomy and freedom.

Throughout the novels, Jean Louise’s ideals evolve from a child’s naïve adherence to her father’s opinions to a grown-up critical evaluation. Her previous idealization of her father is shattered, and she is forced to accept the reality and come to terms with the new perspective.

When you happened along and saw him doing something that seemed to you to be the very antithesis of his conscience – your conscience – you literally could not stand it. It made you physically ill. Life became hell on earth for you. You had to kill yourself, or he had to kill you to get you functioning as a separate entity (Lee, 2015, p. 265).

Jean Louise does not have any female friends, and her participation in games and activities traditionally associated with boys fosters a resistance to the conventional gender roles that persist into her young adulthood. She views her female gender with significant negativity and what contributes to it are her brother’s gender hostile remarks. He addresses his sister as “girl” his sister only when indicating an insult (Lee, 1989, p. 42, 45). When she is in the company of women she feels awkward, and bored, in her own words: “...resigned to her fate...” (Lee, 2015, p. 128). The sense of estrangement was deepened by her belief that she was not welcome in the female world (Lee, 2015, p. 116).

The relationship with female authorities in her life is rather complex. Her mother died before she could remember her, and Scout, as well as the rest of the characters, attributes her tomboyish tendencies in part to being motherless. Ruminating on an interaction with her father on adequate behaviour she remarks that having a motherly figure is necessary for acquiring manners typically associated with girls (Lee, 1989, p. 148). Thus, this comment highlights her recognition of the need for maternal influence in her life (Hakala, 2010, p. 41).

Calpurnia, even though a Black housekeeper, stands as a key parental figure alongside her father. Scout acknowledges being “raised by a white man and a Black woman” (Lee, 2015, p. 179). Calpurnia introduces her to the Black community, proper table manners, and topics such as menstruation and intercourse, addressing the gaps left by the absence of a motherly figure. For instance, when Calpurnia learns about Scout’s fear of being pregnant after a boy kissed her, she refers to her as “the most ignorant child” (Lee, 2015, p. 137).

In Chapter 12 of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, after a quarrel with her brother, Jean Louise turns to Calpurnia, who welcomes her into the kitchen (p. 127). At this moment, she

begins to perceive Calpurnia as a model of femininity. This interaction represents a rare instance where Scout views femininity positively (Hakala, 2010, p. 44).

Besides Calpurnia, another female figure introduced to illustrate Jean Louise's struggle with her gender identity is Aunt Alexandra. One could say she is the representation of everything Jean Louise finds difficult to accept, a model of an ideal lady, described as "the last of her kind" (Lee, 2015, p. 33). Jean Louise frequently quarrels with Aunt Alexandra over matters such as her clothing:

Aunt Alexandra was fanatical on the subject of my attire. I could not possibly hope to be a lady if I wore breeches; when I said I could do nothing in a dress, she said I wasn't supposed to be doing things that required pants. Aunt Alexandra's vision of my deportment involved playing with small stoves, tea sets, and wearing the Add-A-Pearl necklace she gave me when I was born; furthermore, I should be a ray of sunshine in my father's lonely life. I suggested that one could be a ray of sunshine in pants just as well, but Auntie said that one had to behave like a sunbeam, that I was born good but had grown progressively worse every year. She hurt my feelings and set my teeth permanently on edge, but when I asked Atticus about it, he said there were already enough sunbeams in the family and to go on about my business, he didn't mind me much the way I was (Lee, 1989, p. 90).

Aunt Alexandra attempts to impose the conservative expectations of lady-like behavior dictated by Maycomb society onto Jean Louise, while Scout resists these expectations and finds comfort in her father's silent or vocal approval of her behaviour. This discrepancy in perceptions of what is considered right or wrong among her parental figures likely contributes to Scout's confusion in constructing her gender identity (Hakala, 2010, p. 15).

Furthermore, Aunt Alexandra advocates for conservative class divisions in Maycomb. She considers her family as superior to many others in the story including the Ewells, Henry Clinton, Black people. When Jean Louise mentions the possibility of marrying Henry Clinton, Aunt Alexandra opposes it by insulting him and his family, and arguing that Henry's background is unsuitable for Jean Louise (Lee, 2015, p. 36).

However, Alexandra's remarks have the opposite effect on Jean Louise. Despite her general aversion to marriage, after the quarrel with her aunt, she feels "closer to marrying trash than she has ever been in her life" (Lee, 2015, p. 39).

Scout's rejection of the established "duties" of her gender is further complicated by her relationship with Henry Clinton. She is conflicted between her ambiguous feelings for Henry and her aversion towards marriage and its implications for women. She cannot envision herself living the life typical of other women in her neighbourhood. Her desire for independence and the lifestyle she embraces in New York stand in complete opposition to the traditional expectations of Southern womanhood.



This transformation depicts her journey toward self-actualization and moral autonomy. Ultimately, the novels do not reveal whether Jean Louise marries, has children, or becomes a housewife (Hakala, 2010, p. 78). The key point is that she chooses to remain true to her own conscience, allowing it to guide her in alignment with her true self, rather than succumbing to the pressures of her environment.

### **The Character of Calpurnia**

Calpurnia, the Black housekeeper of the Finch family, is a pivotal character in both novels, and serves as a significant example of navigating multiple oppressed and marginalized identities. As previously mentioned, Crenshaw coined intersectionality to illuminate the multifaceted oppression faced by Black women, who belong to more than one marginalized group. Thus, Calpurnia's character exemplifies this concept, as she skilfully balances her roles within both her Black community and the Finch family, often challenging the established norms. This part aims to highlight her success in navigating these two worlds and to demonstrate her atypical abilities and beliefs, reflecting her unique identity.

As a Black woman in a society where race, gender, and class intersect to marginalize her, Calpurnia's experience underscores the complexity of her character and her capacity to function within a segregated society. Approaching the analysis of identity through the lens of intersectionality adds complexity, as it emphasizes the nuanced experiences of individuals who embody multiple intersecting identities simultaneously (Wijeyesinghe & Jones, 2014, p. 4).

Aside from being the primary caretaker of her own family, Calpurnia also serves as motherly figure by providing constant support and upbringing for Jem and Scout, whom she refers to "my children" (Hakala, 2010, p. 42). Despite being a Black woman, she establishes a unique authority with the children, exhibiting a level of control that surpasses even their father's (Hakala, 2010, p. 43). And despite conventionally accepted inferiority, Atticus and the children appreciate and respect her (Lee, 1989, p. 28). Calpurnia's education level separates her from other Black people at their county, which is similar to Atticus and Scout and their progressive viewpoints (Hakala, 2010, p. 45). In fact, she is one of only four literate individuals in the entire Black community of Maycomb (Lee, 1989, p. 137). As intersectionality acknowledges the diversity among social groups it sets it apart from previously established theories that regard solely one social identity (Wijeyesinghe & Jones, 2014, p. 4). Jean Louise observes that, when needed, Calpurnia's eloquence resembles that of white people of Maycomb (Lee, 1989, p. 27).

Her convictions differ from the vast majority of people at her time. While the Maycomb community imposed strict boundaries among social classes, she encouraged the Finch children to be kind to everyone (Hakala, 2010, 44). Her resistance to racial and social barriers is evident when she brings the children to the Black church. By exposing Scout and Jem to this environment, she introduces them to a more thorough understanding of race and exemplifies how she navigates her own identity across these two worlds. At the church, one part of the community welcomes them with respect: "When they saw Jem and me with Calpurnia, the men stepped back and took off their hats; the women crossed their arms at their waists,

weekday gestures of respectful attention” (Lee, 1989, p. 131). However, there are also individuals who express hostility towards the presence of white people in a place reserved solely for Black individuals, while they have their own. Calpurnia manages to ensure peace among both parties by pointing out that they worship the same God (Lee, 1989, p. 131). Thus she demonstrates a great courage by defying the established order in the community.

Additionally, she manifests a dual identity by navigating her role both in the Black community and the Finch household. She shifts her conduct and vocabulary to align with the norms of each setting fulfilling her duties effectively (Johnson, 2007, p. 13). This dual identity serves as a means of survival in a divided society, with Calpurnia acting as a bridge between the Black and white communities. Although her role as a domestic worker places her in a lower socioeconomic class, her employment with the Finches provides her with a degree of financial security that is uncommon for many Black people in Maycomb. Her racial identity and class status intersect thus shaping her chances and experiences.

In *Go Set a Watchman*, the Civil Rights Movement has an impact on how the South’s racial dynamics are evolving. After a long absence, when visiting Calpurnia Jean Louise finds her distant and reserved.

“Cal,” she cried, “Cal, Cal, Cal, what are you doing to me? What’s the matter?”

I’m your baby, have you forgotten me? Why are you shutting me out? What are you doing to me?”...

“What are you all doing to us?” she said...

She sat there in front of me and she didn’t see me, she saw white folks. She raised me, and she doesn’t care (Lee, 2015, pp. 159-161).

Her reserved manner demonstrates her awareness of racial tensions and the need preserve her safety in tumultuous circumstances. Her last encounter with Jean Louise reveals a wary side of her, surely formed by struggles she faced as a Black woman.

## **POWER RELATIONS AND SOCIAL DYNAMICS**

Modern theories of psychosocial identity, which focus on how people interpret their experiences in relation to the roles or groups they belong to, pay special attention to socially constructed groups that are tied to larger systems of power, privilege, and inequality. At the individual level, a sense of self and identity is shaped by one’s race, gender, class, and sexual orientation. The growing attention to the concept of intersectionality stems from its recognition of individual’s multiple social identities, resulting in a more comprehensive understanding of the whole person (Wijeyesinghe & Jones, 2014, p. 2). Nevertheless, it is necessary to connect each individual’s experience to more extensive systems of privilege and oppression in order to fully embrace an intersectional view of identity. This approach ultimately leads to a

deeper understanding of the link between the social groups to which individuals belong and their experiences in society (Wijeyesinghe & Jones, 2014, p. 6). This part of the research will examine character's position within social hierarchies and their experiences of privilege and oppression by implementing Michael Foucault's theory of power, along with Patricia Hill Collins' classification of power.

The theoretical contributions of Michael Foucault significantly enhance the sociological understanding of power. In his concept of a "disciplinary society", Foucault argues that authority increasingly functions through impersonal systems of control, including physical punishment, and ruling which function beyond the volition of both individual and group social agents. In these circumstances, authority, as traditionally understood, begins to function only in the presence of resistance (Yuval-Davis, 2011, pp. 5-6). In his work *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Foucault repurposes Jeremy Bentham's concept of the "Panopticon" – a type of circular prison originally introduced in the late eighteenth century – applying it to all spheres of social life. According to Foucault, this design guarantees the mechanical operation of power by ensuring the traces of power are visible (the prisoners can see the watchtower even if the watchman is not present) and its presence uncertain – the prisoners can never be certain if they are being watched, only that they may be (Foucault, 1977, pp. 200-201). Understanding power dynamics through the lens of intersectionality in Harper Lee's novels can be enhanced by applying Michael Foucault's concept of the Panopticon to the setting of the novels – Maycomb County.

In her article *Panopticism and the Use of 'the Other' in To Kill a Mockingbird*, Rebecca Best explores characters' quests for identity through the framework of the Panopticon and the concept of "the Other" – as examined by Claudia Durst Johnson in *To Kill a Mockingbird: Threatening Boundaries*. "The Other" refers to the people belonging to the marginalised groups (such as Tom Robinson, Calpurnia, the Ewells, Cunninghams, etc). Best argues that pursuit of understanding "the relationship among people and groups of people" is one of the central themes in Harper Lee's novel. She points out that, even though it is not as extreme as society described by Foucault, Maycomb society still imposed rigid class and race boundaries and behavior (Best, 2009, pp. 541-542).

Best argues that the "disciplinary mechanisms" embedded in Maycomb's society consist of both physical exclusion of black and white individuals and "specific practices such as lynch mobs and biased juries for black people in particular" (Best, 2009, p. 542), as seen in Tom Robinson's case in *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

The protagonist of the novel, Scout, and her brother Jem, still children in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, learn about the social dynamics from the way their father, neighbours and the rest treat each other:

You know something, Scout? I've got it all figured out, now. I've thought about it a lot lately and I've got it figured out. There's four kinds of folks in the world. There's the ordinary kind like us and the neighbours, there's the kind like the Cunninghams out in the woods, the kind like the Ewells down at the dump, and the Negroes... The thing about it is, our kind of folks don't like the Cunninghams, the Cunninghams don't like the Ewells, and the Ewells hate and despise the coloured folks (Lee, 1989, p. 249).

Each kind of people in Maycomb can be seen as representing a different wing of the Panopticon. The first wing is occupied by the Finch family, and their close neighbors belonging to the dominant white middle class, while the other wings are occupied by "the other". Through their personal encounters with Calpurnia, the way black servants are treated by their neighbors, and the reaction to Tom Robinson's case, Scout and Jem establish that black people are regarded as "the other", inferior to them. They hear from their father that the Ewells' lifestyle resembled the one of animals (Lee, 1989, p. 34), and from Aunt Alexandra that Walter Cunningham is not someone she should be friends with since "they're not our kind of folks" (Lee, 1989, p. 247). Their aunt also reminds them that their ancestors are the ones of "gentle breeding" (Lee, 1989, p. 147). Scout and Jem come to conclusion that one's "background" determines their position in society (Best, 2009, p. 543).

While this system of Panopticon is maintained, members of each group are kept under surveillance and subjugated by the fear of being perceived as outsiders and judged by others. Individuals from one group who attempt to reach out to members another group face aggressive exclusion from the system or harsh treatment within it (Best, 2009, p. 544). The primary example of someone treated harshly for stepping out of the boundaries of their group is Atticus Finch in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, due to his dedication to defending Tom Robinson (Best, 2009, p. 545). Similarly, the character of Calpurnia navigates and balances interactions between races while raising Jem and Jean Louise, well aware of the rules she can or cannot break (Best, 2009, p. 547).

Examining Maycomb County in Harper Lee's novels through the lens of the Panopticon reveals how discipline and surveillance are used to preserve power structures. This perspective emphasizes the complexity of social control by illustrating regulation of intersecting identities.

Patricia Hill Collins, a leading scholar on intersectionality, claims that illuminating the established pattern of intersecting oppressions reconceptualises the social relations of resistance and dominance (Collins, 2000, p. 273). In her work *Black Feminist Thought*, she categorizes power into four domains – structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal (Collins, 2000, p. 277). According to the theory of intersectionality, individuals' experiences are shaped by the specific combination of their intersecting identities (Collins, 2000, p. 273). These identities interact to produce complex patterns of privilege and oppression.

The first domain – structural – refers to how social institutions are set up to perpetuate oppression. These interconnected institutions manipulated multiple forms of segregation to generate subordination (Collins, 2000, p. 277). In the context of the novels, the structural domain of power is primarily reflected in Tom Robinson’s trial in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. As the character of Reverend Sykes remarks, it has never happened that the jury favors a black over a white man (Lee, 1989, p. 230). Tom Robinson is subjected to state power through imprisonment. He is prohibited from seeing his family, and is constantly under surveillance. Eventually, frustrated by the lack of justice, he attempts to escape the prison, but is killed by the guards (Saini, 2015, p. 396).

The next domain – disciplinary – governs power relations through bureaucratic hierarchies and surveillance techniques. It was thoroughly examined in the previous part since it is related to Foucault’s notion of power.

The hegemonic power domain “deals with ideology, culture, and consciousness” (Collins, 2000, p. 248). It allows dominant groups to create and maintain power systems (Collins, 2000, p. 284). Alongside the hegemonic domain, the interpersonal domain of power “functions through routinized, day-to-day practices of how people treat one another” (Collins, 2000, p. 287). These become a part of a routine so ingrained that people don’t distinguish it (Collins, 2000, pp. 288). The Maycomb citizens formed their views on all mentioned aspects of identity and perceive it as “common sense”, as Collins describes it, and allow no exceptions from it. To name just one instance, Black people endure the greatest oppression. As “social actors who are subordinated within multiple systems of power” (Collins, 2017, p. 30), they are denied their humanity by white supremacists without considering their humanness (Lee, 1989, p. 222), and are considered as “a set of backward people” (Lee, 2015, p. 242). Additionally, the absence and marginalisation of African American characters in the novels resembles their overall reality (Clukey, 2015, p. 7).

In both *Go Set a Watchman* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Harper Lee offers a profound examination of the layers of social relationships and power hierarchies. Examining these power relations through Michael Foucault’s concept of the Panopticon further clarifies the social dynamics in Maycomb County, revealing a society rigidly and conservatively divided by race, class, and gender. Moreover, incorporating Patricia Hill Collins’ power domains into the analysis broadens the exploration to include cultural impact, interpersonal relationships, and self-perception. This approach demonstrates that interpersonal relationships of characters are permeated with ingrained racism, marginalizing those of lower class, ostracizing those who defy mainstream norms, and reinforcing prejudice.

## CONCLUSION

The issue of social justice has been prominent theme in American literature, encompassing aspects such as race. It implies equality in various aspects – including race, gender, and class. Analyzing these categories of different types of identities requires a thorough examination encompassing multiple theories and approaches. However, applying intersectionality theory allows for a more inclusive and comprehensive analysis.

The novels *Go Set a Watchman* and *To Kill a Mockingbird* address these themes extensively. By presenting the dynamics of the American South in the 1930s and 1950s, Harper Lee explores racial, class, and gender issues of these periods. Thus, employing intersectionality in the analysis of these works is both essential and overdue, as existing research on the novels has largely neglected this approach. The body of research corpus on *To Kill a Mockingbird* is more extensive and varied, focusing separately on gender, race, or class, but not integrating these multiple identities into a cohesive analysis as intersectionality does.

This thesis has set out to investigate how convergence of multiple identities in characters from the novels impacted their experiences throughout the plot. By conducting a thorough analysis of instances and excerpts from the novels and incorporating them into various aspects of social dynamics, the hypothesis has been confirmed. The extensive exploration of identity negotiation demonstrates the value of intersectional analysis, thus enriching the scope of research on Harper Lee's works.

Considering the broader ramifications of this thesis, it has demonstrated evidence of the unique contribution of re-examining Lee's novels through the prism of intersectionality theory. This approach has enhanced our understanding of social hierarchies and identity, contributing to both the field of intersectionality's literary studies and the body of knowledge on Southern literature.

While this research has provided a valuable intersectional analysis of Harper Lee's *Go Set a Watchman* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*, it does have some limitations. Although the primary focus of the study was on race, gender, and class, it does not cover other intersecting categories of identity as sexuality or religion. Furthermore, integrating psychological or sociological viewpoints could contribute to an improved understanding of the characters' identities. Incorporating these elements in further research might enrich the analysis of the works through the lens of intersectionality. Moreover, extending the intersectional study to other Southern authors or works that address related issues could provide further insights into how class, gender, and race intersect and are portrayed in Southern literature.

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## REZIME

Ova studija se fokusira na analizu tema identiteta, roda, rase i klase u djelima „Čuvar morala“ i „Ubiti pticu rugalicu“ američke spisateljice Harper Li, koristeći teoriju intersekcionalnosti kao glavni okvir. Intersekcionalnost, koncept koji je uvela Kimberli Krenšo, proučava kako različiti aspekti identiteta međusobno djeluju i oblikuju iskustva pojedinaca. Ova teorija se posebno primjenjuje na likove koji pripadaju ili utjelotvoravaju jedan ili više aspekata identiteta koji pripadaju marginalizovanim grupama – poput lika Kalpurnije (Afroamerikanke) ili Džin Luiz. Analiza Kalpurnijinog lika pokazuje njenu sposobnost da balansira između više marginalizovanih identiteta i prevazilazi društvene granice koristeći obrazovanje, autoritet i hrabrost. Slično njoj, Džin Luiz kroz oba romana odbacuje rodne stereotipe i na taj način prikazuje proces izgradnje vlastitog identiteta unutar društvenih normi. Također, rad istražuje dinamiku moći i društvenu hijerarhiju među likovima koristeći se Fokoltovim konceptom Panoptikona i podjelom moći Patriše Kolins. Na taj način, utvrđuje se da rasa, klasa i rod određuju nivo privilegije i potlačenosti likova u romanima. Utvrđeno je da primjena teorije intersekcionalnosti u analizi ovih romana omogućava obuhvatnije razumijevanje toga kako identiteti, moć i društvene strukture djeluju međusobno. Prikaz društvenih odnosa na američkom jugu, s naglaskom na rasne, rodne i klasne razlike, pokazuje složenost pregovaranja identiteta i kontinuiranu borbu protiv društvene nepravde.