

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

The issue of racism is a very familiar name in many field of study. America in particular, have been the most notably known as the source material for a study about racism. Unfortunately, as popular as it is, research and study about racism are always to some extent sugarcoated due to concerns of political correctness. In a recent op-ed in *The New York Times* in 2018, David Reich, a Harvard geneticist, argued that scientists are unwilling to do research on—or, in some cases, even discuss—genetic variation between human populations, despite the fact that genetic variations do exist. This piece received mixed reactions, drawing condemnation from social scientists because of its implication and praise from people approving the argument that discussion of racial differences has become taboo.

Although, this could not be helped at a time when white supremacists are openly marching in the streets of America. Perhaps, any writing that invokes the notion of racial study will inevitably sparks cultural war and political debate due to its sensitivity. But it is not always the case, “*To Kill a Mockingbird*” and “*Go Set a Watchman*” is an American classic novelette by Harper Lee that has endured almost six decade maintaining its success and popularity. Tom Santopietro on his book *Why ‘To Kill a Mockingbird’ Matters* published in 2018, argued that this novel success was due to its message that stands the test of time. On the other hand, some critics argues that this books only matters to white people who inexplicably still do not understand the ills of racism, and seemingly need this book to show them the

light. However, it could be argued that if the message was only about race relation, then this book would not be as popular as it is today. The question then become, how was race relation conveyed in the novel, and how much was it really matters in real world situation.

It is not to be an argument anymore that racism exists, it is truly one of the oldest truism around. Albeit that, it is still important to highlight social issues that is still relevant to date. Hence, there will always be a significance in reading and discussing literature written about racial relation. In accordance, this study seeks to critically read and discuss *Go Set a Watchman* by Harper Lee using Lucien Goldmann's genetic structuralism theory in order to see how the text could be seen as a reflection of the society through the work of the author.

According to Luxemburg, a fictional world is a world that is not a part of reality, but in some aspects it is also similar with reality. When an author expresses their imagination, to create an imaginary universe filled with an imaginary characters that does not exist in our reality, there is still a particular relatability with the characters and their journey that we could relate with our own experiences (Luxemburg, et al. 1989, 20).

It is not a coincidence that we could relate to those fictional characters, and that is because literature is a product of human activity, born from human desire to understand, express, and to share their experiences with others (Pickering and Hoepfer 1981, 307). In addition, according to Eagleton, these experiences are the product of their interaction with their society (Bressler 1999, 218), in other word the society shapes the form of literature that the author wrote, and the author wrote

the ideas that he acquired from the society. In addition, Glickberg said that a literary work, does not matter how nihilistic it seems, was born because of a profound social concerns (Endraswara 2011, 77).

*Go Set a Watchman* novel by Harper Lee is a literary work that is deeply influenced by the author's social background and historical background. Harper Lee wrote the draft for *Go Set a Watchman* novel in 1954, around the time where the Supreme Court was preparing to take a decision on Brown v. Board of Education case. The decision was taken by the Supreme Court to make segregation in public school illegal, and this decision upsets the people in the southern states of America, including Harper Lee's hometown in Alabama. The reaction to this decision became one of the major plot point in *Go Set a Watchman* novel.

The author of *Go Set a Watchman* novel, Harper Lee, as previously mentioned, was brought up in this world and lives most of her life in Alabama. Harper Lee was born as the daughter of Amasa Finch Lee and Frances Finch Lee, who both could be considered as progressive parent at the time. Being born in a white family, which is a clear privilege at the time, Harper Lee could experience things that most people cannot at that time. Harper Lee could afford education up to the university level, and moves out to New York to achieve her dream as an author. All of these experiences then poured into a novel titled *Go Set a Watchman*.

*Go Set a Watchman* was written by Harper Lee and was confirmed to be the first draft of the American classic and Pulitzer winning novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*. *Go Set a Watchman* was written with her hometown Monroeville, Alabama as her inspiration, as Harper Lee's have confirmed that the novel was

loosely based on her experience living as a white southerner in America. The novel provides an honest, and often uncomfortable, depiction of America especially in the south in 1950s. Michiko Kakutani, a Pulitzer award winner for criticism, in 2015 wrote off this book as a “distressing narrative that is meant to capture the extreme prejudice that could exist in small towns in the Deep South in the 1950s.”

The novel tells us a story about the journey of Jean Louise Finch, who went on an annual visit to her hometown in Maycomb, Alabama after working for a while in New York. Instead of warm welcome, Jean Louise felt like she was a stranger in her hometown, because the people that she think she knew suddenly become a stranger to her. All of those people that she thinks she knew, suddenly became more racist than ever. Feeling uneasy because of the worsening racial relation in her hometown, she seeks for an answer from all of those people that she used to know.

It is already established that in the novel *Go Set a Watchman*, historical event and social condition of the author do influence the text in a major way. In accordance, it opens up the possibility of *Go Set a Watchman* to be researched by using approach of sociology of literature, which in this study will be conducted by using by using Lucien Goldmann genetic structuralism theory. This theory was chosen because this theory was deemed to be appropriate in this situation, in a way that this theory does not only focus on the text for its analysis, but also on the historical and social conditions that produced the text.

Genetic structuralism theory aims to reveal the author’s worldview expressed in the literary text that could only be seen after doing an analysis on the intrinsic element of the literary work, the author’s social background, and the sociological

and historical background influence at the time the work was written (Faruk, *Strukturalisme - Genetik* 1986). Genetic structuralism believes that understanding only the structure, or the intrinsic element of the novel, without considering the author's presence would not produce a meaningful and coherent analysis (Goldmann, *Towards a Sociology of the Novel* 1975).

Author's world view is a concept introduced in genetic structuralism theory referring to the ideas, aspirations, and feelings that unite a particular group, which is expressed in the novel by the author as a collective subject. Genetic structuralism method to reveal the author's world view is called as "whole-part" and "comprehension-explanation" method. In brief, "whole-part" method means understanding the structure of the novel, while "comprehension-explanation" method means we must relate the structure of the novel with the author's social structure.

Although *Go Set a Watchman* was published in 2015, four year later this year in 2019 the novel has not been gaining many attention from the scholars. Despite that, the existing researches and studies that has been done by some scholars on this novel were quite diverse and interesting. One of the more common topic to be found on this novel was discussion about racial prejudice against black American. As seen in Abielah study in 2016 and Rahayuningsih study in 2017 that covers similar topic, which are the prejudice in economic, politic, and law. The content and conclusion on both study were quite similar in which both are pointing out prejudices happened in the novel. Other scholars studying this novel were Krol and Yuliani, whose research focused on the characterization in the novel. Yuliani study in 2018 focused

on the characterization of mainstream American in the novel, and reached a conclusion that their character was heavily influenced by individualism ideology. On the other hand, Krol study in 2016 focused on one character instead, which is Jean Louise, and reached a conclusion that Jean Louise was influenced mostly by her father rather than her society.

Reference regarding the application of genetic structuralism theory could be seen in the thesis by Gustaf Sitepu titled *Strukturalisme Genetik Asmaraloka*, which used Goldmann's genetic structuralism theory on *Asmaraloka* novel in 2009. Gustaf thesis is interesting because his analysis does not stop on the novel *Asmaraloka*, but also continued on the author's other various work, in relation to the author's social context. In addition, Gustaf also added extra step using linguistic theory to analyze the most frequent word that is used in the novel by the author as a supporting claim. The thesis conclusion was drawn from the combination of genetic structuralism theory and linguistic theory, resulting in the conclusion that *Asmaraloka* novel was highly influenced by the conflicts surrounding Indonesia's government and religious group.

Unfortunately, there are limited discussion on the novel using genetic structuralism theory. Therefore, one of the goals of this study is to fill in the gap and by doing an analysis on the novel using genetic structuralism theory, consequently would contribute something new to the discussion. The difference between these studies with the existing one is that this discussion will focus more on the ideological aspect in the novel by relating the structure of the literary work

with the structure of the author's society, while the existing discussions are focused more on the literary aspect of the novel.

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

In accordance with the Background of the Study that has been formulated before, this study will be aiming to critically examining Harper Lee's novel *Go Set a Watchman* by using Genetic Structuralism approach developed by Lucien Goldmann to reveal the author's worldview. Therefore, the formulation of the statement of the problem is as follow:

How do the intrinsic elements, author's social background, and historical background leading up to the novel, to reveal the author's world view in *Go Set a Watchman*?

### **1.3 Objective of the Study**

Following the Statement of the Problem and the aims of the study mentioned above, the objective of the study is as follow:

To achieve the coherence of meaning between intrinsic elements, author's social background, and historical background leading up to the novel, and reveals the author's world view in *Go Set a Watchman*.

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

Theoretically this study aims to be useful and contribute to the disciplines of literary sciences. Whether it is to help another research to understand the application of genetic structuralism to a literary text, or helping another researcher that researched on *Go Set a Watchman*.

Practically this study aims to deepen the readers understanding on the effects and consequence of social conflict. Additionally, when the readers are aware of the social conflict around themselves, hopefully they could respond to it appropriately and sympathize with the victim of social conflict.

### 1.5 Definition of Key Terms

- Social Conflict : Struggle of the conflict groups to claim status, power, and values. (Coser, *Continuities in The Study of Social Conflict* 1967, 232)
- Racism : Ideology that the subordinate racial group is inherently inferior to the dominant racial group. (Bobo and Fox 2003, 319)
- Problematic Character : Character searching for values within a problematic world. (Goldmann, *Towards a Sociology of the Novel* 1975, 2)
- Prejudice : Unfavorable attitude towards a certain identity group because of their class or race. (Mclemore 1983, 108)