

SCOUT AS THE MAIN CHARACTER IN TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD, A NOVEL BY HARPER LEE

^{1*}Asma Asma, ²Ida Muliawati

^{1,2}Department of English Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Iskandar Muda University, Banda Aceh, Indonesia

*Corresponding author: asma@unida-aceh.ac.id

Abstract

Novel is entertaining for its readers and has other purposes, such as education, history, struggle, and social life, as seen from the characters presented. The study focuses on the characterization of the main character in the novel, Jean Louis Finch (Scout). *To Kill a Mockingbird* was written by Harper Lee and published in 1960. She is the best-known author and got the Pulitzer Prize winning seller for her only novel. A qualitative method was adopted in data collection and analysis to achieve the study's objective. Specific questions were applied to identify and consider essential ideas and returned to the novel to locate specific evidence and passages related to the main character. Then, the actions, thoughts, words, expressions and other statements regarding the main character were described to find the analytical result. The result shows that the author develops the main character as an innocent little girl who continuously learns many things through life problems faced by his father. Moreover, the main character has an important role, making the store's plot more interesting.

Keywords: Main Character, To Kill a Mockingbird, Harper Lee

1. Introduction

Readers of all ages agree that reading literature such as short stories, novels, dramas, or plays is exciting. In other words, literature is an artistic creation expressed through beautiful languages. Beautiful language is a highly selective language that can tremble and absorb the reader's soul due to its beauty in form, content, or message. However, readers read literary works not only to enjoy their artistic element; but also to contain some educative functions. M. Djasi (2001) put forward various educative functions of literature.

Literature is to increase the reader's language skills, to increase the reader's knowledge of literature, and to develop the reader's character. To develop the reader's imagination and creativity and to implant in the reader's souls the sense of rejecting all kinds of irregularities, violence, cruelties, and the like to provide the readers with higher life values, to purify the reader's souls.

As one of the exciting literature works for reading, the reader could enjoy a novel easily, especially for those whose hobby is reading. A novel would have many effects on the readers; reading and responding to a novel will facilitate the building of knowledge and language skills in a complex way. By reading a novel, they would have the opportunity to develop the ability to analyze the text, interpret the

idea related to them and make the connection to their lives. It can invite the reader to enter the story and experience the characters' lives deeply.

Some previous studies were conducted related to the analysis of the main character. Many researchers have studied the analysis of the main character. Afifulloh (2019) on his study revealed that psychologically the main character in the *Karangan Bunga*, a novel by Marsiraji Thahir, is described as a person who often feels worried, frightened, keeping reality up, and burdened by the problem faced. In addition, the same research conducted by (Nurdayanti et al., 2020) in *Hush, Hush Novel* resulted in six forms of archetypes appearing in the main character's personality in the novel. They are the persona, the shadow, the anima and animus, the great mother, the wise older man and the self. There are two characters' personalities of the main character, such as mysterious and ambitious. Another study related to the analysis of the main character was conducted by Hasibuan (2022), where she found two main characters in *Keberangkatan Novel*, the protagonist and antagonist.

The purpose of the study was to describe the main character's personality through some aspects. They are action, statement and thought, appearance/looks, and statement by other characters and the narrator.

2. Literature Review

The characters presented by the author establish the structure of the literary work. They are influenced by the natural, cultural, social and ideological environment and their relationships with each other (Lismalinda & Rizka, 2021). It must be included in the novel because it is one of the elements in the novel or fictional prose. Characters include the entire object or physical appearance with characteristics, behaviours, emotions, and attitudes that make the story's plot come alive and understood (Nurdayanti et al., 2020). A reader reads fiction because they are interested in what happens to the character. The reader does not ask the character necessarily be like themselves, but they do ask that the character in the story is believable and that these characters be consistent.

In order to convince the reader, a character must observe at least three principles (Ronie & Hellystia, 2019). First, the character must be consistent in their behaviour. They must not behave one way on one occasion and a different way on another unless there is a sufficient reason for the change. In other words, a character must be essentially "stable" or unchanged in his outlook and disposition from the beginning to the end of a work. Whether they remain stable or change, consistency is required in character. They should not suddenly break off and act in a way not plausibly grounded in his temperament as we already have come to know it.

Second, the characters must be motivated in whatever they do, especially when there is any change in their behavior. Readers must understand the reason for what the characters do, if not directly, at least by the end of the story. Readers are interested to know that character act from known motives.

Third, the characters must be plausible, lifelike, credible, realistic, and probable. If the writer can meet the second principle, the third will automatically be realized. The credibility of a character can be achieved by meeting the second principle, for instance, his/her clear motivation to take any action. A character introduced as an always skeptical person cannot suddenly be allowed to make a prompt firm decision unless readers are informed about all the possible reasons for him to do so. His/her motives for acting deviating from his general nature must be explained.

According to Nurgiyantoro (2005), characters can be classified into several categories. They are major and minor, protagonist and antagonist, and round and flat characters. A major character is an actual figure at the story's centre, action or theme. Principally, a story focuses on this character because it is frequently told in a story that he or she establishes the development of the plot as a whole. The character always comes as a significant person that influences the storyline. However, to make the story more attractive, the major character needs other characters to support it as it cannot stand alone. In the novel, this character might be more than one person, and their superiority is different. A minor character is a

person or personified which is performed several times in a story. The character plays less essential roles and rarely shows up in the story. Nevertheless, this character is needed to support the major character.

The protagonist is the central person. It is often called the main character in the story, novel, drama or other literary work. It is also the character that the readers or audience usually empathizes with and writes as a good person. The story's plot is often written from the protagonist's point of view. They may not always be admirable, but they must grab the readers' attention, such as their empathy. This type of character can be trying to find something or win and defeat a conflict that should be resolved. In contrast, the antagonist is the character that represents the opposition. It can be defined as a person who actively opposes the protagonist. They provide the story's conflict and always be an obstacle for the protagonist to overcome. The protagonist and antagonist are different and, in most cases, complete opposites.

A round character or dynamic character is a character who has a complex personality. The characters are described in depth with many details and well-rounded characters. If the readers are reading the story and feel they know a character extremely well, it is likely a round character. In contrast with round characters, flat characters do not grow as it is the opposite of a round character. The characterizations never change from the beginning until the end of the story. Even though they are not worthless and remain static, they usually highlight the development of the round characters.

From the above meaning, as an imaginary person, the author creates a character that will significantly affect readers. It influences readers through action, voice, description, commentary, and thought. It is difficult for the author to create and develop a good and memorable character. They must act and sound like people in real life. The character touched the readers' attention and even emotions through these things. As a result, the character could be loved, cared for, laughed at, disliked, and hated by readers.

3. Research Method

This study was qualitative design. The primary data for the research was derived from the novel by Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Data analysis used Mile and Huberman's Model (2014), which involves data reduction, data display, and conclusion or verification (Ayouni & El-Sukny, 2022). Data reduction is reducing the data by studying the main character based on the interaction that occurs in the novel. Then, specific passages or sentences were offered to strengthen the investigation that referred to the character's traits from the text as evidence. The findings are discussed for data display by explaining each element of the character's traits such as action, statement and thought, appearance or looks, and statement by the narrator and other characters. Meanwhile, the meaning and interpretation are given to the result in order to conclude.

4. Results and Discussion

The author uses many ways to present the characters. (Thamrin & Wargika, 2013) mentions five ways to reveal the characters' qualities in the novel: action, personal and environmental description, dramatic statements and thoughts, statements by other characters, and statements by the author speaking as a storyteller or observer. Some characters fascinate readers by being very different, for example, living in a distant place, living in a time long past, being wildly glamorous, and being consummately evil. Sometimes, characters may capture their minds and hearts because characters are people that readers can relate to. They may face circumstances similar to the reader's own or act in ways that make the reader feel as though they are looking in the mirror. Frequently, a character intrigues us by displaying a special quality or style, a unique sense of humor, a gift for the absurd, or a profoundly wise way of looking at the world. Through these ways, the reader can also analyze the character in the novel.

4.1 Action

What characters do is our best way to understand what they are. For example, in the novel, we could show what the character does, such as:

"I **told** Jem if he set fire to Radley house I was going to **tell** Atticus on him." (page 17, lines 32-33).

Scout frequently threatens her brother, Jem, to show that she loves her brother. When their father, Atticus, forbids Jem from doing something terrible, she threatens him. The same thing happens when she hears that Jim will disturb Boo Radley in Radley Place. She immediately prohibits Jem not to do it, as their father does not allow them to visit Radley's house. It shows that Scout is a good girl. She obeys what her father says.

"Jem and Walter returned to school ahead of me: staying behind me to **advise** Atticus of Calpurnia's iniquities was worth a solitary spirit past the Radley Place." (page 33, lines 20-22).

The utterance also shows that Scout is a nice girl. She tells Atticus about Calpurnia, the keeper of their house. She feels that Calpurnia does not care for her. She loves Jem better than her. However, she hopes her father will not displace her and still allow her to stay with them.

"The Radley house no screen doors. I **once asked Atticus** if it ever had any: Atticus said yes, but before I was born." (page 11-12, lines 32-34).

"When I **asked** Jem what entailment was, and Jem described it as a condition of having your tail in a track. I **asked** Atticus if Mr. Cunningham would ever pay us." (page 27, lines 5-7).

"That was the only time I ever heard Atticus say it was a sin to do something, and I **asked Miss Maudie about it.**" (page 119, lines 18-20)

Scout is an intelligent girl, always curious about something she did not know before. When she hears something new for her and she does not know before, she will try to find the answer by asking anyone. Atticus, Jem, Miss Maudie Atkinson, and Calpurnia are the person she frequently meets to find answers that intrigue her. In any case, she loves to ask Atticus because he always gives her a brief explanation with an exact words that she can easily understand. However, as a little girl trying to cope with her emotions, she still quickly gets angry and temperamental. It usually occurs when her friends try to provoke her into something that she does not like, such as her father's job. In addition, she does not afraid of anyone. When someone mocks her self-esteem, she will challenge them back. In her cousin's house, Francis mocks Atticus as *nigger lover* and *defender of nigger*. She could not control herself and immediately gripped Francis's collar, **hitting and scratching her even though her father and aunt could see what she was doing.** She knows her father is right, making her want to defend him. As a result, she gets the punishment either from her father or her uncle.

"This time, I **split my knuckle to the bone on his front teeth. My left impaired, I sailed in with my right, but not for long.** Uncle Jack pinned my arms to my sides and said, "Stand still!" (page 112, lines 3-6).

"I leaped off the steps and ran down the catwalk. **It was easy to collar Francis.** I said take it back quick." (page 110, lines 23-24).

4.2 Statement and Thought

The speeches of most characters are functional. However, they provide material from which readers can conclude. The statement is one way to describe the character's personality.

"If I didn't have to stay I'd leave. Jem, **that damn lady** says Atticus been teaching me to read and for him to stop it--" (page 23, lines 30-32).

"**He ain't company, Cal, he's just Cunningham ---**" (page 33, line 1).

“Dill, **If you don’t hush I’ll knock you bowlegged**. I mean it, now --- (page 48, lines 30-31).

“**You can just take that back, boy!**” (page 90, line 1).

“**Aw, that’s a damn story.**” I said (page 104 line 27).

“**Francis, what the hell do you mean?**” (page 110, line 13).

“He is not!” I roared. “I don’t know what you’re talking’ about, **but you better cut it out this red hot minute!**” (page 110, lines 21-22).

“**I’ll never speak to you again as long as I live! I hate you an’ despise you an’ hope you die tomorrow!**” (page 112, lines 25-26).

Sometimes Scout uses profanity to show her emotions, such as anger, disappointment, annoyance and sadness. She spoke impolitely to her uncle and teacher as she was prohibited from reading books and magazines with her father. Actually, it is not normal for a little girl to use profanity. However, Scout is a nice little girl who understands her brother's feelings. A part of the story tells us that Jem probably wants to be alone when he misses their mother or even has a problem. He looks sad, stays moody, and not talking for weeks. Fortunately, Atticus asks her daughter not to bother Jem and tries to feel if she is in Jem's position. Imaginating that he needs to go alone to Radley Place at two in the morning. Scout probably will act like her brother after going to Radley Place, which seems too mysterious. So, she obeys what her father tells her to do by not disturbing Jem and being a lovely sister to her brother.

“He remembered her clearly, and sometimes in the middle of a game he would sigh at length, then go off and play by himself behind the car-house. **When he was like that, I knew better than to bother him.**” (page 7, lines 16-20).

“**He seemed to be working himself into a bad humor, so I kept my distance.**” (page 83, lines 27-29).

“**Jem stayed moody and silent for a week.** As Atticus had once advised me to do, I tried to climb into Jam’s skin and walk around in it; if I had gone alone to Radley Place at two in the morning, my funeral would have been held next afternoon. **So I left Jem alone and tried not to bother him.**” (page 77, lines 1-6).

Scout also lets her imagination runs away. She says that actually, she is not Atticus daughter, that she is from Bullfinch family rather than Finch family. She also makes fun of Boo Radley by telling people that he is died and his family stuffs him up the chimney. It cannot be denied that it is not normal for a little girl to play with those kinds of words.

“Jem says I was. He read in a book where I was a Bullfinch instead of a Finch. Jem says my name’s really Jean Louse Bullfinch, **that I got swapped when I was born and I’m really a---**” (page 22, line 30-31)

“Maybe he died and **they stuffed him up the chimney.**” (page 57, line 33).

Scout does not like Calpurnia because she always asks her to do what she does not want. Sometimes, Calpurnia gives her punishment and threats her if she is naughty. Calpurnia does it because she wants to educate Scout. However, a little girl such as Scout dislikes being prohibited, scolded, and threatened. She does not realize that

Calpurnia does it for her kindness.

“Calpurnia bent down and kissed me. **I ran along, wondering what had come over her. She had come over her. She had wanted to make up with me, that was it. She had always been too hard on me, she had at last seen the error of her fractious ways, she was sorry and too stubborn to say so.** I was weary from the day’s crimes (page 38, line 30-35).

“Rather than risk a tangle with Calpurnia, I did as Jem told me. **For some reason, my first year of school had wrought a great change in our relationship: Calpurnia’s tyranny, unfairness, and meddling in my business had faded to gentle grumbling of general disapproval.** On my part, I went to much trouble, sometimes, not to provoke her.” (page 45, lines 14-20).

4.3 Appearance/Look

The author represented Scout as the main character who dressed as a little boy. She always wears *overall*, which are mainly worn by the boy. An overall is a type of garment which is usually used as protective clothing when working. Some call overalls a "pair of overalls" by analogy with a "pair of trousers". At the time, little girls wear skirts or dresses, not trousers. However, Scout does not like to wear them as her aunt demands; she loves to wear them overall as she always plays with Jem and Dill. If she wears a skirt or dress, it will limit her movement.

“But the only time I ever heard Atticus speak sharply to anyone was when I once heard him say, “Sister, I do the best I can with them!” **It had something to do with my going around in overall.**” (page 108, lines 1-4)

"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.**" (page 108, lines 5-9)

"And you--"she pointed an arthritic finger at me—"what are you doing in those overalls? **You should be address and camisole, young lady!** You'll grow up waiting on tables if somebody doesn't change your ways-a Finch waiting on tables at the O.K Cafe – hah!" (page 135, lines 14-18)

4.4 Statement by Other Characters/Narrator

A statement is what the narrator or other character says about the main character. By studying what they say, we can understand the main character's personality. Of course, in the novel, the narrator and the other characters have their own opinion about Scout, as stated in the following sentences:

“**Hotheadedness isn't. Scout's got to learn to keep her head and learn soon,** with what's in store for her these next few months. **She's coming along, though.** Jem’s getting older and **she follows hin example a good bit now. All she needs is assistance sometimes.**” (page 116, lines 12-17).

“I admit that. So far I’ve been able to get by with threats. Jack, **she minds me as well as she can. Doesn’t come up to scratch half the time, but she tries.**” (page 116, line 19-21).

“No, the answer is she knows I know she tries. That’s what makes the difference. What bother me is that she and Jem will have to absorb some ugly things pretty soon. I’am not worried about Jem keeping his head, **but Scout’s just as soon as jump on someone as look at him if her pride’s at stake....**” (page 116, line 23-28)

From other characters' opinions, we may know that Scout is a very temperamental girl. When her friends or relatives mock her, she quickly gets angry. Sometimes, she tries to cool down as she does not want her father to get disappointed if she fights with her friends. In addition, Atticus needs to be a good role model for her in order to make Scout changes her attitude. Surprisingly, Scout changes slowly and shows an outstanding behaviour change.

5. Conclusion

After analyzing the data, it was found that the character of Scout can be revealed from some features such as her action, thought, and words from the author. As people grow in life, they get mature and change. The same thing happens to Scout. She is childish and disrespectful at the beginning of the novel. However, she learned from her experiences throughout the novel. By the novel's end, she has a vital concern for others' feelings and starts to understand that she cannot always get what she wants, so she tries to understand the world around her.

The author shows that Scout, the main character in the novel that plays a leading role in the story, is also a nice girl, intelligent, helpful, brave, and obedient to his father. Sometimes, she acts as a temperamental girl, such as hitting and attacking her brother and friends when she wants to protect herself and cannot control her anger. In addition, as the main character, Scout has much influence on the story. Her existence makes the story more alive as she can interact well with other characters. Even though Scout is too young, she can act like an adult by speaking with a woman or man older than her. She can understand her brother's condition, as well. Those all personality behaviors are not a child's behavior. Scout learns through her own experiences.

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