



# **UNIVERSIDAD TECNOLÓGICA NACIONAL**

**INSTITUTO NACIONAL SUPERIOR DEL PROFESORADO TÉCNICO**

**En convenio académico con la Facultad Regional de Villa María**

## **LICENCIATURA EN LENGUA INGLESA**

**Tesis de Licenciatura**

### **Women's Resistance to Patriarchal Oppression**

**A Journey of Self-Discovery from Girlhood into Womanhood in  
Harper Lee's Novels *To Kill a Mockingbird* And *Go Set a Watchman***

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**Dissertation**

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Harper Lee's Novels *To Kill a Mockingbird* And *Go Set a Watchman***

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## Dedication

To the memory of Antonio Aurelio (1945-1991) who was not a lawyer nor lived in his homeland but who was the most caring, hardworking and earnest father life could have given me.

To Camila and Facundo Wilson as proof that nothing is impossible as long as you struggle on despite the time it may involve and the difficulties and sacrifices it may entail.

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## Abstract

The construction of human identity and, mainly, the development of gendered life, have been the topics of debate and analysis of contemporary feminists. Among them, Judith Butler (1990) explores the issue of gender identity and claims that the performativity of gender roles revolves around the repetition of different acts and a ritual culturally sustained within a rigid regulatory structure which achieves its effects through the gendered stylization of the body within a binary frame. Moreover, Gayatri Spivak (1990) argues that this binary opposition -male and female- perpetuates women's subordination in culture and society due to patriarchal social relations. Accordingly, Kate Millett (1969) views patriarchy as a hindrance for women who are treated as an inferior male and subordinated, both in civic and domestic life, to the male by a power exerted both directly and indirectly, perpetuating the repressive relations of subordination and domination. Within this theoretical framework, this dissertation purports to explore the extent to which the intellectual, psychological and moral development of Scout Finch in Harper Lee's novels, *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960) and *Go Set a Watchman* (2015), is influenced by her growing awareness of the power-structured relationships within the society she was born and raised in. Additionally, this work also hypothesises, firstly, that the role of white men in the Southern United States of the 1930s/50s may prove to have a strong impact on Scout Finch as she dares to stand up against the society of that period. Secondly, it is considered the extent to which the traditional racist values of the white men ruling society of the period will lead to women's necessity to conform to the gender roles imposed. Finally, the last research concern focuses on the embodiment of ideal womanhood represented by the different female characters in both novels and how they influence Scout Finch's identity quest. To this end, detailed content analysis has been carried out to relate the information obtained from the novels to the above mentioned theoretical framework. A thorough exploration of the novels makes it possible to conclude that both of them, read as a *bildungsroman* -in which the main character presents a gradual growth in her path to self-awareness- indeed depict the struggle of a young girl who manages to bear the dominant influence of her surroundings. Both the young Scout and later, the older Jean Louise, clearly, disclose a process of maturity and manage to defy and stand up against the society of that period by keeping her self-reliant preferences, independent attitude and original appearance. Jean 'Scout' Louise identifies herself primarily with the masculine world and chooses unconventional predilections and choices, especially related to her attire, desires and interests. It is noteworthy, however, that the two novels analysed contain countless more instances of the main issues developed than those provided in this dissertation. The elements explored (limited by length-related restrictions) in this study should be taken as the most relevant ones.

### Key words:

Performativity - gender - subordination - patriarchy - roles - identity - femininity

## Resumen

La construcción de la identidad humana y, principalmente, el desarrollo de la vida de género, han sido los temas de debate y análisis de las feministas contemporáneas. Entre ellas, Judith Butler (1990) explora la cuestión de la identidad de género y afirma que la performatividad de los roles de género gira en torno a la repetición de diferentes actos y a un ritual culturalmente sostenido dentro de una rígida estructura normativa que logra sus efectos a través de la estilización del cuerpo en función del género dentro de un marco binario. Además, Gayatri Spivak (1990) sostiene que esta oposición binaria -masculino y femenino- perpetúa la subordinación de las mujeres en la cultura y la sociedad debido a las relaciones sociales patriarcales. En la misma línea, Kate Millett (1969) considera el patriarcado como un obstáculo para la mujer, que es tratada como un varón inferior y subordinada, tanto en la vida cívica como en la doméstica, al varón por un poder que se ejerce tanto directa como indirectamente, perpetuando las relaciones represivas de subordinación y dominación. Dentro de este marco teórico, esta disertación pretende explorar hasta qué punto el desarrollo intelectual, psicológico y moral de Scout Finch en las novelas de Harper Lee, *Matar a un ruiseñor* (1960) y *Ve y pon un centinela* (2015), está influenciado por su creciente conciencia de las relaciones estructuradas de poder dentro de la sociedad en la que nació y creció. Además, este trabajo también plantea la hipótesis, en primer lugar, de que el papel de los hombres blancos en el sur de los Estados Unidos de los años 30/50 puede resultar muy impactante para Scout Finch, ya que se atreve a enfrentar a la sociedad de la época. En segundo lugar, se estudia hasta qué punto los valores racistas tradicionales de los hombres blancos que gobiernan la sociedad de la época provocarán la necesidad de las mujeres de ajustarse a los roles de género impuestos. Finalmente, la última cuestión de la investigación se centra en la encarnación de la feminidad ideal representada por los diferentes personajes femeninos de ambas novelas y cómo influyen en la búsqueda de identidad de Scout Finch. Para ello, se ha llevado a cabo un detallado análisis de contenido para relacionar la información obtenida de las novelas con el marco teórico mencionado. La exploración minuciosa de las novelas permite concluir que ambas, leídas como un *bildungsroman* -en el que la protagonista presenta un crecimiento gradual en su camino hacia el conocimiento de sí misma-, efectivamente describen la lucha de una joven que logra afrontar la influencia dominante de su entorno. Tanto la joven Scout como, más tarde, la adulta Jean Louise, revelan claramente un proceso de madurez y consiguen desafiar y enfrentarse a la sociedad de la época manteniendo sus preferencias autónomas, su actitud independiente y su aspecto original. Jean 'Scout' Louise se identifica principalmente con el mundo masculino y opta por predilecciones y elecciones poco convencionales, especialmente relacionadas con su atuendo, deseos e intereses. Cabe destacar, sin embargo, que las dos novelas analizadas contienen innumerables más casos de los principales temas desarrollados que los aportados en esta disertación. Los elementos explorados (limitados por las restricciones de longitud) en este estudio deben tomarse como los más relevantes.

Palabras clave: Performatividad – género – subordinación - patriarcado – roles – identidad – feminidad

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**And *Go Set a Watchman***

**1- Introduction**

**1. 1- Gender Oppression: Universal Patriarchy, Unsolved Debates**

The notion of universal patriarchy has been widely criticized in recent years for its failure to account for the workings of gender oppression in the concrete cultural contexts in which it exists.

—Judith Butler

In recent years, the notion of gendered life and its many possibilities have been analysed under different views attempting to explain the process of gender construction. Following Simone de Beauvoir's famous remark stating that "one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman," (de Beauvoir, 2010: 330) with which she opens the second volume of her seminal manifesto, *The Second Sex* (1949), many have been the theories that tried to shed light on the various and contradictory myths about femininity as well as the role of women in society.

Within the contemporary feminist debates, Judith Butler (1990) explores the issue of gender identity and claims that "gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame" (Butler, 1990: 45). According to Butler (1990), the construction of the human identity is the result of a series of actions which are regularly performed on a daily basis whereby the human

being defines herself / himself in relation to others. The author states that being female is a natural indisposition and questions herself about what it really means being female, whether it constitutes a “natural fact” or a cultural achievement out of performative acts that the body produces through and within the categories of sex.

Indeed, as Butler assumes and reinterprets Simone de Beauvoir’s above stated remark, the category of woman is a variable cultural accomplishment, a set of meanings acquired within a cultural field. As this contemporary feminist formulates, “gender is not always constituted coherently or consistently in different historical contexts, [...] gender intersects with racial, class, ethnic, sexual, and regional modalities of discursively constituted identities.” (Butler, 1990: 4).

Moreover, Gayatri Spivak (1990) argues that different and, as she calls them, “independent” definitions of woman fall into binary oppositions that perpetuate women’s subordination in culture and society. In addition, and following Morton’s (2003) reading of Spivak’s approach, “the dominance of patriarchal social relations depends on the definition of women’s reproductive bodies as the legal objects, or private property, of men.” (Morton, 2003: 83) Therefore, considering Spivak and Butler’s beliefs, a girl grows into a woman in a world ruled by men, in which women have always been silenced and confined to the domestic sphere.

Furthermore, conforming to Kate Millett’s (1969) view of “patriarchy” as a hindrance for women, the female is subordinated to the male and treated as an inferior male by a power exerted, both directly and indirectly, in civil and domestic life. As expounded by Millett (1969), women, as much as men, perpetuate the attitudes and the acting-out of sex-roles through repressive relations of domination and subordination. As a result, the various forms of social oppression of women in a

hegemonic structure of patriarchy or masculine domination materially affect the lives of all women.

Harper Lee's novels *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Go Set a Watchman* depict Jean Louise Finch's – "Scout" - conflicted passage from a childhood of innocence and freedom into womanhood, embedded in the cruelty, limitations and constraints of her position as a woman in the Southern American patriarchal community in which she was born (Fisher, J. and Silber, E.S., 2003). Lee's novels can both be read as a *bildungsroman* as they span the time between her years as a child in Maycomb, Alabama, in the 1930s and the trip back to Alabama from New York as a 26-year-old woman. The German term *bildungsroman* is often literally translated as a 'novel of growth' and, as Childs and Fowler (2006) explain, applies more broadly to fiction detailing personal development or educational maturation. Being a *bildungsroman*, the "gradual growth to self-awareness of its protagonist depends on a harmonious negotiation of interior and exterior self-hoods, a reconciliation that involves the balancing of social role with individual fulfilment." (Childs, P. and Fowler, R., 2006:18).

The novels are set between 1930 and 1950 in the fictional county of Maycomb, Alabama, Southern United States, in which the fiercely independent Scout Finch spends her childhood trying to resist any kind of limitations placed upon her. Moreover, as described by Fisher, J. and Silber, E.S., "an important part of Scout's development is her growing comprehension that she will be forced to enter the world of women, a world that holds no attractions for her." (Fisher, J. and Silber, E.S., 2003: 286-7). Since her early childhood Scout identifies herself with the masculine world of both her father and her brother as her mother died when she was only two. Later in her twenties, Scout returns home from New York City to face, once again, the political

prevailing tensions of her hometown, discovering disturbing truths about her family, the town and the people dearest to her.

The purpose of this dissertation is to explore the extent to which it is possible for Scout Finch, the young female character in Harper Lee's novels *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Go Set a Watchman*, to resist, on her journey to self-discovery, the ideological indoctrination and the cultural and social constraints placed upon her by the dominant, patriarchal white men ruling society in the 1930s/50s Southern United States. This dissertation intends to shed light on Scout Finch's struggle, both as a girl and as a young woman, to challenge the gender stereotypes representative of the dominant white male society she lives in and, as a result, manage to assert her selfhood as a woman in the construction of an identity of her own.

## **1. 2- Research Question and Basic Hypotheses**

The purpose of this dissertation can be encapsulated in the following research question:

- To what extent is the intellectual, psychological and moral development of Scout Finch in Harper Lee's novels, *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Go Set a Watchman*, influenced by her growing awareness of the power-structured relationships within the society she was born and raised in?

From the research question stated above, the following guiding hypothesis can be derived:

- The role of white men in the Southern United States of the 1930s/50s may prove to have a strong impact on Scout Finch as she dares to stand up against the society of that period.
- The traditional racist values of the white men ruling society of the period will lead to women's necessity to conform to the gender roles imposed.
- The embodiment of ideal womanhood represented by the different female characters in both novels influences Scout Finch's identity quest.

### 1. 3- Study approach

To achieve the object of this study, the research will be carried out through the content-analysis method by which the characters in both novels will be analysed, compared and contrasted. As defined by Klaus Krippendorff (2019: 24) "content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use. As a *technique*, content analysis involves specialized procedures." The purpose of using this scientific tool is to obtain new insights and understanding of the particular topics under study. Through this process the characters' behaviours, attitudes, beliefs and language will be analysed to obtain valid, reliable and replicable results.

Moreover, as "every content analysis requires a context within which the available texts are examined," (Krippendorff, 2019: 29) the literature review will deal with the historical background in which both Harper Lee's novels are set and the theoretical framework on which the analysis of the novels will be based. The development of the analytic material will probe some key concepts that tend to be useful tools in the study of the novels.

Conclusions will be drawn after the final analysis of the books and the findings of the research. If limitations are to be found, they will be presented in the same section.

#### **1. 4- Study organisation**

The present study consists of four chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the main ideas that are going to be developed in the current dissertation, formulates the research question, the hypothesis derived from it and describes the method of study.

The chapter which follows this *Introduction* is the *Literature Review* (Chapter 2), which has a two-fold aim. On the one hand, this chapter aims to explore the historical background which will not only provide the reader with a useful historical understanding of the period in which both novels take place, but it will also enable him/her to explore the cultural and political situation depicted in the novels as regards the gender roles within the white patriarchal society of that period. It starts with a brief chronological development of the American history and includes some important facts and reflections upon the dominant and repressive characteristics of the founding pillars of the American society. On the other hand, its second part deals with some key concepts as part of a theoretical framework of study. To begin with, it delves into the notion of power following Michel Foucault's theory on the matter, contrasting and comparing his theory to some other philosophers' studies. Finally, it presents an overview of some feminist literary theories, such as gender performativity and "sexual politics", particularly in the works of Judith Butler and Kate Millett, including some concepts related to patriarchy and compulsory heterosexuality in Gayatri Spivak's analysis. More specifically, this chapter is an attempt to explore and identify, describe

and examine the connections, similarities and differences between the notions of power, race, gender and patriarchy as they mingle and interact in the historical and social span in which both novels are set.

Furthermore, chapter 3 entitled *Analysis of the Literary Works* is presented next, displaying a brief summary of each novel and analysing both Harper Lee's novels in the light of the concepts developed in the theoretical framework. The purpose of this stage is to unveil and analyse how the protagonist's identity is redefined through the challenges posed by her family and wide circle of close acquaintances, and by adjusting to the historical period, culture and country she is immersed in.

Within the final section, chapter 4 will intend to provide conclusions, comprising the most salient aspects of this work. The findings obtained through the content analysis of both novels will be presented in an attempt to provide adequate responses to the research question duly formulated.

## **2- Literature Review**

### **2.1- Part 1: Historical setting of the novels**

History interpretation and understanding are both enlightening and challenging processes. Following Orelus' definition (2010), history is a discipline which does not simply imply the narration of past events but also works as a vehicle through which the reader can question and deconstruct the past so as to connect it to the present in order to create future events.

As Edward Quinn (2006) asserts, the relevant historical and social conditions in which a text is set are deemed necessary as part of the historical context that shapes people's attitudes and beliefs. The historical context of a literary work may help the reader understand the economic, political, social, racial and religious conditions that existed during a certain period of time, and the place as depicted in the written piece. This study grew out of the conviction that the reader should be aware of those past events and details and interpret them, trying to make sense of the historical situation and connect them within the juncture presented along the written piece.

#### **2.1. 1 Conflicts within the United States**

Class and cultural dissonance magically fade from view in order to remake American origins into a utopian love story.

-Nancy Isenberg



The United States of America has openly announced to be a fair and just society, and so, according to Susan Wallach (2010: 1) “through compromise and change, the country has grown, prospered, and made progress toward its ideals.” Although the United States of America has been a democracy, i.e. a system of government in which the citizens of a country can vote to elect their representatives, for more than 200 years, some important issues in its early years remain so today: massive controlling political groups versus limited ones, individual rights versus group interests, free markets versus controlled trade, and connection with the world versus focusing on internal affairs.

Being a land built up of immigrants, most people who came to the U. S. in its origins, as part of the British colonies in the 1600s, were English and many others came from Germany, France, Scotland, Northern Ireland, among others. Varied were the reasons the first immigrants had to leave their original birthplace and travel to the unknown but promising and novel land of opportunities. Some of the newcomers escaped war or sought political or religious freedom. Many of them had to work as servants to pay back the cost of their trip before gaining their freedom. Among this last group, were the black Africans who arrived as slaves. In time, the colonies were developed within some distinct regions according to the characteristics of the territory they were settled, as well as the inhabitants’ race and origin. (Wallach, 2010).

Some of these issues are captured in *White Trash: The 400-Year Untold History of Class in America*, in which history professor Nancy Isenberg describes the colonists as a mixed group of people: single men and women, and families from low gentry who eventually became unfree labourers next to the African and Caribbean slaves, who also reached the mainland British American colonies. In addition,

Isenberg (2016) connects the British law of ownership - measured by the amount of land a person, in this case, a coloniser holds and occupies- to the winners and losers in the colonial conquest. "Land itself was a source of civil identity." (2016: 12) As Isenberg narrates,

"Land was the principal source of wealth, and those without any had little chance to escape servitude. It was the stigma of landlessness that would leave its mark on white trash from this day forward. [...] Independence did not magically erase the British class system, nor did it root out long-entrenched beliefs about poverty and the willful exploitation of human labour. An unfavored population, widely thought of as waste or "rubbish," remained disposable indeed well into modern times." (2016: 14)

Moreover, as Richard Rothstein, in his work *The color of law* (2017), explains "the stereotypes and attitudes that support racial discrimination have their roots in the system of slavery upon which the nation was founded." (2017: 5) According to the author, the government practises, which combined explicit laws and regulations, resulted in a system of official segregation that excluded African Americans to designated areas in the outside of the cities mainly populated by white people. As a result, a nationwide system of urban ghettos was created surrounded by white suburbs. Rothstein correctly points out that the term *ghetto* was used to describe low-income African American neighbourhoods, created by public policy with an obvious shortage of opportunities for its inhabitants, and with almost impossible barriers to exit. "African Americans were unconstitutionally denied the means and the right to integration in middle-class neighborhoods, and [...] this denial was state-sponsored." (2017: 9)

## **2.1. 2 Growth and Transformation**

In the Southern colonies, for example, the growing season was long and the soil was fertile so most homesteaders were farmers. Some of them owned small farms that they worked themselves with the help of their entire family. However, the wealthy farmers owned large plantations and used African slaves as workers. Contrarily, in the Northeast, as trees covered the hills, stones filled the soil and waterpower was available, the economy was based on timber, fishing, ship-building, and trade. Moreover, in the centre of the territory, the weather was milder and the countryside was more varied. People worked in industry and agriculture.

By 1850, the United States was a large and independent realm, full of contrasts, as each side and region of the new country held its intrinsic characteristics and beliefs solidly. On the one hand, the landowners from the north thought slavery was amiss, and saw it as a threat to the free workforce. On the other hand, most white Southerners considered slavery part of their way of life. As a result, a vast number of slaves escaped to the North through secret routes and with the assistance of some sympathetic citizens who felt empathy for their meagre living conditions. In 1860, however, one-third of the total population of slave states was not free. Consequently, the class anger that came from the realities of ordinary life could not be suppressed, but only postponed, by nationalism or fanatical patriotism. (Zinn, 1999) To this, Richard Rothstein (2017) adds that a “caste system”- as the author calls it- has been created in the country by which African Americans were exploited and geographically separated by racially explicit government policies.

## **2.1. 3 The American Civil war and the prosperous 1920s**

By April 1861, the American Civil War started in spite of the fact that President Lincoln was determined to stop the rebellion and keep the country united. The war lasted four years and although a preliminary Emancipation Proclamation that liberated all slaves in the Confederate states and allowed African Americans into the Union Army in 1862 was issued, the different race groups lived separately in the South for the next 100 years. Once in the 20th century, this would become a national issue.

As Zinn observes, “the government of the United States (between 1901 and 1921, the Presidents were Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, Woodrow Wilson)-whether Republican or Democrat- watched Negroes being lynched, observed murderous riots against blacks in Statesboro, Georgia, Brownsville, Texas, and Atlanta, Georgia, and did nothing.” (Zinn, 1999: 326) Moreover, the Ku Klux Klan was revived in the 1920s, and it also spread into the North. There was mob violence and race hatred everywhere and “the impossibility of the black persons ever being considered equal in white America was the theme of the nationalist movement led in the 1920s.” (Zinn, 1999: 357)

In spite of the American Civil War, and the fact that, after the war, many areas of the country experienced a period of prosperity due to industrialisation and economic growth, in which many families were able to purchase their first automobile, radio and refrigerator, they could go to the theatres and, most of all, women finally won the right to vote – in 1920-, the racial tension, struggling farms and labour unrest, did not disappear. Moreover, as historian Richard Rothstein (2017) points out, government policies that mainly involved residential segregation of African Americans from the 1930s to the 1960s in the United States, were the roots of the racial inequality in the area. Due to these government segregating policies, a substantial black-white

income gap, as well as an enormous wealth gap, was established as a natural disposition.

#### **2.1. 4 The Great Depression, the New Deal and World War II**

Forthwith, the collapse of the stock market resulting in an economic depression ended the good times and as a result banks failed, businesses and factories shut down and farms were not excluded from the economic crises and suffered the depression as well. All over the country, people organised spontaneously to help themselves, since business and government were not assisting them between 1931 and 1932. As a consequence, in the early 1930s President Roosevelt “proposed a “New Deal” to end the Great Depression.” (Wallach, 2010: 57) However, “to white Americans of the thirties [...] North and South, blacks were invisible. Only the radicals made an attempt to break the racial barriers: Socialists, Trotskyists, Communists most of all.” (Zinn, 1999: 379) Even though the economic programs eased the dire strait, they did not solve the entire financial milestone which, in fact, would be covered by the next World War. American industry grew again focused on the war effort. Women took part in the industry building aircraft, cargo ships and tanks while the men acted as soldiers up to August 1945 when World War II was finally over.

#### **2.1. 5 Cultural change 1950s onwards**

In the pursuit of stability, open trade and the strengthening of democracy, by 1952 the United State presented a program, which was called the Marshall Plan, to repair the war damage and help European nations economies through the investment of large sums of money, so, at the same time weaken the increasing

popularity of the communist ideas of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, at home, some American families started to grow again and had the opportunity of moving into the outlying areas of the major cities so as to be able to buy their own homes. However, not all Americans obtained the same benefits therefore they were not so successful. That was the case of many African Americans who initiated a movement to eventually gain a fair and well-deserved treatment all along the American territory and not only in some areas.

A period of real change finally sprang and by 1954 the Supreme Court ruled fairly for all the citizens on that promising land. As Wallach (2010) describes the historical moment, the schools were separated for black and white children with the purpose to show the difference between the races, as black children's schools were not equal to those for white children. As a result, after the Supreme Court amendment, the schools had to be integrated.

While racial prejudice was still present in the American society, President Lyndon Johnson decided to support Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s peaceful struggle for equal civil rights and the legitimate opportunity to vote for African Americans. Together with Martin Luther King Jr., many were the black leaders who gave their life in a peaceful joust hence forthwith new laws were passed to end segregation and guarantee all African Americans the right to vote and the opportunity of working toward joining the more prosperous middle class. However, in spite of the fact that African Americans had a better chance to live freely and well, racial prejudice was not gone. Moreover, many American white women did not have the same opportunities as men, so they grew angry at the prospect of a hard and unfair future for them as well.

Within this historical framework it can be said that the American society was heavily transforming. Leisurely, the United States was nestling a large multicultural population without considering individual characteristics and capabilities, only following racial matters. As captured and defined by Isenberg (2016), America's class history is a "complicated story" in which the past informs the present attitude of the American society made up of voters who accept huge disparities in wealth. However, as class and identity politics matter, voters are finally seduced by the language deployed by contemporary politicians. As Isenberg clearly summarises in the preface to the paperback edition of her book,

"Punditry has tended to reduce the reality of class, which crosses lines of racial and gender identity, and to replace it with an all-encompassing marker of dispossession that exclusively features the once ascendant, now aggrieved "white working-class male [...] We need to stop thinking that some Americans are the real Americans, the deserving, the talented, the most patriotic and hardworking, while others can be dismissed as less deserving of the American dream".

(Isenberg, 2016: xxiv)

Thus, as Isenberg manages to reflect, there is a far more complicated history of class and gender identity beyond the ignorance and anger present in the white founders of the American society and that dates back to America's colonial period.

Although some civil rights efforts have managed to abolish segregation in the field of education and in public spaces, according to Rothstein (2017) half a century after the Civil Rights Movement, residential segregation remains in almost every metropolitan area producing extensive effects of poverty, inequality, criminal justice policy, and health in the United States.

## 2.1. 6 The womanhood oppressed: a downtrodden minority?

It seems to be recurrent in the average retelling of the history of a country and its founding pillars, to forget about an important part of the population. That is the case of the secretly and naturally oppressed in certain backgrounds: women. The apparent disregard and anonymity of women is a consequence of their meagre status within society. As Zinn (1999) enumerates, “the explorers were men, the landholders and merchants men, the political leaders men, the military figures men.” (1999: 94) Consequently, within this invisible status created by men, women were treated and considered as black slaves so they ended up facing a double type of oppression.

Their biological characteristic as children bearers was the basis for being treated as inferior to men, even for those who were too young or too old for having a child and enlarge the community. Due to this unique characteristic, women became convenient for men as they could be exploited as servants in the household, as sexual mates, and as teachers and guardians for their children.

This is the case of the American society that, as Zin describes, follows the characteristics of,

“Societies based on private property and competition, in which monogamous families became practical units for work and socialization, found it especially useful to establish this special status of women, something akin to a house slave in the matter of intimacy and oppression, and yet requiring, because of that intimacy, and long-term connection with children, a special patronization, which on occasion, especially in the face of a show of strength, could slip over



into treatment as an equal. An oppression so private would turn out hard to uproot.” (1999: 94)

American earliest societies pursued the same type of families sharing the land or extensive territory which gave them a special social status and on which aunts, uncles, and grandparents were living together. Moreover, the first white settlers in America, consisting almost exclusively of men, created various situations and conditions for women whether they had been imported as sex slaves, child bearers or companions. No matter the purpose of their presence in the new land, all women were loaded with ideas brought from England by mainly white Christian colonists.

Over the years, even though the American society grew and became independent, the women’s condition within society did not change so much. They kept on taking care of the children, the household and only a small number of them became literate. Only after the Civil war and the industrial revolution were they considered for performing jobs outside their home but always keeping submissive to the male figure in the family. The low status given to women within society was evident as they were not able to vote or own property; if they had the opportunity of working, their wages were half of that earned by men in the same job. As regards education, they were excluded from colleges and certain professions. They had to fight and unwind a difficult path towards emancipation and a proper social status.

## **2.2- Part 2: Theoretical Framework**

### **2.2.1- Michel Foucault’s view on power relations: a challenge to the traditional notion of power.**

What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse.

-Michel Foucault

This section reflects upon Michel Foucault's theory as a ground-breaking scholar in the field of power relations, sexuality and the essence of man as a subject and agent, capable of comprehending and altering his own personal condition. Michel Foucault (1926-1984) was a French, highly influential, postmodernist philosopher, psychologist and historian who challenged the fundamental assumptions of the notion of power as it has traditionally been conceived. His work offers a new insight on this matter, stating that all human knowledge is locked in an intimate relationship with power (Foucault, 1995). Foucault's theory delves into how dominant structures of thought or ways of thinking have changed over time and his approach to the relations between power, the body and sexuality has had a profound impact on the feminist representatives of his period.

Feminist literary critics have taken Foucault's ideas and applied them to a range of texts, from Judith Butler (1990) to Kristeva (2002), among others. However, while contemporary feminists have found Foucault's treatment of the relations between power and the body enlightening, they have also pointed out its constraints. For instance, many feminists believe that Foucault's theory of the "docile" bodies and his questioning of the categories of the subject and agency are prone to undermine

the feminist emancipatory drive. However, his firm account of subjectivity and resistance offers a great deal to feminist politics. In Foucault's words,

“[...] discipline produces subjected and practised bodies, 'docile' bodies. Discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience). In short, it dissociates power from the body; on the one hand, it turns it into an 'aptitude', a 'capacity', which it seeks to increase; on the other hand, it reverses the course of the energy, the power that might result from it, and turns it into a relation of strict subjection.”

(Foucault 1995 [1977]: 138)

On Foucault's account, sex and sexuality developed into compelling political concerns in a society distressed to manage and direct the life of individuals, as well as populations. He understands sex as an instinctual biological and psychological drive with profound connections to identity and, hence, with possibly extensive effects on the sexual and social individuals' behaviours.

### **2.2.1- 1. The intimate relationship of power and knowledge in Foucault's views**

In his book, *Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison*, translated from the French by Alan Sheridan, the philosopher states that “there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations” (Foucault 1995 [1977]: 27) so, as a result, the author implies that power and knowledge directly entail one another. Power, in Foucault's work, is very rarely a matter of politics, the state or economy and instead tends to be a question of the possibilities of self-empowerment.

Foucault's central idea connotes that knowledge, rather than being universal and incontrovertibly objective, is, in fact, historically contingent (specific to a particular moment in time). "Power is articulated directly onto time; it assures its control and guarantees its use." (Foucault 1995 [1977]: 160)

Moreover, Foucault inquires himself about whether the received wisdom of the era in which we live allows us to have agency, to truly know ourselves and to construct our identities to our own design, or it subtly coerces us into appealing to some kind of "normality." Foucault sets out to ask whether what is considered logical or reasonable might also be historically contingent. He suggests that each period of history -or, indeed, the present- might have a corresponding structure of thought or what he calls an "episteme." An episteme, then, refers to the way in which a society thinks at any given moment. Furthermore, the philosopher states that a shift from one episteme to another allows new discoveries. In fact, the power that the philosopher is exploring, being exercised here, is also definitely epistemological, due to the fact that the human sciences, as he describes, "have been able to be formed and to produce so many profound changes in the episteme [...] because they have been conveyed by a specific and new modality of power: a certain policy of the body, a certain way of rendering the group of men docile and useful". (Foucault, 1995 [1977]:305)

As opposed to Foucault's concern to move the analysis of power one step beyond the Marxist view of power as essentially something that the institutions possess and which they use oppressively upon individuals or groups, the French Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser ponders over a theory of power that describes how people are oppressed by the state apparatus, as ideological and repressive.

According to Althusser, people build themselves as individuals through the inscrutable action of the ideology.

Althusser's writings *On the Reproduction of Capitalism. Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* (1971) resulted in a significant elucidation in the field of discourse theory. Here, the philosopher translates 'discourse' into 'ideology' introducing a domination–subordination model. He explains that the discursive formations are linked with 'state apparatuses' -religious, legal, and educational, among others- through which all the "subjects" of ideology are summoned to take place in the social structure. As explained by Selden, Widdowson and Brooker (2015),

"[...] the more politicized notion of ideology [are] developed in the writings of Louis Althusser. Althusser's theory [...] abandons the orthodox interpretation of ideology as 'false consciousness' in favour of a theory which situates ideology firmly within material institutions (political, juridical, educational, religious, and so on), and conceives ideology as a body of discursive practices which, when dominant, sustain individuals in their places as 'subjects' (subjects them)." (2015: 182)

As a result, every subject or individual is 'interpellated' to serve the interests of the ruling classes by a number of ideological discourses. Moreover, when ideology is connected with science as a counterpart, a certain relationship of power between the different forms of knowledge arises. As opposed to Foucault's ideas, Althusser claims that Marxism is a science, an epistemological break, with an autonomous rationality that guarantees its independence of ideology.

### **2.2.1- 2. Discipline and routine: The diffusion of power throughout society**

In the above-mentioned book, *Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison*, Foucault deals with “society as a whole” (Foucault, 1995 [1977]:130). As the writer argues, the practices of instilling obedience through discipline and routine, “since the seventeenth century, [...] had constantly reached out to ever broader domains, as if they tended to cover the entire social body.” (Foucault, 1995 [1977]:139) Foucault always argued that power was diffused throughout society rather than centralised.

Throughout Foucault’s work, questions of morality certainly appear both implicitly and explicitly. As the author states, his book “is intended as a correlative history of the modern soul and of a new power to judge; a genealogy of the present scientific- legal complex from which the power to punish derives its bases, justifications and rules, from which it extends its effects.” (Foucault, 1995 [1977]:23). This “genealogy”, i.e., a historical narrative and investigative method, which offers an intrinsic critique of the present (Crowley, 2021), is markedly interested in how a change in the way in which a society thinks might relate to a change in its power relations. According to Foucault, “the meticulous control of the operations of the body, which assured the constant subjection of its forces and imposed upon them a relation of docility-utility, might be called 'disciplines'.” (Foucault, 1995 [1977]:137) This particular form of discipline operates precisely by limiting the knowledge that we are able to gain about ourselves; the routine encourages us to want to conform in some way, to try and fit in and therefore limits our ability to construct our own identities. Indeed, Foucault argues that the real insidious form of discipline lies in the fact that much of work is done internally: by us to ourselves.

Furthermore, he suggests that we come to internalise the ways of thinking that we are routinely forced into through school, workplace or the prison. As the writer states,

“discipline is the unitary technique by which the body is reduced as a 'political' force at the least cost and maximized as a useful force. The growth of a capitalist economy gave rise to the specific modality of disciplinary power, whose general formulas, techniques of submitting forces and bodies, in short, 'political anatomy', could be operated in the most diverse political regimes, apparatuses or institutions.” (Foucault, 1995 [1977]:221).

All this limits the knowledge that we are able to gain about ourselves; this, to a certain extent, prevents us all from being competent to form our identities to our own end and turns us into conforming, docile bodies. Effecting our individual agency in this way and our potential for personal empowerment or subjection, knowledge thus comes to be intimately associated with power.

Being discourse a central human activity, as depicted by Foucault, and a way to exercise power, the historical dimension of discursive change determines the rules and procedures about what is considered normal or rational. Otherwise, those individuals acting within certain discursive patterns that do not obey the rules and constraints already set, run the risk of being condemned into madness or silence.

Beyond this theory, Louis Althusser, in his book *On the Reproduction of Capitalism. Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* (1971), describes the mechanism by which an individual acts by himself/herself under a certain ideology “in the technical-social division of labour, that is, in the various posts held by agents of

production, exploitation, repression and ideologization (and also of scientific practice).” (Althusser, 2014 [1971]: 177) As a result, ‘knowledge’ is, according to the philosopher, directly repressive by nature so there is a need to revolt against the ‘authority of knowledge’. In the philosopher’s words,

“This proves that ‘knowledge’ altogether different from repressive authoritarian knowledge is possible - precisely the scientific knowledge that, since Marx and Lenin, has become emancipatory, because revolutionary, scientific knowledge.” (Althusser, 2014 [1971]: 180)

Consequently, every subject acts in everyday life following the most elementary practical rituals (handshaking, calling a person by his/her name, recognising that person by that given name as unique) due to the recognition of a certain ‘ideology’ as “all ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects, through the functioning of the category of the subject.” (Althusser, 2014 [1971]: 190) Thus, the act or function of the ideology is to recruit individuals and transform them into subjects through interpellation or hailing.

### **2.2.1- 3. The historical dimension of discourse: a way to exercise power and mark the dichotomies in society**

As described by Selden, R., Widdowson, P & P. Brooker. (2005), by defining and excluding the mad, the sick, the criminal, the poor and the deviant, Michel Foucault delineated the discourse formations as inseparable from power by depicting discourse as a governing and ordering medium in every institution. In this way, discourse determines the criteria of “truth”, authority and where speech can be spoken.



Moreover, Selden, R., Widdowson, P & P. Brooker. (2005) emphasise the importance of Foucault's dichotomies which are imposed as definitive of human existence and they have direct effects on the society's organisation in the way they operate. "Discourses are produced in which concepts of madness, criminality, sexual abnormality, and so on are defined in relation to concepts of sanity, justice and sexual normality." (Selden, R., Widdowson, P & P. Brooker. 2005:182) According to this, the discursive formations establish and bind the concepts of "knowledge", "normality" and "subjectivity" in each particular period. The different historically dominant discursive patterns, rather than having a universal validity, they represent ways of preserving and controlling social relations of exploitation. As a result, the mad, the sick, the criminal, the poor and the deviant existence gives evidence of the rightness of established power relationships.

In this regard, the American scholar Stephen Greenblatt, as part of a group called the New Historicists, who promote an approach to literary criticism, dissenting from the "functionalist" Foucaultian ideas of discursive power, states that an individual defines his/her identity in relation to what he/she is not. Following Selden, R., Widdowson, P & P. Brooker's (2005) reading of Greenblatt's approach, there is an inward necessity of subversion within the individuals and after defining their identity discarding what they are not, what is excluded is, at the same time, demonised and objectified as "others". Consequently,

"The mad, the unruly and the alien are internalized "others" which help us to consolidate our identities: their existence is allowed only as evidence of the rightness of established power" (Selden, R., Widdowson, P & P. Brooker, 2005: 183)

Furthermore, Selden, R., Widdowson, P & P. Brooker. (2005), point out that Foucault's configurations of power are central to the production and control of sexuality due to the fact that power is intrinsically involved with pleasure as they both seek out, overlap, and reinforce one another.

#### **2.2.1- 4. The intrinsically involved pleasure in power: the production and control of sexuality**

In *The History of Sexuality. Volume I: An Introduction* (1978), translated from the French by R. Hurley, Foucault revisits the notion of sexuality and its relationship with the body and power. The philosopher's treatment of these topics "has provided feminist social and political theorists with some useful conceptual tools for the analysis of the social construction of gender and sexuality" (Armstrong, A., 2020: 6). In the light of Foucault's writings on the phenomenon of sexuality, it should be understood that sexuality is constructed through the exercise of power relations. According to the philosopher, since the classical age there has been a fundamental link between repression and power, knowledge and sexuality. As a consequence, the individuals would not be able to free themselves from this link. Following Foucault's view of the body and sexuality, and his arguments about the corporeal reality of the bodies, he explains that,

"[...] deployments of power are directly connected to the body- to bodies, functions, physiological processes, sensations, and pleasures; far from the body having to be effaced, what is needed is to make it visible through an analysis in which the biological and the historical are not consecutive to one another, [...] but are bound together in an

increasingly complex fashion in accordance with the development of the modern technologies of power that take life as their objective.”

(Foucault, 1978: 151-2)

Thus, he does not consider, as he calls it, a “history of mentalities” that would describe the body only regarding how they have been perceived and given meaning and value, “but a “history of bodies” and the manner in which what is most material and most vital in them has been invested.” (Foucault, 1978: 152) Hence, he claims a corporeal reality of the body directly constructed by social and historical forces, avoiding, in this way, “the traditional gendered opposition between the body and culture.” (Armstrong, A., 2020: 9). As a result, the philosopher establishes a distinction between a natural sex and a culturally constructed gender and claims that the body is straight targeted and formed by power and, as a result, it becomes unintelligible outside of its cultural significations.

It is not surprising, then, that, in Judith Butler’s words, Michel Foucault asserts that “sexuality is coextensive with power” (Butler, 1990 :128) and moreover, according to Butler, he argues that the construct of “sex” as univocal - meaning one sex and not the other- is produced following social regulations and control of sexuality, artificially unifies unrelated sexual functions and also produces and renders sensation, pleasure and desire as sex-specific. However, Butler claims that,

“Foucault engages a reverse-discourse which treats “sex” as an *effect* rather than an origin. In the place of “sex” as the original and continuous cause and signification of bodily pleasure, he proposes “sexuality” as an open and complex historical system of discourse and power that produces the misnomer of “sex” as part of a strategy to conceal and, hence, to perpetuate power-relations.” (Butler, 1990: 129)

In Butler's words, Foucault asserts that the body is not "sexed" in a significant sense before its determination within a discourse invested in an "idea" of natural sex. To be sexed means to be subjected to a set of social regulations, under the directive law that resides both as the formative principle of a subject's sex, gender, pleasures, and desires and as a principle of self-interpretation. The only way for the body to gain meaning, according to Foucault's theory, is within discourse only in the context of power relations. "The category of sex is thus inevitably regulative, [...] as a power/knowledge regime." (Butler, 1990: 130) Moreover, as explained by Butler, Foucault contends that sexual identity is constituted only within heterosexual contexts -in which heterogeneity is constituted by medical discourse and the repressive juridical law- and, as a result, sexual non-identity is promoted in homosexual contexts. To conclude Butler's analysis of Foucault's theory, she states that,

"Foucault appears to locate the quest for identity within the context of juridical forms of power that become fully articulate with the advent of the sexual sciences, including psychoanalysis, [...]." (Butler, 1990: 144)

In her further analysis, Butler proposes that the pursuing of sex-determination is focused and framed within the cultural assumptions concerning the respective status of men and women and the binary opposition of genders. According to Butler, and following her reading of Monique Wittig's theory, the terms "masculine" and "feminine", "male" and "female" are naturalised within a heterosexual matrix that conceals the category of sex within a system of compulsory heterosexuality and sexual reproduction.

## 2.2. 2- Patriarchy as a habit of mind within a male dominant society

We owe others our language, our history, our art, our survival, our neighborhood, our relations with family and colleagues, our ability to defy social conventions as well as support those conventions. All of this we learned from others. None of us is alone; each of us depend on others- some of us depend on others for life itself.

-Toni Morrison

The notion of “patriarchy” has been marked, by many, as the origin of the feminist theory, owing to the fact that, a patriarchal character structure becomes a habit of mind and a way of life, from which the eventuality of the history of women’s oppression should be established. The term itself implies a family-centred theory of male power that starts in the male-headed household and develops into a male dominant society (Millet, 2016 [1969]). Many debates have emerged over whether the beginning of patriarchy could be shown and if it could be subjected to an end as well.

According to the Oxford Reference Dictionary online (2021), the term refers “literally, [to] a community of related families under the authority of a male head called a patriarch; [and it may be] applied more generally to any form of social organization in which men have predominant power.” Moreover, according to the Cambridge Dictionary, patriarchy refers to “a society in which the oldest male is the leader of the family, or a society controlled by men in which they use their power to their own advantage.” All in all, the concept of patriarchy implies every social organization in which the supremacy of the father in the clan or family is established, through which

the legal dependence of wives and offsprings is performed, and the inheritance in the descending male line is reckoned.

## **2.2. 2- 1 Kate Millett's voice: a sexual revolution against the basis of oppression**

In her book *Sexual Politics* (2016) [1969], Kate Millett, the American writer, teacher, artist and feminist activist, states her views on the topic of patriarchy and she presents the sexual revolution as a direct revolt against the ruling of men. She initiates her analysis stating that “the term “politics” shall refer to power-structured relationships, arrangements whereby one group of persons is controlled by another.” (Millett, 2016 [1969]: 23) She asserts that the sexualization of power is the basis of oppression. According to her, politics itself, properly understood, is sexual at its core. Moreover, she defines the theory of politics on less conventional grounds and states that power relationships are developed “on grounds of personal contact and interaction between members of well-defined and coherent groups: races, castes, classes, and sexes.” (Millett, 2016 [1969]: 24) Hence, as certain groups do not have a strong political structure so as to have a stable and strong position, their oppression remains continuous.

Millett proposes that sex is a political category the way castes or race are. Moreover, one sex -males- has dominated the life of the other sex -female- all through the recorded patriarchal history. All along this period, the power of all the institutions has been in male hands and females have been psychologically oppressed, second-class citizens, kept out of all offices of importance. According to Millett (2016 [1969]), in modern terms, “historical patriarchy” (2016) may be defined as “a controlling political

institution built on status, temperament, and role, a socially conditioned belief system presenting itself as nature or necessity.” (Millett, 2016 [1969]: xxi)

Moreover, the philosopher includes within the political relationships those between the races and she describes them as relationships in which the general control is performed from one collectivity, defined by birth, towards another collectivity, defined by birth as well, perpetuating a truly political state of affairs between the races that secures a series of oppressive circumstances. In the same way, Millett examines the system of sexual relationship as one of subordination and domination. This means that, in our social order, there is a

“[...] birthright priority whereby males rule females. Through this system a most ingenious form of “interior colonization” has been achieved. It is one which tends moreover to be sturdier than any form of segregation, and more rigorous than class stratification, more uniform, certainly more enduring. However muted its present appearance may be, sexual domination obtains nevertheless as perhaps the most pervasive ideology of our culture and provides its most fundamental concept of power.” (Millett, 2016 [1969]: 25)

According to Millett, in a general sense of power, domination, as the possibility of imposing one’s will upon the behaviour of other persons, can emerge in the most diverse forms. She states that the cause of women’s oppression is based on, not only economic inequality, but also ideological indoctrination. As a result, due to patriarchy, females are subordinated to males, constrained to a power exerted directly in civil and domestic spheres.

## **2.2. 2- 2 Sociological analysis of patriarchy**

As part of the second-wave feminist movement, Kate Millett recognises that women, as much as men, tend to perpetuate this “natural” subordination imposed by patriarchal views and the unequal and repressive sex-roles that tend to secure the relations of domination and submission among the sexes. Moreover, following Selden, R., Widdowson, P & P. Brooker’s (2005) reading of Millett’s theory, she “borrows from social science the important distinction between ‘sex’ and ‘gender’, where sex is determined biologically but ‘gender’ is a psychological concept which refers to culturally acquired sexual identity, and other feminists have attacked social scientists who treat the culturally learned ‘female’ characteristics (passivity, etc.) as ‘natural’.” (Selden, R., Widdowson, P & P. Brooker., 2005: 123)

Within the sociological sphere, Millett claims that “sexual politics obtains consent through the “socialization” of both sexes to basic patriarchal polities with regard to temperament, role, and status.” (Millett, 2016 [1969]: 26) Every manifestation of power within society is performed by males and due to the fact that “the essence of politics is power, such realization cannot fail to carry impact.” (Millett, 2016 [1969]: 25) In sum, Millett affirms that, similarly to some other political spheres, the supremacy of men resides in the acceptance of a value system which is not biological and is not just based on physical strength.

Socially speaking, Millett enumerates the three main patriarchal institutions, the family, society and the state as separate but interrelated entities, sharing the same religious support, and within which “women have a decreasing importance as one goes from the first to the third category.” (Millett, 2016 [1969]: 33) Moreover, she declares the family as the patriarchy’s chief institution, connected and reflecting a larger patriarchal unit. According to the writer, the family is responsible for effecting



control and conformity where political and other authorities are insufficient. In Millett's words,

“Serving as an agent of the larger society, the family not only encourages its own members to adjust and conform, but acts as a unit in the government of the patriarchal state which rules its citizens through its family heads. Even in patriarchal societies where they are granted legal citizenships, women tend to be ruled through the family alone and have little or no formal relation to the state.” (Millett, 2016 [1969]: 33)

Consequently, no woman as head of a household is desirable and in case this condition takes place, it is a sign of poverty or misfortune. Within the legal institution of marriage, the female provides the sexual and domestic service to her husband in return for financial support. The status of both the mother and her children depends directly upon the male and “the position of the masculine figure within the family [...] is materially, as well as ideologically, extremely strong.” (Millett, 2016 [1969]: 35)

## **2.2. 2- 3 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's essentialist debate: the cultural differences of women according to their origins**

In a similar line, the Indian postcolonial theorist and feminist critic, Gayatri Spivak, speaks for all women, through the challenging of the ubiquitous claims of feminism and generating an important rethinking of feminist assumptions. She challenges the universal humanist belief that all women are the same and emphasises the need to respect the difference in race, class, religion, citizenship and culture between them. Her main purpose is to strengthen the feminist arguments and urgent

political claims. She also underlines the importance of a “global political awareness of the local economic, political, social and cultural conditions that structure women’s oppression in different parts of the world.” (Morton, 2003: 90) As a result, she proposes an essentialist debate that changes the topic of concern, from the sexual difference between men and women to the cultural differences between women according to their place of origin.

What is more, Spivak proposes that certain definitions of woman fall as a prey in the binary opposition that perpetuates women’s subordinated role in culture and society. Women’s complex position under patriarchy, as a dominated, docile but relentless subject should be understood as they conform to the stereotypes of patriarchy. Spivak’s main purpose is to demonstrate the objectification of women’s bodies by patriarchal social relations through which women’s reproductive bodies are treated as legal objects and private property of men.

## **2.2. 2- 4. A pattern of subordination: “The subaltern”**

As a leading postcolonial critic, Spivak’s methodology is based on deconstruction -defined by Bennet, A. and Royle, N. (2004) as a strategy of disruption and transformation of any kind of essentialism and the conceptual oppositions through which essentialism operates (male/female, literal/figurative, among others)- speaking the language of who is being criticised and drawing attention to questions of identity. Moreover, she assumes from Antonio Gramsci, the Italian Marxist, the figure of the ‘subaltern’, and through it she refers to those of inferior rank without class consciousness. According to Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., Tiffin, H.’s (2003) definition of ‘subaltern’, it means “‘of inferior rank’, [and] is a term adopted by Antonio Gramsci to

refer to those groups in society who are subject to the hegemony of the ruling classes. Subaltern classes may include peasants, workers and other groups denied access to 'hegemonic' power.” (Ashcroft et al., 2003: 215)

Subsequently, a main problem arises due to the fact that, according to some interpretations of Spivak’s theory, the colonised, non-elite and of inferior caste, cannot speak since they have not got a language of their own. In Selden, R., Widdowson, P & P. Brooker’s analysis of Spivak’s concepts,

“That is to say, the oppressed and silenced cannot, by definition, speak or achieve self-legitimation without ceasing to be that named subject under neo-colonialism. But if the oppressed subalterns cannot be spoken for by Western intellectuals – because this would not alter the most important fact of their position – nor speak for themselves, there can apparently be no non- or anti-colonial discourse.” (Selden, R., Widdowson, P & P. Brooker, 2005: 224)

However, as Ashcroft et al. (2003) rightly observe, out of embracing essentialism and asserting the inability of the subaltern voice to be accessed or given agency, Spivak struggles to liberate those oppressed by the effects of colonial and neo-colonial domination. She draws “attention to the dangers of assuming that it was a simple matter of allowing the subaltern (oppressed) forces to speak, without recognizing that their essential subjectivity had been and still was constrained by the discourses within which they were constructed as subaltern.” (Ashcroft et al., 2003: 79) Moreover, she claims that no act of resistance or dissension on the subaltern site occurs outside the dominant discourse as it is the one that “provides the language and the conceptual categories with which the subaltern voice speaks.” (Ashcroft et al.,

2003: 219) Under this light, she coins the term 'the other' to define the subject who is created, and at the same time excluded by the discourse of power.

In her aim of going further in the analysis of the subaltern and their political situation of oppression, she explores the particular condition of gendered subjects, especially in India, as objects in the history of colonialism and as subjects of defiance, asserting that the ideological construction of gender is still based on male dominance. According to Spivak, whereas the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the situation of female subalterns is even more deeply compromised due to their gender.

### **2.2. 3- Gender: performance and submission**

The Truth is that males are not a superior gender; nor are females a superior gender. Masculinity, however, as a concept, is envied by both sexes. The problem, therefore, is this: the tacit agreement that masculinity is preferable is also a tacit acceptance of male supremacy, whether the "males" are men, male-minded women, or male-dominated women, and male supremacy cannot exist without its genitalia.

-Tony Morrison

As it has been stated in the course of this chapter, in the light of Foucault's assumptions, Judith Butler (1990) conceives gender as arising out of power relations. According to the writer, throughout different historical contexts, gender is not constituted meaningfully or accordingly, owing to the fact that it converges with racial, class, ethnic, sexual, and regional characteristics. Therefore, it is impossible to

separate “gender” from political and cultural connections. Accordingly, Butler tends to shed light to the concepts of “sex” and “gender” stating that, the different ways in which the category of sex is understood depend on the field of power in which they are articulated as “very different regimes of power are understood to produce the identity concepts of sex.” (Butler, 1990: 24)

In this regard, the distinction between sex and gender was based on the idea that sex appears to have a biological bases whereas gender is culturally constructed. Hence, following Butler’s theory, as “gender is neither the casual result of sex nor as seemingly fixed as sex,” (Butler, 1990: 8) the cultural meaning that the sexed body assumes would constitute the gender of the subject but may not follow a specific sexual form. Subsequently, the sex/gender characteristics may assert a radical discontinuity between sexed bodies and culturally constructed genders. As the writer states,

“Assuming [...] the stability of binary sex, it does not follow that the construction of “men” will accrue exclusively to the bodies of males or that “women” will interpret only female bodies. Further, even if the sexes appear to be unproblematically binary in their morphology and constitution [...] there is no reason to assume that genders ought also to remain as two.” (Butler, 1990: 9)

Thus, presupposing that there is a binary gender system would imply that there is also a mimetic relationship between gender and sex, in which gender reflects and is restricted by sex (Butler, 1990). Furthermore, Butler (1990) states that gender should not be defined as a cultural inscription of meaning on a pre-given sex, but as an apparatus of production from which the sexes themselves are established. Hence,

as the philosopher sums up, “gender is not to culture as sex is to nature; gender is also the discursive/cultural means by which “sexed nature” or “natural sex” is produced and established as “prediscursive,” prior to culture, a politically neutral surface on which culture acts.” (Butler, 1990: 10)

## **2.2. 3- 1 Traditional and stereotyped gender roles**

Frequently, feminist critics are engaged in a psychoanalytic approach through which women’s recognition, as such, is focused on the maternal identification and the development of a corresponding maternal discourse. This position tends to reinforce a binary opposition between gender roles. Further, this “heterosexist framework [...] carves up genders into masculine and feminine and forecloses an adequate description of the kinds of subversive and parodic convergences that characterize gay and lesbian cultures.” (Butler, 1990: 90) In this regard, and following Butler’s (1990) analysis of Gayle Rubin’s feminist reading of Levi-Strauss, Lacan, and Freud, cultural institutions, as the family, and the laws that structure and propel individual psychic development, transform biological males and females into hierarchized genders within a “sex/gender” system regulated by cultural mechanisms. Moreover, according to Rubin’s analysis, all the sexual possibilities available to human expression are presented in every child before biologically transforming into male or female, that is to say, a gendered man or woman. As a result, it is the law, as an antecedent to sexuality, that prohibits and sanctions certain sets of sexual possibilities.

As Kate Millett (2016) states, both sexes participate in a set of basic patriarchal politics with their consent to certain characteristics in their process of socialisation. Firstly, the characteristics related to the development of the human

personality, attitude and disposition, which establish a set of stereotyped lines of sex categories,

“(“masculine” and “feminine”), based on the needs and values of the dominant group and dictated by what its members cherish in themselves and find convenient in subordinates: aggression, intelligence, force, and efficacy in the male; passivity, ignorance, docility, “virtue,” and ineffectuality in the female.” (Millett, 2016: 26)

Secondly, the characteristics of the specific role related to the attitudes and conduct developed by each sex. Thus, while males are related to ambitious enterprises and conducts, the females are chained to the domestic sphere for the well-being and education of the children. Finally, the characteristic of the status which links each sex to the political component that would follow each role in society. As a result, as Millett (2016) asserts, “those awarded higher status tend to adopt roles of mastery, largely because they are first encouraged to develop temperaments of dominance. That this is true of caste and class as well is self-evident.” (Millett, 2016: 26) All things considered, the sexual stereotypes have no biological bases according to Millett’s theory.

In *Sexual/Textual Politics*, professor Toril Moi (2002) revisits the notion of “patriarchal binary thought” and reasserts the positive/negative underlying paradigm within the male/female opposition. In Moi’s voice,

“patriarchal oppression consists of imposing certain social standards of femininity on all biological women, in order precisely to make [them] believe that the chosen standards for “femininity” are *natural*. Thus a woman who refuses to conform can be labelled both *unfeminine* and *unnatural*.” (Moi, 2002: 64)

Moreover, according to Bennet, A. and Royle, N. (2004) gender stereotypes depend on the conceptual opposition: men versus women, in which the men are active, rational, dominant, and uncompassionate, whereas the women, on the negative side of the hierarchy involved in this binary opposition, appear to be passive, inefficient, subordinate and emotional.

## **2.2. 3- 2 Construction of the identity through actions: performativity**

One of Judith Butler's central endeavours has been to put issues of citational repetitions or performativity at the heart of feminist politics and critic. Individual actions performed within cultural discourses convey a prevailing understanding in which the terms "boy" and "girl" or "man" and "woman" have a specific significance. Through these meanings, for instance, a boy would learn his masculinity by imitating the behaviour designated as "male" due to the ubiquitous power functions those meanings imply. In this regard, Butler (1990) introduces the terms "heterosexual matrix" to designate that grid of cultural intelligibility through which bodies, genders, and desires are naturalized." (Selden, R., Widdowson, P & P. Brooker, 2005: 248) However, the writer continues to assert the distinction between sex and gender, and the possible sexual subversion within the "heterosexual matrix" towards the acquisition of a sexual identity performing the social acts that tend to constitute it.

Butler (1990) expands on these ideas by arguing that "gender is constructed, or 'contoured', through 'repetition and recitation', [and adds that] the subversive "re-signification" of normative identities [...] is not a matter of free choice." (Selden, R., Widdowson, P & P. Brooker, 2005: 256) Thus, gender evolves into a set of correctly performed activities that relates the subject to what is socially perceived



as normal. Therefore, the individual needs to behave in socially and legally recognised ways so as to be defined as masculine or feminine.

Butler furthers on this issue by expanding Simon de Beauvoir's theory of gender construction. Beauvoir suggests that the category of women is the result of a variable cultural accomplishment, so it is acquired within a cultural field. Although Butler comments on Beauvoir's ideas according to which a woman should follow the complexion of the female body, as well as a man should interpret male bodies, Butler adds the concept of gender as a kind of becoming or activity, not restricted to the usual two sexed bodies since sex does not limit gender. In the writer's own words,

“gender is a kind of action that can potentially proliferate beyond the binary limits imposed by the apparent binary sex. Indeed, gender would be a kind of cultural/corporeal action that requires a new vocabulary that institutes and proliferates present participles of various kinds, resignifiable and expansive categories that resist both the binary and substantializing grammatical restrictions on gender.” (Butler, 1990: 152)

Moreover, Butler sets forth to analyse the constraints that lead to construct an identity within an idealised and compulsory framework of heterosexuality. These constraints would have a disciplinary effect in the production of gender so as to follow the interests of a heterosexual reproductive domain. To conclude, “gender becomes a set of correctly performed gestures that link the subject to what is socially perceived as the standard for normal identification, and not the expression of a natural feminine or masculine sex.” (Doncu, R., 2017: 334) To this respect, not only the deceit of the gender order is shown through the possible rupture in the repetition of the correct

attitudes and actions expected for each gender, but it also makes evident the continuous resistance to the gender norms.

### **2.2. 3- 3 The concepts of identity and “woman identification”**

Butler’s (1990) inquiry and concern upon the notion of “identity” shows that the debate about it should be ensuing a discussion of gender identity due to the fact, as the philosopher states, “that “persons” only become intelligible through becoming gendered in conformity with recognisable standards of gender intelligibility.” (Butler, 1990: 22) In addition, she claims that “intelligible” genders are those that institute and maintain relations of coherence and continuity among sex, gender, sexual practice, and desire. Hence, after defining the notion of the “truth” of sex as the practices performed within a heterosexual cultural matrix of coherent gender norms, between “feminine” and “masculine”, she concludes that those gender identities that do not conform to the norms of cultural intelligibility end up being failures or impossibilities according to that domain.

As the notion of gender is not defined by the philosopher as a noun but “always as a doing”, through which its effect is performatively produced constituting the identity it is asserted to be,

“there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very “expressions” that are said to be its results.” (Butler, 1990: 34)

Being the gendered body performative implies that it has no existential meaning out of the various acts which constitute its reality. Acts, gestures and desires

create the illusion of an organising gender core, with the main purpose of maintaining the sexual regulation within a heterosexual reproductive frame.

An altogether different view of gender identity is articulated by the Bulgarian French philosopher and critic, Julia Kristeva who has challenged the conventional notion of identity through the concept of 'abjection' and has stated that subjectivity is a discontinuous and perpetual process. As described by Doncu (2017), Kristeva's definition of the abject marks its characteristic of destabilising all systems and hierarchies of meaning, truth, law and order.

Following Selden, R's et.al. (2005) reading of the feminist philosopher, Kristeva assumes the "subject" as a site of meaning, and not as a source of it, undergoing "a radical 'dispersal' of identity and loss of coherence." (Selden, R.'s et. al., 2005: 132) In addition, Kristeva considers the first stage in life -which she calls 'pre-Oedipal' stage- the moment in which there is a flow of impulses centred on the mother which produces the first demarcation of the parts of the body. In Kristeva's philosophy, the woman is powerless to change a male-driven symbolic order due to the fact that she is necessarily linked to the maternal instinct within the female essence. Moreover, she identifies women's femininity with maternity and finds the distinction between the self and the other blurred in the experience of pregnancy. However, she does not call for compulsory maternity but for a more thorough way of thinking, a new representation of motherhood. As McAfee, N. (2004) sums up,

"Kristeva's focus on the sociosymbolic order calls on men and women to rethink their most fundamental views about what it is to be masculine and feminine, how their identities are constructed, and how they cannot escape these constructions in search of some

androgynous alternative. Kristeva likes sexual difference, but she wants this difference to be one that is neither masochistic nor constraining, but, rather, productive and freeing for women and their sexuality.” (McAfee, N., 2004: 103)

Based upon the collective structures of oppression and the transcultural approaches to femininity, maternity and sexuality, the contemporary feminist debates raise the question of the universality of female identity and masculinist oppression, as presented by Butler (1990). According to the philosopher, many are the “number of criticisms from women who claim that the category of “women” is normative and exclusionary and is invoked with the unmarked dimensions of class and racial privilege intact.” (Butler, 1990: 19) Thus, expecting that the category of “women” needs to comply with certain features of race, class, age, ethnicity, and sexuality so as to be complete, would be amiss.

Furthermore, following Selden, R. 's et. al. (2005) reading of Adrienne Rich’s writing on the topic of “woman identification” and “lesbian feminist community,” women resist the patriarchal power that oppresses them, within their given community, developing a “woman-bonding” from which the concept of “lesbian continuous” also forges ahead. As a result, they are able to involve themselves in a range of “woman-identified experiences,” along with family, friends and political relationships, and resist patriarchal oppression.

## **2.2. 3- 4 Politics of gender within post-colonialism**

Feminism and post-colonialism are linked through some common concerns arising from the circumstances of domination and subordination both of them endure.

To begin with, as described by Ashcroft, B. et.al (2013), both patriarchy, as regards feminism, and imperialism, on the side of colonialism, impose analogous forms of domination over those they pursue as subordinates. Thus, women living under patriarchal rules, as well as colonized subjects, undergo similar experiences in a number of respects and both of them oppose such domination. Secondly, there is not a clear statement about whether gender or colonial oppression is the most important political factor that affects women's life, but there has been "great consideration of the construction and employment of gender in the practices of imperialism and colonialism." (Ashcroft, B. et.al, 2013: 15) Thirdly, for both women, under patriarchal constraints, and colonised subjects, language is their main concern, crucial to identity formation, to the construction of subjectivity, and as a vehicle for overturning patriarchal and imperial power.

In particular, Spivak stating that all women are the same, and emphasising the importance of respecting the differences in race, class, religion, citizenship and culture between women, proposes a critical strategy -called by the philosopher "strategic essentialism"- by which the minority groups, such as women or the subaltern, emulate a negative representation. Following Morton, S's (2003) reading of Spivak's theory,

"the formation of gendered identity in the nineteenth century is re-worked by colonial discourse, so that the white European female individual is defined as socially and culturally superior to the non-western women." (Morton, S., 2003: 88)

There is an evident overlap between patriarchal, economic and social oppression and the various forms of social oppression materially affects the lives of all

women. Furthermore, there is clear evidence that colonialism operates on, both, women and men, in a different way and, as a result, women are subject to general discrimination as colonial subjects, as well as specific discrimination as women, who are falsely depicted as quietist and subordinate, reproductive subjects.

Moreover, focusing on the dissension of race and gender within colonised cultures, as Gandhi, L. (1998) describes, both feminists and postcolonial theories attempt to invert prevailing hierarchies of gender/culture/race, progressively refusing the binary oppositions upon which patriarchal/colonial authority construct itself. However, controversy arises within three areas that may disrupt the potential unity between postcolonialism and feminism: a- the figure or the 'third-world woman', b- the description of 'feminist-as-imperialist', and c- the colonist setting of 'feminist criteria' to strengthen the 'civilising mission'. As regards the figure of the 'third-world woman', both postcolonial and feminist theory argue about the racial politics that inevitably omits the 'double colonization' of women under imperial conditions, being the 'third-world woman' a victim and "forgotten casualty of both imperial ideology, and native and foreign patriarchies." (Gandhi, L., 1998: 52) Some of the characteristics given to the 'third-world woman' are: ignorant, poor, uneducated, traditionally enslaved, domesticated, family-oriented, and victimised, as opposed to the positive qualities of Western women: educated, modern, having control of their own bodies and able to make their own decisions. As a result, the redemptive ideological/political image of Western feminism is fortified whereas the cultural lack of the 'third-world woman' is emphasised.

By way of conclusion, it is worth noting that, when focusing the analysis on class, the issue of material deprivation should be considered. According to Schwarz,

H. and Ray, S. (2005), “the different forms in which sociocultural identities are constructed are finally held in operation by the material reality of women’s control of resources and the scope women have to negotiate this control in order to fulfil the roles they have been socialized into.” Even though women's ownership of property determines their class position, that belonging to a propertied class does not mean any woman is wealthy herself as their material circumstances are at odds with the class position they have been socialized into by patriarchy. As Schwarz, H. and Ray, S. (2005) state,

“[...] it is important to relate the symbolic construction and ordering of social relations to the material reality of women’s lives, especially to discern the ways in which these factors affect women who despite being economically deprived, must carry the ideological burdens of womanhood imposed, upon them by the intersecting patriarchal formations that regulate their lives at any given point.” (Schwarz, H., Ray, S., 2005: 490)

### **3- Analysis of the Literary Works**

#### **3.1- Part 1: An overview of the two works – Setting the scene**

The countryside and the train had subsided to a gentle roll, and she could see nothing but pastureland and black cows from window to horizon. She wondered why she had never thought her country beautiful.

-*Go set a Watchman* (2015)

Harper Lee's novels *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960) and *Go set a Watchman* (2015) narrate the development of a young Southern girl, Jean Louise "Scout" Finch, from a childhood of innocence and freedom to the adult world. In this process, she discerns the harshness, malice, and the restraints imposed on her by the society she was born into. Along both novels, Lee's narrative discloses the issues of power, race, class, and gender as they touch the life of the little girl on her journey to become a mature woman.

The setting of both novels, the fictional county of Maycomb, Alabama, in the Southern United States, depicts the intersection of the above-mentioned issues and leads to the exploration of the dynamics of racial prejudice, poverty and the role of women in the everyday life of this small town. As described by the young Scout,

"Maycomb was an old town, but it was a tired old town when I first knew it. In rainy weather the streets turned to red slop; grass grew on the sidewalks, the courthouse sagged in the square. Somehow, it was hotter then: a black dog suffered on a summer's day; bony mules



hitched to Hoover carts flicked flies in the sweltering shade of the live oaks on the square. Men's stiff collars wilted by nine in the morning. Ladies bathed before noon, after their three-o'clock naps, and by nightfall were like soft teacakes with frostings of sweat and sweet talcum." (Lee, H., 1960: 6)

Moreover, in Jean Louise's mature words,

"Home was Maycomb County, a gerrymander some seventy miles long and spreading thirty miles at its widest point, a wilderness dotted with tiny settlements the largest of which was Maycomb, the county seat. Until comparatively recently in its history, Maycomb County was so cut off from the rest of the nation that some of its citizens, unaware of the South's political predilections over the past ninety years, still voted Republicans."

(Lee, H., 2015: 7)

According to these descriptions, Maycomb is a small, poor, farming community in Alabama, apparently detached from the rest of the country due to the lack of means of transport and communication. Its population has remained essentially unchanged for decades, and newcomers are not accepted easily -taking into account the scarce means of transports available to reach that area within the county. As a result of this lack of new people to enlarge the community, everyone knows everyone else, and local gossip is widespread. Anyone who does not conform to the accepted patterns of "normal and proper" behaviour, imposed by the white patriarchal ruling society in the county, is regarded as an oddity -that is the case of Mr Radley or Dolphus Raymond, for example (*To Kill a Mockingbird*)-, or an inferior and subordinate subject -as Mayella Ewell and all her family (*To Kill a Mockingbird*).

Although the stories take place more than seventy years after the American Civil War, which put an apparent end to black slavery in the American territory, black people are still segregated, struggling to stop the division and domination they have been living under, since the establishment of the first landowners in the South territories of the United States. The white community does not allow the black population to establish themselves as an autonomous community as white people want them to remain as their subordinates, and a cheap labour force to look after their lands. As illustrated by Scout in her visit to a black community church,

“It was customary for field Negroes with tiny children to deposit them in whatever shade there was while their parents worked- usually the babies sat in the shade between two rows of cotton. Those unable to sit were strapped papoose-style on their mothers’ backs, or resided in extra cotton bags.” (Lee, H., 1960: 164)

As it has been discussed in a previous section of this work, many cultural changes take place along these years of development within American history. As Isenberg (2016) contends, the Civil War period should be reinterpreted as a class struggle alongside a racial one.

Within this apparently “frozen in time” society, gender stereotypes become the order of the day, being the men the masters of all the important activities regarding the development of the community and the providers for their families whereas the women are secondary supporters to the needs of their men. Enclosed by this type of society, women have no voice and they play a silent but necessary role in this patriarchal circle. Moreover, there is a caste system from which escaping is almost impossible as the privileged groups do not want to lose their high standards acquired

by heritage -in many cases, not even by their own hard work- making it clear that the low groups do not deserve better living conditions as they are born to fulfil a role already set by birth to ensure the wellbeing and development of the community. In Scout's words,

“There was indeed a caste system in Maycomb, but to my mind it worked this way: the older citizens, the present generations of people who had lived side by side for years and years, were utterly predictable to one another: they took for granted attitudes, character shadings, even gestures, as having been repeated in each generation and refined by time.” (Lee, H., 1960: 175)

### **3.1. 1 *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960)**

When enough years had gone by to enable us to look back on them, we sometimes discussed the events leading to his accident. I maintain that the Ewells started it all, but Jem, who was four years my senior, said it started long before that. He said it began the summer Dill came to us, when Dill first gave us the idea of making Boo Radley come out.

- *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960)

Regardless of the fact that Harper Lee's first released novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960) is recounted through a first-person narrative point of view that is unreliable to the reader as it only “gives the reader access to the narrator's perspective of the events, characters and plot” (Prudchenko, K., 2021), the novel is clear to the

reader as the language of the narrator is that of a young person and not just a little child. A young white girl, Jean Louise “Scout”, narrates her anecdotes of three significant years of her childhood and manages to connect the issues of gender, race, and power within the dynamics of fictional Maycomb. Moreover, the presence of the protagonist’s voice in the first-person narrative point of view does not prevent the reader from getting an accurate picture of the role of women in the patriarchal community in which the story takes place, as Jean Louise manages to describe her experiences, observations, thoughts, feelings and motivations. As Stratford (2017) explains,

“First-person narrative is used by an author to create a limited view of the events of the story; the tale unfolds with some elements deliberately emphasised and others left out, based on what the narrator knows or observes. In the case of Harper Lee's "*To Kill a Mockingbird*," the effect of using 6-year-old Scout as narrator is to specify, to distance and finally to intensify the novel's happenings.” (Stratford, M., 2017: 1)

The opening chapter of the book fully describes the background around Scout’s life in a sleepy town where she lives with her brother Jem and her father Atticus Finch, a very respectful and clever lawyer. Their household is looked after by Calpurnia, a strict and kind black woman as the children’s mother died when Scout was only a two-year-old little girl. Following Scout’s memories,

“We lived on the main residential street in town- Atticus, Jem and I, plus Calpurnia our cook. Jem and I found our father satisfactory: he played with us, read to us, and treated us with courteous detachment.”  
(Lee, H., 1960: 6)

The central conflict within the novel is marked by a black man's trial, Tom Robinson, who is falsely accused of raping a white woman. In Atticus' words,

“This case should never have come to trial. This case is as simple as black and white.” (Lee, H., 1960: 271)

This situation proves to be a continuous source of tension with some of the white townspeople, many of whom are deeply prejudiced and racist. As a result, an innocent man is punished in observance with the established status quo and the legally correct behaviour expected, as stated by Reverend Sykes,

“I ain't ever seen any jury decide in favor of a colored man over a white man.” (Lee, H., 1960: 279)

The novel begins during the summer, when Scout and Jem, together with their new friend Dill, try to solve the mystery around their quiet and secretive neighbour who has not been seen for fifteen years -Arthur (Boo) Radley. They want him to come out of his house as they learn he had been locked in by his father for stealing and then resisting arrest. Seemingly, the mystery of the Radley Place is not sensed merely by the young children. It becomes the object of superstition and fear for many townspeople as well. As Scout describes Boo Radley,

“Inside the house lived a malevolent phantom. People said he existed, but Jem and I had never seen him. People said he went out at night when the moon was down, and peeped in windows. When people's azaleas froze in a cold snap, it was because he had breathed on them. Any stealthy small crimes committed in Maycomb were his work.” (Lee, H., 1960: 10)

However, Boo, as the children call him, emerges as a different sort of person from the one the children imagine him to be.

As described by Fisher, J. and Silber, E.S (2003) Scout is a stormy self-reliant young girl, who has no memory of her mother so she seeks for her father's - Atticus- guidance and counsel, and the company and amusement of her older brother, Jem. "Scout's primary identification with the masculine world of her brother Jem and her father stems in part from her mother's death when Scout was only two." (Fisher, J. and Silber, E.S., 2003: 286) All in all, Scout's honest and inadvertently humorous narrative expresses the difficulties around her understanding of the adult world and the different episodes of social injustice some members of her community suffer.

### **3.1. 2 Go set a Watchman (2015)**

For no reason an ancient fear gnawed her. She had not been in this station for twenty years, but when she was a child and went to the capital with Atticus, she was terrified lest the swaying train plunge down the riverbank and drown them all. But when she boarded again for home, she forgot.

-*Go set the Watchman* (2015)

In Harper Lee's second novel, *Go set a Watchman* (2015), Jean Louise Finch comes back to her hometown for the fifth time since moving from Maycomb, Alabama, to New York City. The story unfolds from a third-person limited omniscient perspective and its focus is on 26-year-old Jean Louise. As described by Quinn (2006), this is the most traditional form of third-person narrative and "the omniscient narrator, [...] (usually identified with that of the author) is presumed to know everything there is to know about the characters and action. [However,] a more limited third-person

perspective is that viewed through the consciousness of a particular character” as it can be seen in Lee’s second published novel.

Jean Louise is a passionate and relentless woman now who feels the place where she grew up is no longer like the place she remembers from her childhood. Somehow, Scout is forced to face some harsh realities; realities that turn her world upside down. Mainly, the reader is circumscribed to Jean Louise's experiences and thoughts, but sometimes the narrator opens a window to the perspectives of other characters as well.

The hardest part of growing up for her is to realise the world is not as she has thought it was. In the new reality Scout is immersed after her coming back home, her apparently saintly father, the man she remembers as a just and loving person who cares about other people, holds views that are shocking to her. Somehow, she realises that,

“[t]he one human being she had ever fully and wholeheartedly trusted had failed her, the only man she had ever known to whom she could point and say with expert knowledge, “He is a gentleman, in his heart he is a gentleman,” had betrayed her, publicly, grossly, and shamelessly.” (Lee, H., 2015: 113)

Consequently, she struggles to come to terms with this realisation and deal with it. While she is already physically an adult, Jean Louise must still cope with coming-of-age truths.

The watchman of the title is taken from a biblical quotation (Isaiah 21:6) and refers to the human conscience and the moral responsibility to listen to others and to speak up for what is right. As described in the novel,

“[...] Mr. Stone rose and walked to the pulpit with Bible in hand. He opened it and said, “My text for today is taken from the twenty-first chapter of Isaiah, verse six:

*For thus hath the Lord said unto me,*

*Go, set a watchman, let him declare what he seeth.”* (Lee, H., 2015: 95)

Scout tries to reconcile her conscience with what she now sees and realises that this “new” reality for her has been present all along her life. Even though her mind is full of amazing memories of her childhood in this town, she is anguished by her internal struggle. In facing the possibility of rejecting her father and the place -her hometown- in which she became the person she has grown into, she is faced with rejecting a part of herself due to her inner, mental as well as physical, conflict she cannot control nor accept. In this regard, she tries to understand her own body, feelings and inner pain, seeking for some comfort and also trying to discern her fate,

“It is weird, she thought, this must be like physical pain. They say when you can’t stand it your body is its own defense, you black out and you don’t feel any more. The Lord never sends you more than you can bear-” (Lee, H., 2015: 142)

This tends to be the core conflict of the story as Scout is forced to face some harsh realities; realities that overturn her world. The hardest part of her struggle to grow up is the realisation that the world around her is not as she has thought it was. In Jean Louise’s words,

“Blind, that’s what I am. I never opened my eyes. I never thought to look into people’s hearts, I looked only in their faces. Stone blind...[...] Mr. Stone set a watchman in church yesterday. He should have



provided me with one. I need a watchman to lead me around and declare what he seeth every hour on the hour. I need a watchman to tell me this is what a man says but this is what he means, to draw a line down the middle and say here is this justice and there is that justice and make me understand the difference.” (Lee, H., 2015: 181-182)

### 3.1. 3 A journey to maturity: *bildungsroman*

I’m something else and I don’t know what. Everything I have ever taken for right and wrong these people have taught me -these same, these very people. So it’s me, it’s not them. Something has happened to me.

-Jean Louise. *Go set the Watchman* (2015)

As it has been established at the beginning of the present dissertation, Lee’s novels can both be read as a *bildungsroman* as they cover the time between Jean Louise’s years as a child in Maycomb, Alabama, in the 1930s and the trip back to the old county from New York as a 26-year-old woman. The German term *bildungsroman* is often literally rendered as a ‘novel of growth’ and, as Childs and Fowler (2006) explain, applies largely to fiction dealing with a person's formative years of spiritual and/or educational maturation and depicts and explores the manner in which the protagonist develops morally and psychologically. Being a *bildungsroman*, both Lee’s novels follow the protagonist, Jean Louise, from a concerned childhood along her path to enlightenment and maturity. According to Childs and Fowler (2006), within a *bildungsroman*, there is an agreement and reconciliation of interior and exterior singularities towards the “gradual growth to self-awareness of its protagonist.”

On the one hand, Scout Finch's main concern, as the central character in Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, is coming to terms with her society's expectations for women who were constrained to conform to the widely held idea of "Southern womanhood." (Castleman, T., 2021) Within this background, she is forced to grow into a delicate and fragile creature and act in accordance. However, she is not docile, delicate or fragile, and she needs to deal with everyday situations in which she has to attempt to fit into a world that expects tomboys -as she was- to deny their inner characteristics and to wear dresses and show a gentle disposition. Following Scout's description of her aunt - her father's sister,

"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; [...]" (Lee, H., 1960: 108)

Although the first novel published, *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960), takes place over the course of three years, Scout learns her lessons that will guide her along her lifetime, in that short time span. Through a passionate and deeply moving narrative, Lee manages to describe in Scout's retelling of her early years, the foundation of human behaviour and the main notions in life which contrast and mingle in the growing path, such as innocence and experience, kindness and cruelty, love and hatred, humour and emotions.

On the other hand, although *Go Set a Watchman* (2015) is set when Jean Louise is 26 years old, her flashbacks to childhood make up a significant part of the

novel. As an adult, Jean Louise is not as untamed as the young “Scout” used to be, but she has evolved into a passionate, energetic and idealistic young woman. Jean Louise’s fifth yearly visit home reminds her of her younger years in Maycomb, especially her rough years of puberty. Forthwith, however, Jean Louise must go through a very different coming of age process when she learns that her father, Atticus, and her close friend and prospective husband, Hank, are members of the Maycomb citizens’ council, which is an organisation dedicated to preserving segregation in the South. In the process of understanding her new reality, she asks herself several questions,

“What was the blight that had come down over the people she loved? Did she see it in stark relief because she had been away from it? Had it percolated gradually through the years until now? Had it always been under her nose for her to see it she had only looked? No, not the last. What turned ordinary men into screaming dirt at the top of their voices, what made her kind of people harden and say “nigger” when the word had never crossed their lips before?” (Lee, H., 2015: 150)

It is hard for Jean Louise to accept and convince herself about the fact she has just learnt that her father and proposed husband are active members of an organisation that aims at reinforcing white superiority and authority over the black community. After creeping into the balcony of the courtroom assigned for the black community, as she used to do when she was a little girl, she discovers Atticus and Hank’s connections with a group of men she knows to be deeply racist. Dazed by her discovery, she leaves the courthouse wandering around town seeking for an explanation.

After blaming Atticus without really understanding his beliefs, she is confronted by her uncle, Atticus' younger brother, Jack, who illustrates through a number of stories the importance of Southern history to the prevailing race conflict. Consequently, she shows a crisis of beliefs as she is forced to face reality and to develop a conscience of her own, after realising that the root of all her anger is that she has always relied on Atticus as a model of righteousness and as a tutor who always explains to her why some things were wrong and now for the first time, she sees him as a real man, not an idealised father. As a result of her inner realisation and growth, she manages to accept Atticus' beliefs and asks for his forgiveness after blaming him without really understanding his ideas although Atticus always expresses his pride in her defence of what she believes is right.

### **3.2- Part 2: Struggling and growing in Harper Lee's novels- Gender and Patriarchy as main concerns.**

As it has already been pointed out, most of the themes which unfold in both novels deal, in general terms, with racism and white superiority, gender stereotypes and the role of women in the Southern American communities, the cultural and social constraints imposed by the white men ruling society and their influence on Jean Louise Finch's journey to self-discovery. In particular, the present study attempts to explore the following themes: gender roles and the embodiment of ideal womanhood within the traditional racist values of the period, and the intellectual, psychological and moral influence of the power-structured society Jean Louis Finch was born into.

Moreover, following the above stated descriptions of the enclave in which both novels develop, there is a clear ideological construction of gender roles and

habits based on the males' strengths and responsibilities and the portrayal of the feeble female roles and duties which reveals the male domination. Atticus exposes this situation to the young Scout and clarifies these ideas in her innocent mind,

"[...] Miss Maudie can't serve on a jury because she's a woman-"

"You mean women in Alabama can't-?" I was indignant.

"I do. I guess it's to protect our frail ladies from sordid cases like Tom's. Besides," Atticus grinned, "I doubt if we'd ever get a complete case tried- the ladies'd be interrupting to ask questions." (Lee, H., 1960: 296)

These themes will be examined further on as the analysis is carried out, considering both novels separately. The reason for this choice is the need to explore the development of gender and power issues tackled in both novels individually.

### **3.2- 1 Gender issues depicted in the novels**

"Tell us what it is to be a woman so that we may know what it is to be a man. What moves at the margin. What it is to have no home in this place. To be set adrift from the one you knew. What it is to live at the edge of towns that cannot bear your company."

-Tony Morrison

As has been discussed in the previous section, Foucault's (1978) description of the social construction of gender and sexuality is defined by the exercise of power relationships and the fulfilment of a set of social regulations. It has also been suggested that, following Butler's analysis, the pursuing of sex-determination is

framed under a binary system of opposing genders, male and female, within the cultural assumptions concerning the status of both men and women.

Interesting as it may be to analyse all the female characters in the novels, who have been carefully chosen by the author to represent different facets of reality, this short scale study will concentrate mostly on those who influence Jean Louise “Scout” both as a girl and a young woman. In addition, the issues of race, sexual development and binary roles will be taken into consideration in order to provide an analysis of the concept of gender as it is believed is worth studying in both novels.

### **3.2- 1.A- Gender roles in *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960)**

Based on the concepts explored in the *Literature Review*, the cultural assumptions of the period concerning the respective status of men and women build the binary opposition of genders in Maycomb’s society. In this regard, Scout is presented as an extremely free-spirited tomboy who spends her days playing games -considered within her community as male ones- with her older brother Jem, and her late evenings reading articles from the newspaper with her father, Atticus Finch, for whom she feels special admiration. It could be said that Scout resists any kind of limitations placed upon her as she withstands the status quo of the society in which she develops, through her attitude, appearance and preferences.

From the very beginning, the roles of the different members of the family follow the pattern of power relations and, with them, the distinction between the intelligent, rude and efficient functions of men and the docile, passive and secondary activities of women.

“It was customary for the men in the family to remain on Simon’s homestead, Finch’s Landing, and make their living from cotton. [...] (T)he tradition of living on the landing remained unbroken until well into the twentieth century, when my father, Atticus Finch, went to Montgomery to read law, and his younger brother went to Boston to study medicine. Their sister Alexandra was the Finch who remained at the Landing: she married a taciturn man who spent most of his time lying in a hammock by the river wondering if his trot-lines were full”  
(Lee, H., 1960: 4)

This excerpt from the novel unveils two different facts. On the one hand, only the male members of the family were allowed to study and to pursue a future outside the Landing and the cotton industry. They could become professionals in their field and prove to be useful and well-known in their community. On the other hand, although having taken an important role in the family, being her husband, apparently, not hard-working or of a high-profile, their sister, Alexandra remained in her family home, and took the role of a married woman, in charge of the house chores.

It is worth noting that Scout identifies primarily with the masculine world due to the fact that she was not raised by a female figure. As she describes her early life,

“Our mother died when I was two, so I never felt her absence. She was a Graham from Montgomery; Atticus met her when he was first elected to the state legislature. He was middle-aged then, she was fifteen years his junior. Jem was the product of their first year of marriage; four years later I was born, and two years later our mother died from a sudden heart attack. [...] I did not miss her, but I think Jem did. He remembers her clearly, [...]” (Lee, H., 1960: 4)

She has no memory of her mother, so she looks up to Jem and Atticus as her advisers on appropriate behaviour. Furthermore, as Scout grows up, she learns that power and authority are masculine attributes, so she has to refrain herself from performing activities that lead to those characteristics; as she sometimes experiences in the roles she is expected to take in the company of Jem and her childhood friend, Dill, to be a girl generally means to be marginalised and excluded. Nonetheless, due to her maturation and her growing comprehension, she is forced to enter the world of women, which she does not feel attracted to. Scout's participation in games is a clear example of this issue,

“As the summer progressed, so did our game. We polished and perfected it, added dialogue and plot until we manufactured a small play upon which we rang changes every day [...] I reluctantly played assorted ladies who entered the script. [...] The three of us were the boys who got into trouble; [...]” (Lee, H., 1960: 52)

Her appraisal of what being a woman means emphasises her rejection of a seemingly useless and decorative existence.

### **3.2- 1.A- 1- Female characters' influence on Scout's growth.**

Scout's social and gender development is influenced by various female characters who appear to be models within the range of gender roles available to her. Likewise, they represent different cultural characteristics determined by race and social status. Scout's reactions towards these women reveal her growing knowledge about power and where it resides in her community.



### 3.2- 1.A- 1.1- Calpurnia: the family's cook.

Although employed as a cook, Calpurnia's role in the family is, clearly, more relevant than that. As the family's African American cook and housekeeper, Calpurnia's role provides a strong and loving female presence in the home. Moreover, she acts as a role model for Scout who, in spite of her rebellious and sometimes conflicting attitude, resorts to her when in need. As described by Scout,

“Calpurnia was [...] all angles and bones; she was nearsighted; she squinted; her hand was wide as a bed slat and twice as hard. She was always ordering me out of the kitchen, asking me why I couldn't behave as well as Jem when she knew he was older, and calling me home when I wasn't ready to come. Our battles were epic and one-sided. Calpurnia always won, mainly because Atticus took her side. She had been with us ever since Jem was born, and I had felt her tyrannical presence as long as I could remember.” (Lee, H., 1960: 7)

Calpurnia is able to move easily from one side of the racially divided southern community to the other, as she has a life and mind of her own. She manages to take Jem and Scout to church along with her on Sunday and she discloses the other side of racism to the children, when they face some of the members of the black community's hatred towards their white origin. Besides, through this experience Scout manages to see the differences in chances and lifestyles in each, black or white, community due to educational opportunities. She learns that only four members of the black community are literate -including Calpurnia and her son, Zeebo, the garbage collector. Reading is such a natural experience for Scout that it has never occurred to her how she might have learned it. Calpurnia has been an important guide in her

process of acquiring the writing and reading skills after giving Scout different activities related to the practice and knowledge of the language whenever she is around the house not knowing what to do or play. When she starts school and the new teacher questions Scout about her ability to read, the little girl describes her feelings about it,

“I never deliberately learned to read, but somehow I had been wallowing illicitly in the daily papers. In the long hours of church- was it then I learned? [...] Now that I was compelled to think about it, reading was something that just came to me, [...]. Until I feared I would lose it, I never loved to read. One does not love breathing.” (Lee, H., 1960: 23)

Furthermore, Scout blames Calpurnia for teaching her to write, as well,

“Calpurnia was to blame for this. It kept me from driving her crazy on rainy days, I guess. She would set me a writing task by scrawling the alphabet firmly across the top of a tablet, then copying out a chapter of the Bible beneath. If I produced her penmanship satisfactorily, she rewarded me with an open-faced sandwich of bread and butter and sugar. In Calpurnia’s teaching, there was no sentimentality: I seldom pleased her and she seldom rewarded me.” (Lee, H., 1960: 24)

By the time Calpurnia takes the children to the local black community church, Tom Robinson’s trial is approaching. However, Calpurnia manages to protect Scout from insults and violence, and she also helps her see the reality of the world around her, not just on one side of the argument. She acts as a moral guide and female authority for Scout and also teaches the children about the equal humanity in her African American community. During the short period leading up to Tom Robinson’s trial, Scout ascertains plenty about race relations and the perpetuated differences between the white and black communities as regards education, living and working

conditions, social rights, among others. With respect to educational opportunities and development, Calpurnia appears also as one of the few members of the African American community who can read and write. Although she recognizes the limitations she faces due to her inferior position as a cook, Calpurnia seldom refrains from speaking her mind.

It may also be interesting to explore the fact that Calpurnia is a mother figure for both Scout and Jem. The ethical values and moral guidance are instilled in the children by Atticus, but Calpurnia is responsible for providing the day-to-day lessons and discipline rules that may arise from the children's daily experience, at school or while they play on the streets of their old town. When Scout's body transitions physically from childhood to womanhood, Calpurnia helps her and explains, as a mother would do, how to take care of her body. Calpurnia plays an essential role in Scout's childhood, expressing, despite Calpurnia's narrow ways, all her love and affection towards this little girl,

“I missed you today”, she said. “The house got so lonesome ‘long about two o’clock I had to turn on the radio.” [...]Calpurnia bent down and kissed me. I ran along, wondering what had come over her. [...] She had always been too hard on me, [...]” (Lee, H., 1960: 24)

### **3.2- 1.A- 1.2- Miss Maudie Atkinson: a model of kindness and respect.**

Another female character in the novel that is worth mentioning is Miss Maudie Atkinson. She is a widow who grows beautiful flower beds full of azaleas and camellias and who also bakes, according to Scout, the best cakes in town. She contributes as a good guidance for Jem and Scout when they cannot understand or

solve any everyday situation that may arise, blending in her character humour, compassion and shrewdness. Scout manages to establish a fine friendship with her neighbour who, despite her eccentricity, is a respected lady in town. Moreover, Scout turns to her, when Jem and Dill exclude her from their plans, as a lady who provides her with good company and valuable advice.

Drawing on the concepts developed in the *Literature Review*, it can be inferred that Miss Atkinson challenges the traditional and stereotyped gender roles of the period as she does not comply with the activities and interests expected from a lady of her community. In her case, the role of women as a housewife in charge of keeping her home clean and well organised is altered by her real concern: her garden, outside the house. Her azaleas are a symbol of familial duty, wealth and elegance. Even though each individual should behave according to socially recognized ways so as to be defined as masculine or feminine, as Butler (1990) explains, in Miss Maudie's attitude and passion some exceptions are manifested. This might be the reason why Scout finds in her a good ally and advisor although the rest of the community defines her as eccentric. Scout describes her in this way,

“Miss Maudie hated her house: time spent indoors was time wasted.

She was a widow, a chameleon lady who worked in her flower beds in an old straw hat and men's coveralls, but after her five o'clock bath she would appear on the porch and reign over the street in magisterial beauty.” (Lee, H., 1960: 56)

Miss Maudie's attitude towards her garden might be considered a metaphor for her relationship towards the community,

“She loved everything that grew in God’s earth, even the weeds. With one exception. If she found a blade of nut grass in her yard it was like the Second Battle of the Marne: she swooped down upon it with a tin tub and subjected it to blasts from beneath with a poisonous substance she said was so powerful it’d kill us all if we didn’t stand out of the way.” (Lee, H., 1960: 56)

This excerpt from the novel may unveil two different facts. On the one hand, even though the nut grass can contaminate her entire garden as weed does, it is an exception for her, and, as it, represents those members of the community described by Nancy Isenberg (2016) as “white trash”. This is the case of Bob Ewell, a drunken, lazy man, who exerts his male power to dominate and oppress the other members of his family, especially his daughter Mayella. Due to her father’s compelling demand, Mayella accuses Tom Robinson of abusing her, confronting Atticus in court, who presents his evidence in front of the jury to show that the one to be condemned should be her father for raping her, instead. On the other hand, the weed itself, although having the capacity to spoil the complete garden, is considered not so vicious or harmful. It could be suggested that this metaphor makes reference to Boo Radley who is not to blame for being isolated from the rest of the community. The only responsible for this situation, according to Miss Maudie, is his father, “Old Mr. Radley ” who is a Baptist. Therein, religious issues are connected to the accepted traditional roles to follow, in this case Christianity.

### **3.2- 1.A- 1.3- Mrs Henry Lafayette Dubose: a model of courage and honesty.**

One more female character that might be significant to look into is the Finches' neighbour, Mrs. Henry Lafayette Dubose. She is described by the children as a cantankerous old woman who often angers Jem through constant racist comments insulting his father and criticising his sister's lack of femininity. Despite this fact, Atticus teaches the children to respect this old dying woman who shows them courage and fighting spirit in battling against her morphine addiction.

Mrs. Dubose is described by Scout as a bigoted and annoying old woman who is always pushing them to react out of rage. This can be seen in an episode, when Jem tears down Mrs. Henry Lafayette Dubose's precious camellias, in response to her insults against his father,

“Your father's no better than the niggers and trash that he works for! Jem was scarlet. [...] I wasn't sure what Jem resented most, [...] I had become almost accustomed to hearing insults aimed at Atticus. But this was the first one coming from an adult. Except for her remarks about Atticus, Mrs. Dubose's attack was only routine.” (Lee, H., 1960: 136)

As a response to this comment, and despite his tranquil disposition and the gentleman bond he keeps with Atticus -according to Scout-, Jem destroys the old lady's camellias. Scout tries to understand her brother's reaction,

“In later years, I sometimes wondered exactly what made Jem do it, what made him break the bonds of “You just be a gentleman, son,” and the phase of self-conscious rectitude he had recently entered. [...] -he had a naturally tranquil disposition and a slow fuse. At the time, however, I thought the only explanation for what he did was that for a few minutes he simply went mad.” (Lee, H., 1960: 136)

It might be inferred that those fragile, fragrant and traditional southern flowers -Mrs Dubose's camellias- are a symbol of femininity and they are considered a symbol of love, devotion, affection, and admiration. Moreover, Mrs. Dubose herself seems to be a symbol of the Old South, the prejudice and its ugliness but also, she might stand as a symbol of pride and willpower as the plant itself, an evergreen shrub that has durable, glossy foliage and elegant flowers.

As a consequence of Jem's outburst of anger, Atticus gives the children the penance to read out loud to Mrs. Dubose for two hours every afternoon after school, including Saturdays, for a month, until finally and unexpectedly for the children, she dies. Eventually, Atticus reveals his reasons for asking the children to visit the old lady every day. It was the way Mrs. Dubose was able to wean herself off her morphine addiction. He presents this old lady as an example in her fight against addiction, a fight that is beyond violence, weapons, riots or any kind of dispute. Likewise, Atticus propounds her as a model of courage, as a person, without considering her gender. In her case, the features commonly applied for men only in this old county, are evident despite her female condition. Later, he tells Jem and Scout,

"You know, she was a great lady. [...] I wanted you to see something in her- I wanted you to see what real courage is, instead of getting the idea that courage is a man with a gun in his hand. It's when you know you're licked before you begin but you begin anyway and you see it through no matter what. You rarely win, but sometimes you do. Mrs. Dubose won, [...] She was the bravest person I ever knew." (Lee, H., 1960: 149)

### **3.2- 1.A- 1.4- Mayella Ewell: a victim of the white males' supremacy.**

In the course of her early life, the young Scout comes across different types of women, mature as well as inexperienced ones, who present her contrasting models to be considered in her path to adulthood. This is the case of Mayella Ewell, a nineteen-year-old young woman who wants to be treated as a dignified southern lady but, instead, is raped and misunderstood. As the southern lady that she wants to be, she grows geraniums in an effort to imitate the mature ladies of the town. However, those flowers are not “lady’s flowers” as they are perennial plants that stay in place from season to season and are hardy and quite easy to care. They burst with energy in white, pink, red or blue flowers whose petals are often marked with a vein of darker colour. Trying to understand the Ewell’s situation and their home, Scout describes Mayella’s garden as a mystery in the middle of the dump they live in,

“One corner of the yard, though, bewildered Maycomb. Against the fence, in a line, were six chipped-enamel slop jars holding brilliant red geraniums, cared for as tenderly as if they belonged to Miss Maudie Atkinson, had Miss Maudie deigned to permit a geranium on her premises. People said they were Mayella Ewell’s.” (Lee, H., 1960: 228)

She lovingly grows her geraniums as a sign of beauty in her dismal surroundings and as an evident desire for a better life for herself. In her gardening activities, she may daydream about being able to live, in the future, as the white married ladies in town are allowed to live.

Similarly to Scout’s experience in life, Mayella’s mother also died when she was very little but, in her case, her father does not raise her as respectfully and carefully as Atticus takes care of his beloved children. Mayella has become to some extent a surrogate wife and mother for her family, especially for her younger siblings. Moreover,



she cannot attend school due to her father's leaves on binge drinking and her responsibility to look after her younger siblings. Furthermore, she has nowhere to go or no one to ask for help as she finds herself, unwillingly, in an incestuous and abusive relationship with her father.

Apparently, Mayella's future is set at her early nineteen years of age. Although living with her family implies lingering on both physical and psychological abuse, she will most likely continue enduring her poor, lonely and rejected lifestyle, until she is able to marry and leave her family home to assume a new family that may similarly resemble her old one, which means there is no apparent way out for her.

Within this incestuous and abusive relationship with her drunken father, the idea of having an affair with a black man who she will be able to control and dominate is presented as an exciting opportunity as well as a dangerous adventure for her. Whereas she always finds herself completely powerless, she will be the one in dominance and in control. If it happens for him to agree on this liaison with her, he will remain as her servant for the rest of his life. Unfortunately for her, Tom Robinson refuses to accept her offer and as she is discovered by her father, he forces her to report a lie about the affair she was looking for. In this way, she would receive a little recognition and respect as a white woman in town.

In her pitiful existence, Mayella's attempt to gain some kind of power costs the life of an innocent man. Nonetheless, when Atticus finally shows her the respect she deserves and she is carving out at the jury, ironically, she rejects him accusing him of mockery and refusing to answer his questions. In Scout's words,

"She was looking at him furiously.

“Won’t answer a word you day long as you keep on mockin’ me,” she said. [...] ‘Long’s you keep on makin’ fun o’ me.” [...] “Long’s he keep on callin’ me ma’am an sayin’ Miss Mayella. I don’t hafta take his sass, I ain’t called upon to take it.” (Lee, H., 1960: 243)

Scout is astounded by her reaction towards her father's good manners and reflects upon this situation when listening to the young white girl in court,

“I wonder if anybody had ever called her “ma’am,” or “Miss Mayella” in her life; probably not, as she took offense to routine courtesy. What on earth was her life like? [...]” (Lee, H., 1960: 244)

Moreover, as Nancy Isenberg states,

“[...] the Ewells were members of the terminally poor, those whose status could not be lifted or debased by any economic fluctuation -not even the Depression. They were human waste. [...] The Ewells are unmistakably what southerners (and a lot of people) called white trash” (Isenberg, 2016: xxv -xxvi)

It could be inferred from the previous quote that poverty has been naturalised along with the racial imposed inheritance. As a consequence, in Robert Ewell’s mind, taking his daughter to court and proving Tom Robinson’s guilt would cause the town to break with the imposed fate upon his family as part of the “white trash” of the area and think about him as a hero for saving Maycomb’s white women from a threatening and troubling black man as Tom. This would result in his family’s rise in stature and recognition. Unfortunately, by the end of the trial, the Ewell’s, both father and daughter, are proved to be liars and they end up cementing the family into their dreadful situation once and for all.

### 3.2- 1.B- Gender and new discoveries in *Go set a Watchman* (2015)

Jean Louise does not only circumscribe her quest to the tired old town of Maycomb hence she decides to take a new course in life, in a city that represents freedom for her, New York. However, when she comes back to her rural childhood, some tension is built between her city life experience and her early years of innocence. For a young woman as Jean Louise, living in New York represents independence and absolute autonomy in all her activities. She feels free to choose what she wishes to do and wear, without the continuous judgement of her Aunt Alexandra. As it is described when she gets ready to arrive at the station,

“When she dressed, she put on her Maycomb clothes: gray slacks, a black sleeveless blouse, with socks, and loafers. Although it was four hours away, she could hear her aunt’s sniff of disapproval.” (Lee, H., 2015: 4)

Time and again, the domesticity of Maycomb is not just comforting and familiar for her, but it is also stifling and difficult to endure as she tries not to follow the stereotypes imposed upon her by society within that drained traditional town. Nonetheless, she cannot explain her feelings towards the old southern town. She tries to clarify her beliefs and needs as regards her place of origin, when talking to Hank about the late selling of the old cotton landing where the Finch family made their progress in that area,

“I just don’t like my world disturbed without some warning. [...]”

[...] “I don’t know if I can tell you, honey. When you live in New York, you often have the feeling that New York’s not the world. I mean this: every time I come home, I feel like I’m coming back to the world, and

when I leave Maycomb it's like leaving the world. It's silly. I can't explain it, and what makes it sillier is that I'd go stark raving living in Maycomb."

Henry said, "[...] Sooner or later you'll have to decide whether it's Maycomb or New York." (Lee, H., 2015: 75-76)

Jean Louise is constantly confronted with the role of women in this old town and the binary opposition of those roles -male and female- deeply marked in the town's tradition and prospective future. Due to this, Jean Louise finds herself in a relentless indecision about marrying Henry -Hank- Clinton, who is four years her senior, as her dead brother, Jem, was, but who does not belong to the same social circle or status. Despite this fact, they have been together since Hank came back from the war and later the University,

"In the years when he was away at the war and the University, she had turned from an overalled, fractious, gun-slinging creature into a respectable facsimile of a human being. He began dating her on her annual two-week visit home, and although she still moved like a thirteen-year-old boy and abjured most feminine adornment, he found something so intensely feminine about her that he fell in love." (Lee, H., 2015: 13)

Within her current environment, she knows that being in love and agreeing on marrying Hank means embracing the life in Maycomb as well. Hank represents Maycomb's simplicity and slow-paced lifestyle and, apparently, it does not match Jean Louise's city expectations although she knows he could provide and protect her. As the following quote suggests,

“She was afflicted with a restlessness of spirit he could not guess at, but he knew she was the one for him. He would protect her; he would marry her.” (Lee, H., 2015: 13)

In spite of the fact that he does not belong to the same family background as Jean Louise’s, Hank has worked hard all his life to progress and climb up in the social ladder of his community. He has a resolute mind and proves now and again his love to Jean Louise.

### **3.2- 1.B- 1- Jean Louise’s relationship with the female Finch member of the family: Aunt Alexandra**

A dominant, commanding and influential female figure in Jean Louise’s life is that of her aunt Alexandra Finch Hancock, Atticus’ sister. However, despite her imperious commands and bossy exterior, she has a generous heart and kind spirit. She is always dressed up neatly and feminine in a full corset as if she were in a suit of armour, something that attracts Jean Louise’s attention,

“Jean Louise had often wondered, but never asked, where she got her corsets. They drew up her bosom to giddy heights, pinched in her waist, flared out rear, and managed to suggest that Alexandra’s had once been an hourglass figure.” (Lee, H., 2015: 26)

Aunt Alexandra’s attire is also a symbol of her activities and responsibilities in town, especially related to religious rituals, as described in the following quotation,

“Alexandra’s Sunday corset was even more formidable than her everyday ones. She stood in the door of Jean Louise’s room enarmored, hatted, gloved, perfumed, and ready.

Sunday was Alexandra's day: in the moments before and after Sunday School she and fifteen other Methodist ladies sat together in the church auditorium and conducted a symposium Jean Louise called "The News of the Week in Review." (Lee, H., 2015: 88)

Aunt Alexandra and Jean Louise's relationship is not a steady and affable one as they quibble all the time. Seemingly, both of them know how to enrage each other as it could be suggested in the following quotation,

"Alexandra had never been actively unkind to her- she had never been unkind to any living creature, except to the rabbits that ate her azaleas, which she poisoned- but she had made Jean Louise's life hell on wheels in her day, in her own time, and in her own way. Now that Jean Louise was grown, they had never been able to sustain fifteen minutes' conversation with one another without advancing irreconcilable points of view, invigorating in friendships, but in close blood relations producing only uneasy cordiality." (Lee, H., 2015: 26)

Although in Aunt Alexandra's heart, her main desire and interest is to accomplish the best for her family, her major aspiration, as regards her only niece, is for Jean Louise to behave as a genteel Southern lady -as she herself does, following the stereotypes expected for ladies in her homeland- which causes Jean Louise to act rebelliously against the stipulated gender roles. Therefore, Jean Louise confronts her aunt's derogatory remarks on many occasions,

"Alexandra's voice cut through her ruminations: "Jean Louise, did you come down on the train Like That?"

Caught offside, it took a moment for her to ascertain what her aunt meant by Like That.

“Oh- yessum,” she said, “but wait a minute, Aunty. I left New York stockinged, gloved, and shod. I put on these right after we passed Atlanta.”

Her aunt sniffed. “I do wish this time you’d try to dress better while you’re home. Folks in town get the wrong impression of you. They think you are- ah- slumming.” (Lee, H., 2015: 21)

Considering the quotation above, it may be suggested that the narrator brings about a thorny issue in the sense that Jean Louise is not coming back from a place similar to Maycomb but, on the contrary, she lives in a modern and open city in which she can be herself and develop as an independent woman. Accordingly, Jean Louise is able to compare both places and analyse her possibilities as regards her current identity and behaviour. As she critically claims,

“If the folks in Maycomb don’t get one impression, they’ll get another. They are certainly not used to seeing me dressed up.” Her voice became patient: “Look, if I suddenly sprang on’em fully clothed they’d say I’d gone New York. Now you come along and say they think I don’t care what they think when I go around in slacks. Good Lord, Aunty, Maycomb knows I didn’t wear anything but overalls till I started having the curse-” (Lee, H., 2015: 21-22)

After confronting her aunt with this disrespectful comment, according to the standards of her period and background, Atticus, attentive to the situation, replies by scolding Jean Louise as he used to do when she was a little girl. Through this simple action, he imposes his position in the family as well as his authority in front of both ladies of the house, showing respect to one of them, in this case his sister Alexandra, and

indoctrinating his not so young or naive daughter, Jean Louise- or Scout, as he used to call her when she was little. The following quotation depicts this situation,

“That’ll do, Scout,” he said. “Apologize to your aunt. Don’t start a row the minute you get home.”

Jean Louise smiled at her father. When registering disapprobation, he always reverted back to her childhood nickname. She sighed. “I’m sorry, Aunty. I’m sorry, Hank. I am oppressed, Atticus.”

“Then go back to New York and be uninhibited.” (Lee, H., 2015: 22)

Clearly, through this ironical answer, Jean Louise adds up to the difference between her state of mind in New York and in Maycomb.

### **3.2- 1.B- 1.1- Aunt Alexandra’s business: keeping the honour and good reputation of the family.**

Another aspect worth mentioning is Aunt Alexandra’s marital status. She has been married to James Hamcock, a placid and taciturn man, for thirty-three years, with whom she had one son, Francis. However, after taking the role of Atticus’ caregiver, she has been separated from her husband for many years allowing Jean Louise to live far away from Maycomb and dodging the responsibility of taking care of her father herself. Consequently, Alexandra shows constant taunting remarks with guilt, trying to convince Jean Louise to move back to Maycomb permanently to take over her responsibilities as daughter. However, Jean Louise has a clear mind about her relationship with her father, and attempts to clarify her point of view to her aunt,



“Aunty, I can’t make you understand, but truly, the only way I can do my duty to Atticus is by doing what I’m doing- making my own living and my own life.” (Lee, H., 2015: 29)

As Jean Louise claims her aunt does not understand her struggle to develop as an independent woman as Alexandra is centred in her role in society, her prestige and family honour,

“Alexandra saw what Maycomb saw: Maycomb expected every daughter to do her duty. The duty of his only daughter to her widowed father after the death of his only son was clear: Jean Louise would return and make her home with Atticus; that was what a daughter did, and she who did not was no daughter.” (Lee, H., 2015: 30)

Moreover, Alexandra highly attends to her family reputation and social propriety therefore she lectures Jean Louise about conducting ladylike, as depicted by this quotation,

“She was completely unaware that with one twist of the tongue she could plunge Jean Louise into a moral turmoil by making her niece doubt her own motives and best intentions, by tweaking the protestant, philistine strings of Jean Louise’s conscience until they vibrated like spectral zither.” (Lee, H., 2015: 28)

Considering the quotation above, it may be suggested that Jean Louise could not finally resist her aunt’s dominant relationship, however, that is not the case,

“Had Alexandra ever pressed Jean Louise’s vulnerable points with awareness, she could have added another scalp to her belt, but after years of tactical study Jean Louise knew her enemy. Although she

could rout her, Jean Louise had not yet learned how to repair the enemy's damage." (Lee, H., 2015: 29)

### 3.2- 1.B- 1.2- Aunt Alexandra's racial concerns.

Concerning the racial attitudes of the white Southern community, Alexandra stands out from the rest of the Finches as she strongly believes that black people are genetically inferior to whites. In this regard, an instance that might be significant to look into is the moment Jean Louise finds the first hint about her father's affairs within the "Maycomb County Citizens' Council" and presents it to her aunt so as to clarify her disruptive emotions,

"[...] a pamphlet the size of a business envelope caught her eye.

On its cover was a drawing of an anthropogous Negro; above the drawing was printed *The Black Plague*." (Lee, H., 2015: 101)

To her surprise, when consulting her aunt, she does not deny the information presented on the cruel piece of paper, on the contrary, she recognizes it as real, so Jean Louise replies ironically, and the differences between are deepened,

"You- Aunty, do you know the stuff in that thing makes Dr. Goebbels look like a naive little country boy?"

"I don't know what you're talking about, Jean Louise. There are a lot of truths in that book."

"Yes indeedy," said Jean Louise wryly. "I especially liked the part where the Negroes, bless their hearts, couldn't help being inferior to the white race because their skulls are thicker and their brain-pans shallower- whatever that means- so we must all be very kind to them

and not let them do anything to hurt themselves and keep them in their places. Good God, Aunty-" (Lee, H., 2015: 102)

Following Jean Louise's flow of thoughts, readers may perceive that she is an instructed young woman, having read about the Nazi party and its main philosophy as regards race. Actually, she presents to her prejudiced aunt the figure of the minister of propaganda for the German Third Reich under Adolf Hitler, Dr. Paul Joseph Goebbels who was in charge of controlling the press, radio, theatre, films, literature, music, and the fine arts of his period so as to convert the masses to Nazism.

Moreover, after Jean Louise's visit to the retired family cook, Calpurnia, to her black community, aunt Alexandra tries to indoctrinate her niece about the natural distinctions and division between the white and black communities. As she argues with her niece,

"Did you go visiting this morning?" asked Alexandra.

"Went to see Cal."

Alexandra's knife clattered on the table. "Jean Louise!"

"Now what the hell's the matter?" [...]

"Calm down, Miss." Alexandra's voice was cold. "Jean Louise, nobody in Maycomb goes to see Negroes any more, not after what they've been doing to us. Besides being shiftless now they look at you sometimes with open insolence, and as far as depending on them goes, why that's out. [...] You do not *realize* what is going on. [...] -that veneer of civilization's so thin that a bunch of uppity Yankee Negroes can shatter a hundred year's progress in five... [...] All they do is bite the hand that feed'em. No sir, not any more- they can shift for

themselves, now. [...] Keeping a nigger happy these days is like catering to a king.” (Lee, H., 2015: 166-167)

Once and again, Aunt Alexandra clarifies her philosophy in life and her position within the divided society she lives in and in which Jean Louise cannot find her place despite the fact that she was born and raised there.

By the same token, Alexandra also rejects those who do not belong to her social class and status within the white community as well. Subsequently, she does not accept Jean Louise’s boyfriend, Hank, as he belongs, according to her line of thought, to the “white trash” of the community, comparing him to the lowest social class in Maycomb, similarly to the Ewells. Jean Louise is aware of this situation; however, she inquires her aunt for answers,

“What would you say if Hank became your nephew?”

[...] She turned and looked sharply at Jean Louise. “Are you serious?”

“I might be.”

[...] “What’s the matter, don’t you approve of him?”

“It is not that, it’s- Jean Louise, dating a boy is one thing, but marrying him’s another. You must take all things into account. Henry’s background-” [...] “There is a drinking streak in that family-” (Lee, H., 2015: 34)

As regards this last quotation, it should be necessary to consider Hank’s origins and aims in life when proposing to the young Jean Louise. Although Jean Louise deems Henry Clinton to be part of her social class and surroundings, both her aunt Alexandra and Hank, himself, point out that he comes from a low lineage of “white trash” as Hank was abandoned by his alcoholic father and his mother died when he was fourteen and

Atticus took him as his responsibility and raised him to become an apparent heir to Atticus' law practice in Maycomb.

### **3.2- 1.B- 2- The retired family's cook: Calpurnia in her community.**

After many years working for the family, accompanying the children's growth, Calpurnia, the black cook, has retired after Jem's death, as she could no longer accomplish the same household activities. She has managed to be a mother figure for both Jem and Jean Louise while providing them with the day-to-day lessons and discipline, next to Atticus, who was in charge of raising them morally, instilling ethical values in them. As in the episode from her childhood, of a possible pregnancy, the old Scout comes to her mind in her visit to Maycomb,

“She felt Calpurnia's heavy arm around her, comforting when there was no comfort. She heard Calpurnia muttering:

“...no business fillin' your head full of stories... kill 'em if I could get my hands on 'em.”

“Cal, you will help me, won't you?” she said timidly.

Calpurnia said, “As sure as the sweet Jesus was born, baby. [...]”

(Lee, H., 2015: 137)

Furthermore, Calpurnia was in charge of explaining the ways of the world to Jean Louise when she was transitioning from childhood to womanhood. With a loving and caring attitude, she always explained to the young Scout the meaning of life and the relationship with men,

“With all your book learnin', you are the most ignorant child I ever did see...” Her voice trailed off. “... but I don't reckon you really ever had a chance.”

Slowly and deliberately Calpurnia told her the simple story. [...]

“Cal,” she said. “Why didn’t I know all this before?”

Calpurnia frowned and sought an answer: “[...] if there’d been any women around- if your mamma had lived you’d know it-” (Lee, H., 2015: 137-138)

She always played an essential role in Jean Louise’s childhood, nonetheless, now that she does not work for the Finches any more, Calpurnia keeps herself distant from the family as she has never been before, due to her advanced age. In spite of the fact that she has never come back to Atticus’ new house, she receives Jean Louise’s visit in her old house within her black community as a result of a terrible incident his beloved grandson Frank was involved in and from which he could go to jail. As a result of a car accident, Frank hits and kills a white man while driving so he needs Atticus’ help and legal advice.

Due to this situation and her visit to the black community, Jean Louise discovers Maycomb’s racial tensions that are also present in her relationship with the old black family cook poisoning the liaison she used to have with the woman who once treated her like a daughter. Although Calpurnia knows Atticus Finch will defend her grandson Frank from a charge of manslaughter he has been accused of after killing a white drunk man, she knows that within the justice imparted by the same old town everything will be in vain so he will finally be imprisoned. As a result of her visit to the old black lady, Jean Louise feels heartbroken to see how her beloved mother figure has distanced from her as she calls the old cook attention,

“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?”

Calpurnia lifted her hands and brought them down softly on the arms of the rocker. Her face was a million tiny wrinkles, and her eyes were dim behind thick lenses.

“What are you all doing to us?” she said. (Lee, H., 2015: 159-160)

And some minutes later, when rising to go, she looks at Calpurnia’s eyes and discovers that there is no hint of compassion in them, so she asks her,

“Tell me one thing, Cal,” she said, “just one thing before I go- please, I’ve got to know. Did you hate us?” [...]

Finally, Calpurnia shook her head.” (Lee, H., 2015: 160)

### **3.2- 2 Patriarchy and Lee's writings**

[...] the burning question of twentieth-century feminism: How can a woman be viewed and respected as a human being without becoming a male-like or male-dominated citizen?

-Tony Morrison

Following Kate Millett’s (2016) account of power-structured relationships within politics and the resulting oppression where one group of persons is controlled by another, the category of sex should be analysed within a patriarchal structure. This structure, developed into a male dominant society, becomes a habit of mind and a way of life. As a result, women’s oppression is based on economic inequalities as well as ideological indoctrination. Furthermore, the family, the society and the state, as the

three main interrelated patriarchal institutions, are responsible for effecting control over women. Considering Morton's (2003) reading of Spivak, the category of women falls into a binary opposition that perpetuates women's subordination to men in culture and society.

These ideas will be dealt with in order to provide an analysis of the concept of patriarchy for a better understanding of both novels.

### **3.2- 2.A- Power and authority as portrayed in *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960)**

As it has been described by Foucault (1995), all human knowledge exists in an intimate relationship with power. This power is not centralised throughout society but, it is diffuse, instilling obedience through discipline and routine. In Scout's eyes, this power and authority are only masculine attributes thus girls are customarily marginalised and excluded. In this respect, she rejects being a young girl in the society she is immersed in. However, a fundamental part in Scout's development is her deep understanding and acceptance of her role as woman so as to enter a world that results unattractive for her. At the missionary tea circle her aunt Alexandra has organised at home in order to introduce her to this, according to Scout, unappealing world, the young girl manages to clarify her ideas,

“There was no doubt about it, I must soon enter this world, where on its surface fragrant ladies rocked slowly, fanned gently, and drank cool water.

But I was more at home in my father's world. [...] Ladies seemed to live in faint horror of men, seemed unwilling to approve wholeheartedly of them, no matter how much they cussed and drank and gambled and



chewed; no matter how undetectable they were, there was something about them that I instinctively liked..." (Lee, H., 1960: 313)

Following Scout's flow of thoughts, it may be perceived that she gradually tends to understand her power, and the real, but silenced, power of women within her community. This being so, she stands up to a mob while her father confronts a group of men who want to lynch Tom Robinson in jail. She faces the mob with zeal and courage,

"I sought once more for a familiar face, and [...] I found one. [...]"

"Hey, Mr. Cunningham. How's your entailment gettin' along?"

Mr. Walter Cunningham's legal affairs were well known to me; Atticus had once described them at length. [...] He seemed uncomfortable; he cleared his throat and looked away.

"Don't you remember me, Mr Cunningham? I'm Jean Louise Finch. [...] I go to school with Walter," I began again. "He's your boy, ain't he? Ain't he, sir? [...]"

The men were all looking at me, some had their mouths half-open.

[...] Their attention amounted to fascination" (Lee, H., 1960: 204- 205)

She clearly refuses violent reactions and situations like this mob attempt in front of Tom Robinson's jail, as she single-handedly tries to defuse the violence the group of rioters instills by shaming the men as she identifies them by name and asks about their families.

In her coming of age, Scout experiences the relationship with different types of women within her community and she develops a clear sense of power and place within her community as she becomes aware of the role she has in it as a woman. As Scout describes her relationship with Calpurnia at home,

“She seemed glad to see me when I appeared in the kitchen, and by watching her I began to think there was some skill involved in being a girl.” (Lee, H., 1960: 154)

In her role of “surrogate mother,” Calpurnia knows how to advise Scout so she can discern her power and role as the potential woman she will eventually become. Specifically, she should accept the limits within which her power and authority will be circumscribed by the cultural context in which she is immersed. As Foucault states, the intimate relationship of power and knowledge which dominates the structures of thought will limit the knowledge; in this case, Scout will be able to gain about herself as she would turn into a conforming “docile body” (Foucault, 1995) within her community. As regards knowledge and how women are allowed to express themselves within this male driven society, Calpurnia attempts to explain the children why she speaks differently, “nigger-talk” as defined by Scout, when she is at church in her black community,

“It’s not necessary to tell all you know. It’s not lady-like -in the second place, folks don’t like to have somebody around knowin’ more than they do. It aggravates ‘em. You’re not gonna change any of them by talkin’ right, they’ve got to learn themselves, and when they don’t want to learn there’s nothing you can do but keep your mouth shut or talk their language.” (Lee, H., 1960: 167)

The above quotation also depicts Calpurnia’s need to conform to both communities: her own black community and the white patriarchal community she works for. As Foucault (1995 [1977]) describes the way to exercise power also accentuates the dichotomies in society as discourse formation is inseparable from power.

### 3.2- 2.A- 1- Atticus Finch: a father figure with anti-patriarchal traits?

Scout's father, Atticus Finch, is a widower, a single parent to two children who represents morality and reasoning within Maycomb's seemingly disturbed society. He remains impartial and fair throughout the novel and his parenting style is rare for his period and culture as he regards his children as adults, answering and explaining to them any query that may arise in their everyday life. Moreover, he treasures every situation as an opportunity to transmit all his moral values to his children. According to his inner traits, Atticus does not strengthen the binary opposition set between gender roles as his polite and caring attitude towards Jem and Scout are not expected from a man in the society and period he is immersed in.

Atticus' approach dissents entirely from what Scout identifies as southern patriarchy, and she expects very little from him due to his forbearing and elderly idiosyncrasy. As he is described by Scout, with embarrassment, .

“Atticus was feeble: he was nearly fifty. When Jem and I asked him why he was so old, he said he got started late, which we felt reflected upon his abilities and manliness. He was much older than the parents of our school contemporaries, and there was nothing Jem or I could say about him when our classmates said, “*My father-*“ (Lee, H., 1960: 118)

Following Maycomb's standards, every father, as the head of the family, should have certain skills and attributes his children would appreciate. In Atticus' case, and as portrayed by Scout,

“Our father didn't do anything. He worked in an office, not in a drugstore. Atticus did not drive a dump-truck for the county, he was not

the sheriff, he did not farm, work in a garage, or do anything that could possibly arouse the admiration of anyone.

Besides that, he wore glasses. [...]

He did not do the things our schoolmates' fathers did: he never went hunting, he did not play poker or fish or drink or smoke. He sat in the living room and read" (Lee, H., 1960: 118)

As regards this quotation, it may be said that to Scout, Atticus is a disappointment as a father. However, he manages to instruct her regarding realities that she is not ready to face being so young, until she finally incorporates them through experience. In Atticus kind and loving words towards Scout,

"First of all," he said, "if you can learn a simple trick, Scout, you'll get along a lot better with all kinds of folks. You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view-" [...] "-until you climb into his skin and walk around it." (Lee, H., 1960: 39)

Atticus' main characteristic is his genuine attitude towards those he comes across. He uses the same approach not only with his children but also with all Maycomb's citizens, in his office, on the street, in court. Miss Maudie knows how to explain this to Scout when they talk about Arthur -Boo- Radley and how he might live inside his house,

"The things that happen to people we never really know. What happens in houses behind close doors, what secrets-"

"Atticus don't ever do anything to Jem and me in the house that he don't do in the yard," I said, feeling it my duty to defend my parent.

“Gracious child, I was raveling a thread, wasn’t even thinking about your father, [...]: Atticus Finch is the same in his house as he is on the public streets.” (Lee, H., 1960: 61)

In addition to his mature treatment of his children, a rare instance for the male members of the southern families, Atticus acknowledges that they are very young and inexperienced, so they will make childish mistakes in their process of development. Hence, Atticus patiently advises Jem and Scout, equally, without making any distinction of gender between them, somehow confronting those who pursue more traditional ideas about how to raise a child in this southern community -including his sister Alexandra.

### **3.2- 2.A- 2- A role model as a father and master: Atticus’ manly abilities in his children’s eyes.**

As it has been developed in the *Literature Review*, there is a set of correctly performed activities that relates the subjects to what is socially perceived and expected as normal, thus the individual should behave socially and legally in recognised ways to be defined as masculine and/or feminine. In Atticus Finch’s case, he possesses the qualities associated with manhood prized in the South, although he chooses not to use them, especially in front of his children. He invariably respects the law as a way of life. He only resorts to violent actions when it is absolutely necessary and cannot be avoided, for instance when a mad dog appears as a menace to the community. After killing the mad dog in a first and only try, Jem and Scout feel confused about their father’s real manly abilities, and Miss Maudie opens their minds,

“Well now, Miss Jean Louise,” she said, “still think your father can’t do anything? Still ashamed of him?”

“Nome,” I said meekly.

“Forgot to tell you the other day that besides playing the Jew’s Harp, Atticus was the deadest shot in Maycomb County in his time.”

“Dead shot...,” echoed Jem.

“That’s what I said, Jem Finch. Guess you’ll change *your* tune now.

[...]” (Lee, H., 1960: 129)

Moreover, as they cannot understand why their father has never mentioned his shooting skills to them before, Miss Maudie explains to them why,

“If your father’s anything, he’s civilized in his heart. Marksmanship’s a gift of God, a talent- oh, you have to practice to make it perfect, but shootin’s different from playing the piano or the like. I think maybe he put his gun down when he realized that God had given him an unfair advantage over most living things. I guess he decided he wouldn’t shoot till he had to, and he had to today.”

“Looks like he’d be proud of it,” I said.

“People in their right minds never take pride in their talents,” said Miss Maudie.” (Lee, H., 1960: 130)

As a father figure, Atticus is a role model for his children as he is a man of calm wisdom, considerable intellect and exemplary behaviour. Due to these characteristics, he is respected by all the citizens in Maycomb, including those with less possibilities and resources. In the moments of trouble and uncertainty, he serves as a moral pillar for the community.

### 3.2- 2.A- 3- Concerns about race, caste, gender, and southern prejudices.

In his role of male figure and head of the family, Atticus seriously lectures Jem and Scout specially about the evils and misery of taking advantage of those less fortunate or educated in their society. As he is an honourable person who respects the law, he agrees to defend a black person with scarce resources, so he explains his decision to Scout,

“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. Scout, you aren’t old enough to understand some things yet, but there’s been some high talk around town to the effect that I shouldn’t do much about defending this man. [...]”

“If you shouldn’t be defendin’ him, then why are you doin’ it?”

“For a number of reasons,” said Atticus. “The main one is, if I didn’t I couldn’t hold up my head in town, I couldn’t represent this county in the legislature, I couldn’t even tell you or Jem not to do something again.” (Lee, H., 1960: 100)

The above quotation suggests that Atticus recognises that the society they live in is not the ideal one as several inequalities are evident, especially, as regards race and caste. Through his calm and honest discussions with Scout, he promotes Scout’s understanding of how race, caste, gender and the prejudices of southerners are not natural and should not be taken for granted in front of the law. To become a good person courage, empathy and good reasoning are necessary and crucial in the development of any society. He says to Scout,

“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. No matter what anybody says to you, don’t let ‘em get your goat. Try fighting with your head for a change... it’s a good one, even if it does resist learning.” (Lee, H., 1960: 101)

Although Atticus believes all human beings deserve the same natural rights and should be equal before the law, he accepts his defeat before Tom Robinson’s trial starts. He knows he is not going to manage to change the views of the jury about the innocence of a black man, but this does not prevent him from giving Tom the strongest defence he possibly can. As he explains to the jury,

“[...] a quiet, respectable, humble Negro who had the temerity to “feel sorry” for a white woman has had to put his word against two white people’s. [...] The witnesses for the state, [are] confident that you gentleman would go along with them on the assumption -the evil assumption- that all Negroes lie, that all Negroes are basically immoral beings, that all Negro men are not to be trusted around our women [...]” (Lee, H., 1960: 273)

Moreover, Atticus follows Thomas Jefferson’s ideas about human equality when he explains to the jury,

“Thomas Jefferson once said that all men are created equal, [...] We know all men are not created equal in the sense some people would have us believe -some people are smarter than others, some people have more opportunity because they’re born with it, some men make more money than others, some ladies make better cakes than others - some people are born gifted beyond the normal scope of most men.



[...] Our courts have their faults, as does any human institution, but in this country our courts are the great levelers, and in our courts all men are created equal” (Lee, H., 1960: 273, 274)

In this southern community the label “trash” is easily and quickly pinned on other people, especially if they do not belong to the same family lineage. Atticus, however, reserves that definition for those people who are violent and exploit others.

### **3.3. 2.B- A new perspective on patriarchal beliefs in *Go set a Watchman* (2015)**

Following Spivak’s ideas developed in the previous chapter, women’s position under patriarchy is that of complex and docile subjects who are perceived as relentless beings who have to understand and conform to the stereotypes of the ruling patriarchal gender. Following Gramsci’s ideas, according to Ashcroft et al. (2003), they are the “subalterns” who are subjected to the ruling classes, so the ideological construction of gender is based on male dominance. In Jean Louise’s world, this male supremacy is evident as she tends to come back to her father’s world for support and guidance,

“She did not stand alone, but what stood behind her. The most potent moral force in her life, was the love of her father. She never questioned it, never thought about it, never even realized that before she made any decision of importance the reflex, “What would Atticus do?” passed through her unconscious; [...] she did not know that she worshipped him.” (Lee, H., 2015: 117-118)

Whenever Jean Louise goes back to Maycomb, she feels at home and although she does not completely agree with its society’s philosophy and politics, her

whole family is rooted in Maycomb and its surrounding area, so she feels a deep bond with the community. However, she also feels as an outsider in Maycomb as her views do not commune with the beliefs of the township and she does not fit into any conventional role, either. In Lee's narrative,

“Now she was aware of a sharp apartness, a separation, not from Atticus and Henry merely. All of Maycomb and Maycomb County were leaving her as the hours passed, and she automatically blamed herself.” (Lee, H., 2015: 154)

An important male figure in her family is her uncle Jack Finch, Atticus' younger brother, to whom she turns when in doubt. Her uncle tries to open Jean Louise's eyes and help her mature. He also tries to disclose her relationship with the community. Uncle Jack points out,

“Every man's island, Jean Louise, every man's watchman, is his conscience. There is no such thing as a collective conscious.” (Lee, H., 2015: 265)

From the above quotation, it could be inferred that although there should be a connection between human beings so as to live together and survive as part of a community, every citizen has his/her own internal morals and in this way no person can be a compass to somebody else's consciousness. An individual may need help and ask for guidance, but the final ethical decisions will ultimately depend on his/her own conscience. In Jean Louise's world her watchman has always been her father and so she feels that she is not capable of acting without her father's support, so she feels blind and alone.

However, her uncle shows her that she is not voiceless or by herself within the southern community. Although she tends to dramatise the situation and think there is no way out for this racist and prejudiced community, Uncle Jack explains to her that she is not indeed alone in her beliefs or completely against the group so as not to fit in it. Uncle Jack suggests,

“That’s the one thing about here, the South, you’ve missed. You’d be amazed if you knew how many people are on your side, if *side’s* the right word. You’re no special case. The woods are full of people like you, but we need some more of you.” (Lee, H., 2015: 272)

After Uncle Jack’s words, it might be inferred that within the rural area in which they live, there might be many people afraid of expressing their own ideas and opinions as they may lack the language to do so or the leading ability to guide the group.

### **3.3. 2.B- 1- Jean Louise’s idealised views about her father**

Along her early years, Jean Louise has idealised her father, Atticus, and has adopted him as a standard for her own ethical concerns. However, she does not recognise her mistake until she finds her father in the company of a group of men known to her for their racist beliefs and derogatory treatment towards the black community, at the Maycomb County Citizens’ Council, a white supremacist organization. After comparing her childhood in Maycomb, when her father defended a black man with all his energy and good name, to the present situation, Jean Louise feels she has been deceived by her father all along her life and she assumes all the values Atticus has instilled into her have only been the result of his hypocritical actions.

As a result, she realises that her father is not as faithful a supporter of equal rights as she has believed her whole life and so she is forced to separate her conscience from her father's. In shock for her discovery, she resorts to her uncle, Atticus' younger brother, who tries to open Jean Louise's eyes,

“...now you, Miss, born with your own conscience, somewhere along the line fastened it like a barnacle onto your father's. As you grew up, when you were grown, totally unknown to yourself, you confused your father with God. You never saw him as a man with a man's heart, and a man's failings- I'll grant you it may have been hard to see, he makes so few mistakes, but he makes 'em like all of us. You were an emotional cripple, learning on him, getting the answers from him, assuming that your answers would always be his answers.” (Lee, H., 2015: 265)

In the process of “humanising” her childhood hero, Jean Louise is afflicted with losing her childhood vision of her father but deals with her coming of age, handling her memories of her young years with an independent mind.

This is a process Atticus himself has meant to start. As his physical decay also shows, due to his arthritis which keeps him in deep pain most of the time, he knows Jean Louise cannot trust him through her entire life to work as her own conscience. Jean Louise's growth depends on her understanding of her need to behave according to her own desires and to have the determination and her own beliefs to stand up for what she perceives to be right. Over the course of the novel, Jean Louise discovers she has to become her own “watchman”, her own moral conscience so that no other person can influence her ethically than herself.

### 3.3. 2.B- 2- Gender roles and marriage according to the southern Maycomb philosophy.

In Jean Louise's southern Maycomb society, many are the sources of inequality among the community. Social classes, racial relations, together with gender roles deepen the division and unfairness among the southern citizens. Moreover, following Butler's (1990) definition of "intelligible" bodies -those who institute and maintain relations of coherence and continuity among sex, gender and desire, conforming to the norms of cultural intelligibility, not to be considered failures-, it can be inferred that Jean Louise's fierce independence and lack of traditional feminine characteristics turn her into an odd woman within the rest of her family and townspeople. This issue, in particular, is evident in her description of marriage and her ideas about husband-and-wife relationships. In her boyfriend's, Henry Clinton, words,

"You're an odd one, sweet. You can't dissemble."

She looked at him. "What are you talking about?"

"Well, as a general rule, most women, before they've got 'em, present to their men smiling, agreeing faces. They hide their thoughts. You now, when you're feeling hateful, honey, you are hateful." (Lee, H., 2015: 15)

Many are the opportunities in which Jean Louise assumes her inability to understand men and her lack of will to do so, as well. According to Lee's narrative,

"She was a person who, when confronted with an easy way out, always took the hard way. The easy way out of this would be to marry Hank and let him labor for her. [...]"

No. For the present she would pursue the stony path of spinsterhood. [...]" (Lee, H., 2015: 15)

However, despite her manly nature, Henry still loves her and attempts to turn her into the expected feminine ideal imposed by society, restraining her sense of pride and individuality. He tries to show her what is expected of a woman in her relationship with a man,

"First," he said dispassionately, "hold your tongue. Don't argue with a man, especially when you know you can beat him. Smile a lot. Make him feel big. Tell him how wonderful he is, and wait on him." (Lee, H., 2015: 16)

Nonetheless, Jean Louise cannot suppress her wild and out of the expected stereotype wit and answers ironically to his beloved friend,

"She smiled brilliantly and said, "Hank, I agree with everything you've said. You are the most perspicacious individual I've met in years, you are six feet five, and may I light your cigarette? How's that?" (Lee, H., 2015: 16)

Ironically, she shows him that she can pretend to be the woman she is supposed to be among their southern community, following Henry's advice, but she will not act authentically, only to belong.

### **3.3. 2.B- 3- Marry your own kind: Southern precept.**

Eventually, Jean Louise suggests marrying Henry Clinton, Hank, but she faces a strong disapproval from her aunt Alexandra as he does not belong to her close family circle or social status. Despite the fact that Aunt Alexandra likes Hank and he

was raised and tutored by Atticus, she always makes it clear that he does not come from a proper background so as to marry a Finch.

According to Aunt Alexandra, bloodline affects the quality of the family members despite the person's success in life. Although Hank was Jem's best friend and always has had a close relationship with the family, especially with Atticus after Jem died, he cannot be considered as a potential husband to Jean Louise and he will never be suitable to marry her. In aunt Alexandra's words,

“You are as innocent as a new-laid egg for all your city living. Henry is not and never will be suitable for you. We Finches do not marry the children of rednecked white trash, which is exactly what Henry's parents were when they were born and were all their lives. You can't call them better. [...] Fine boy as he is, the trash won't wash out of him.”

(Lee, H., 2015: 36-37)

This last quotation reinforces the racist idea that family names are what determine the person's value in life, no matter how hard or successful a person might be. In Hank's case, he will always live under his family's shadow of inferiority.

However, her experience of living in New York has given Jean Louise a view of marriage different from the one she can learn from her aunt's social coffee meetings. She can clearly describe the role of a married woman following the expected stereotypes and is certain she does not expect that role for her in the future. She manages to explain her ideas to Hank in this respect,

“It begins with the wives being bored to death because their men are so tired from making money they don't pay attention to 'em. [...] Everything is rosy for a while, but the men get tired and their wives start yellin' again and around it goes.” (Lee, H., 2015: 48)

She clarifies her ideas about being an ordinary woman who does not want to live in an unhappy marriage relationship,

“[...] I’m so afraid of making a mess of being married to the wrong man. [...] I’m not different from any other woman, and the wrong man would turn me into a screamin’ shrew in record time.” (Lee, H., 2015: 48-49)

In this case, she discloses her concerns about marrying the “correct” man but not because he would be the “correct one” as regards his family origin but due to his personality and the loving relationship he might develop towards his future wife.



## **4- Conclusion**

### **4. 1 Generalities**

“You, old woman, blessed with blindness, can speak the language that tells us what only language can: how to see without pictures. Language alone protects us from the scariness of things with no names. Language alone is meditation.

Tell us what it is to be a woman so that we may know what it is to be a man. What moves at the margin. What it is to have no home in this place. To be set adrift from the one you knew. What it is to live at the edge of towns that cannot bear your company.”

-Toni Morrison

This small-scale study has attempted to explore, in Harper Lee’s only published novels, the extent to which the notions of gender, race, class and power are inextricably intertwined as a “highly rigid regulatory frame” (Butler, 1990) that leads to a set of repeated acts in the development of a person’s identity and gender role within society. As Judith Butler (1990) states, the human being defines herself/himself through the realisation of a series of awaited, regularly performed actions pursuing a set of features according to the categories of sex expected by the community he/she is immersed. In Butler’s words, “performativity is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual, which achieves its effects through its naturalisation in the context of a body, understood, in part, as a culturally sustained temporal duration.” (Butler, 1990: xv).

The everyday performance of activities -related to the development of a person as an individual within society, defined by Butler (1990) as the “performative of gender”- led the present paper to explore the extent to which the intellectual, psychological and moral development of Jean Louise -Scout- Finch in Harper Lee’s novels, *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960) and *Go Set a Watchman* (2015), is influenced by her growing awareness of the power-structured relationships within the society she was born and raised in.

The present study was guided by the notion that “the very description of the field of gender is in no sense prior to, or separable from, the question of its normative operation.” (Butler, 1990: xxii). Moreover, the strong relationship of “dependency of the masculine subject on the female “Other” suddenly exposes his autonomy as illusory. [...] Power [seems] to be more than an exchange between subjects or a relation of constant inversion between subject and an Other; indeed, power [appears] to operate in the production of that very binary frame for thinking about gender.” (Butler, 1990: xxx). In this way, a multi-layered framework to approach Harper Lee’s novels, *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960) and *Go Set a Watchman* (2015), has provided the diversity of information necessary to tackle the research question from the multiple perspectives that it posed. However, it should be noted that it has not been the main concern of this small-scale research to engage in an exhaustive development of the theories proposed but simply to bestow the analysis with a well-informed theoretical background.

In conclusion, therefore, and in response to the basic aims postulated in the present study, it may be asserted that Harper Lee’s novels, both read as a *bildungsroman* in which the protagonist’s development from childhood to maturity and

self-awareness is masterly described, depict the struggle of a young girl who manages to endure the dominant influence of her surroundings. Jean Louise Finch is portrayed as a strong female individual immersed in a society guided by patriarchal rules and binary -masculine and feminine- roles which centralises male views and experience and marginalises those of women. In her path of personal growth, both the young Scout and later, the older Jean Louise, clearly, disclose the process of maturity throughout her experiences in town, along those distinctive moments in her life which she retells as a young girl and then recalls as a woman in quest of understanding her surroundings and standing on her beliefs, within her inner course of maturation.

As regards the first guiding hypothesis, it could be proved that the role of the Southern white men in the United States of the 1930s/50s has, certainly, had a strong impact on Jean Louise -Scout- Finch as she defies and stands up against the men-ruled society of that period. Throughout the novels, the role of women and their expected behaviour are described as entirely dependent on men's views and interests, clearly exemplified by the ladies who attend Aunt Alexandra's tea meetings in her desire to introduce Jean Louise to the female world. The distinct ideological construction of gender roles marks the specific characteristics of women, who are described as feeble, vulnerable and subordinate to the norms imposed by men, whose characteristics, though, are based on strength and responsibilities. This position of domination of men over women builds the binary opposition of genders in the Southern town of Maycomb, antagonism clearly withstood by Scout, as a young woman engulfed in the above-described status quo, who struggles to keep her open preferences, independent attitude and original appearance. As she certainly identifies herself primarily with the masculine world, she chooses unconventional predilections

and choices, especially related to her attire and free time activities when in contact with her older brother, Jem, and her earnest father as a young little bold girl and later, as a grown-up woman visiting the physically deteriorated Southern well-known lawyer.

Secondly, as far as the traditional racist values of the white men in Maycomb is concerned, the protagonist manages to resist conforming to the role imposed on women at that time. In particular, she does not comply with the duty women are expected to perform in relation to the racial conflicts of the period, silently supporting white men's perspectives and convictions. At the outset, as a young girl, she stands up to the unfair racial and social class differences existing in the area. Afterwards, as a well-prepared and educated woman, she emphasises her rejection of a seemingly useless and decorative existence ascribed to women in Maycomb, as well as the weak and ineffective function assigned to women, related to the community decisions about the fair treatment of all citizens despite their race or origin.

Finally, with respect to the third guiding hypothesis, the embodiment of ideal womanhood represented by the different female characters in both novels shapes and determines Scout Finch's identity quest thoroughly. After analysing different female characters in both novels, it could be inferred that there is a wide range of female types and womanly attitudes presented to Jean Louise along her lifespan in Maycomb and she would not be bound to follow only one of them. To begin with, with the exception of the circle of ladies participating in the afternoon tea sessions arranged by Aunt Alexandra to show Jean Louise how a gentlewoman should behave in society, all the feminine characters are described as unique, with distinctive characteristics and independent from the guidance of a male figure -except for Mayella Ewells who is absolutely controlled by her father due to his physical strength and illegal habits, rare

for a male white father figure in the area. On the one hand, Calpurnia shows the strength of women within the household through her hard work and good disposition as well as the resolute temperament necessary to adapt, comply to and bind both communities -black and white- developing her personal knowledge and language accordingly. On the other hand, Miss Atkinson challenges the role of women especially at home and resists the tradition of women inside the household devoting herself to her garden and personal pleasure outside her home. Furthermore, Mrs Lafayette Dubose's courage and honesty confront and resemble male strength and physical resistance until the end of her own life. Likewise, Aunt Alexandra herself is an example of independence and women in command despite all her effort and insistence on strict standards of female behaviour. To sum up, the roles of all the women in the novel show Jean Louise that each of them struggles to keep their personal ideas and characteristics proving that it is not impossible for women to be independent and have a personal opinion about the everyday situation in the Southern old town. Although they do not own a proper place within the legal system or government in town -as they are not allowed to take part in the juries or politics-, they have a voice for the young generations, young citizens as Jean Louse -Scout-, and they are role models to follow. Accordingly, the influence of the different female characters in the novels encourages Jean Louise to follow her passions, preferences and beliefs, as all of them do in their everyday life, in spite of living within such a strong patriarchal community.

#### **4. 2 Further words about *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960)**

“As it was, we were compelled to hold our heads high and be  
respectively, a gentleman and a lady. [...] I came to the conclusion

that people were just peculiar, I withdrew from them, and never  
thought of them until I was forced.”

- *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960)

It seems evident that *To kill a Mockingbird* illustrates the prejudices not only related to race, but also to gender and power relationships, indisputable in the southern community Jean Louise comes from. Different types of bigotry engendered by class, gender and religion are present in the novel and produce a strong effect on society. As a result, Scout may apparently never grow to be anything but a lady, despite the men's outfits she wears in her childhood. In the same way, her older brother, Jem, is expected to grow into a gentleman as his father. Moreover, due to being born into the Maycomb upper class, both, Jem and Scout, are expected to commit to the duties and the respective roles required. As the social status quo is a lifelong classification for them, it might be inferred that Jean Louise can mature and work hard so as to improve her social status, but she might not be able to change or transcend it in any way.

However, while it might be expected of Jem to follow his father's legacy, Scout's expectations may be less evident but demanding in the same way. The role of women is crucial to the backbone of the southern town in spite of the ineffective and fragile intrinsic characteristics assigned to women. It is Scout's responsibility to recognise and discern the true essence of the ladies of her town from the apparent and forced ones, so as to appreciate the true lady's values and follow them suit.

It might be concluded that, by the end of the novel, Scout has a definite understanding of what being a lady implies, which seems to be something simple to

discern but utmost challenging to undertake. A lady in her southern community is expected to be subtle and modest and, at the same time, to maintain her integrity and good name. Scout manages to recognise the different feminine paradigms and refrains from participating from those that imply being vindictive, dishonest or spiteful. She seems to accept the paradigm of those ladies who restrain themselves and promote gentle criticism instead of virulent attacks against those who appear to be different within the community. She acknowledges that power and authority are masculine attributes, but she refuses to be marginalised or excluded due to her female essence.

#### **4. 3 Further words about *Go set a Watchman* (2015)**

“I mean it takes a certain kind of maturity to live in the South these days. You don’t have it yet, but you have a shadow of the beginning of it. [...]”

-Uncle Jack, *Go set a watchman* (2015)

From the very beginning of the novel, after arriving at Maycomb and not being received by her elderly and physically deteriorated father, it might be clear for the reader that Jean Louise is undergoing a troublesome time. She internally knows that her father needs her, but she does not accept the fact that it is her who should take care of him. Moreover, she is met by her prospective husband who does not refrain himself from proposing to her as many times as possible although he knows she does not feel confident enough to undertake that responsibility in her life. Jean

Louise is not prepared to come to a decision about her future yet, due to the fact that she is, actually, transitioning into a new and grown-up person.

Throughout the novel, Jean Louise undertakes a path of self-discovery to become her own, individual person and close the process of maturity started in her early years of life. She is able to acknowledge that she has worshipped Atticus all her life and, in this respect, Uncle Jack is an exceptional guidance for her. She knows she can no longer resort to her father as she used to do when she was younger. However, as she is not able to solve her inner concerns by herself, she has to turn to a male figure for advice. Worshipping Atticus prevented her from maturing and developing a “conscience” of her own as the watchman in the Biblical quotation illustrates. Forthwith, the male authority within her family is passed on to her uncle and she is forced to mature through this experience as well. It might be inferred that she finally understands that the male figures who have accompanied her along her life are ordinary human beings, not deities with a special wisdom as she had thought about them in her early years. She has matured to find her own place within society and her own voice as well.

Jean Louise Finch is still passionate and relentless in her beliefs and she makes her voice heard especially in front of Aunt Alexandra, who seems to perpetuate the “housewife” role of women, advocate for the family and submissive to the male decisions. With all her female strength and acquired reflective skills, Jean Louise manages to speak those very harsh truths, difficult to accept in the white male ruling society of her period. She speaks, first to express her own beliefs to her aunt and also to whoever will listen to her: her boyfriend Henry, Atticus, her older neighbours, Uncle Jack and even, the old Calpurnia. By the end of the novel, it might be clear that she



has finally reached the maturity that will allow her to speak loud enough for all of Maycomb County to hear.

#### **4. 4 Limitations of the present study**

Racial injustice and white supremacy in the mid-1900s Southern American communities have always been the main topics of study and analysis, indisputably associated with Harper Lee's published novels. The utter moral of a righteous Southern lawyer who stands firm against racism and the ingenious perceptions attributed to his young daughter and later, her mature version of a woman, might make any study exploring the above-mentioned issues into a statement of the evident, aimed at a set of unavoidable conclusions. For this reason, the objective of this examination has mostly focused on the notions of gender acquisition and the regulatory power-structured relationships that might interfere along the journey of self-discovery from an innocent childhood into womanhood as the main theoretical framework capable of illuminating these two notable works. The perspective chosen to explore the texts should therefore be prevalent over the very existence of power supremacy and racial abuse proven long before this work was developed.

Secondly, it should be made clear that Harper Lee's only published novels, *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960) and *Go Set a Watchman* (2015) enclose countless additional instances regarding the main topics under analysis. However, the elements explored in the present study (limited by length-related restrictions) should be considered as paramount and most significant. Under no circumstances should the illustrations provided be assumed as the only instances of gender acquisition or

regulatory power-structured relationships depicted along the two works examined in this dissertation.

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