

**PARENTING STYLE OF ATTICUS FINCH
IN HARPER LEE'S *TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD* NOVEL (1960):
A BEHAVIORIST PERSPECTIVE**



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ABSTRACT

This research paper elaborates the parenting style of Atticus Finch in Harper Lee's 'To Kill a Mockingbird' novel. This is analyzed through Behaviorist perspective. The objectives of the study are to analyze the structural elements of the novel, the characteristics, the type, and the impacts of parenting style inside the novel. The researcher applies qualitative research in conducting this research. The primary data are taken from the text inside novel and the secondary data are taken from other data related to the research. The method for analyzing data is descriptive analysis. After analyzing novel, the researcher found a conclusion. Based on the behavioral analysis, it is clear that in this novel, the author illustrates a psychological phenomenon in which an individual is very much influenced by the environment, either at home, schools, or other kinds of environment. One of environment elements which gives impact on child's personality is parenting style. Parenting style is one of stimulus forms in shaping behavior, habit, and providing model which becomes reference of child's personality.

Keywords: parenting style, behaviorist, Baumrind, Atticus Finch, personality.

A. Introduction

A story about the style of parenting of a single parent named Atticus Finch can be read in a novel entitled *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960) written by Harper Lee. A single parent named Atticus Finch should take care of his two children by himself because his wife died when his second children was two years old. He has one boy named Jeremy Atticus Finch or Jem Finch, who is

10 years old and a 6 years old daughter named Jean Louise Finch or Scout Finch. Here, Atticus Finch tries to complete his role as mother and father in order that Jem and Scout Finch get love from figure of father and mother. Although he cannot be mother and father in same time, but Atticus Finch always teach everything good that he knows by his own ways.

Based on the background of the study above, the researcher proposes a problem statement. The problem is what the type of parenting style is practiced by Atticus Finch? Then the objective is to analyze the parenting style which is used practiced by Atticus Finch.

The researcher got some research paper as literature reviews. First is Feni. She is from Andalas University. Her research paper (2010) focused on racial prejudice and discrimination by White Southerners toward the Black in Alabama during 1930s as reflected in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Then, some students from North Sumatra University also conducted research papers. Saragih (2010) focused on the Sigmund Freud's theory in Harper Lee's novel: *To Kill the Mocking Bird*. Next is Wendy Saragih (2010) focused on analysis of American social condition in the middle of 20th century viewed in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Tampubolon (2010) focused on moral values found in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Simanjuntak (2011) focused on prejudice in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Students from Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta also have analyzed *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Novita (2011) focused on racial injustice in the Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* Novel. Purnomo (2013) focused on against racial injustice in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Winarni (2013) focused on affection and prejudice in *To Kill a Mockingbird* Novel by Harper Lee.

Some people also have reviewed *To Kill a Mockingbird* from scholarly journals. Chura (2000) compared the fictional trial in *To Kill a Mockingbird* and the trial of Emmett Till entitled *1955*. Hall (2011) discussed

the limitation of Southern liberalism and real life of Alabama. Eckard (2012) focused on closeted traditions and sexual curiosities in Harper Lee's novel.

The researcher finds underlying theory related to the issue. Baumrind defines three parenting styles. They are authoritarian, permissive, and authoritative. Each parenting style has different indicators. Authoritative parents have social responsible, rational control, relative freedom of choice, and social responsibility. They tend to be cooperative. Baumrind (in Ellis, 2005: 19) defines results indicated that the children of authoritative parents were more mature, independent, friendly, active, and achievement-oriented than children raised under other types of parenting styles.

B. Research Method

This is library study which is analyzed by descriptive analysis. Type of data in this library study is text. This study uses two types of data sources, such as primary data and secondary data. Primary data is *To Kill a Mockingbird* novel and secondary data is another data related to the novel. Then, the researcher conducts the research by note taking. She takes important note from internet, library, and bookstores. After taking important note, the researcher takes some actions to analyze data. First is looks for some literary theories. Then, she chooses the most interesting theory. Next is she looks for interesting novel and reads it much times. After gets the main point, she analyzes it by applying secondary data.

C. Research Findings and Discussion

The researcher finds some results after analyzing the novel by using Behaviorist perspective. First finding is demands and chores. Scout and Jem are curious about Mr. Arthur Radley. One day, Jem and Scout write a letter for Mr. Arthur Radley. They decide to insert it from the window of side house. They insert it by using a fish hook. They think this is the best way for knowing Mr. Arthur Radley, but not for Atticus. He grabs that letter and asks

them to go home. Atticus tells them that is impolite and does not respect Mr. Arthur's privacy. He asks them not to disturb Mr. Nathan Radley anymore.

Next finding is obedience. Scout has talked with Atticus about her temperament. Atticus does not like it and wants her to keep her emotion or she will get punishment. Because of this, Scout tries not to quarrel with Cecil although her fists are ready to fly. Then, she leaves Cecil alone.

The third finding is high behavioral control. Scout and Jem are curious about Mr. Arthur Radley. One day, Jem and Scout write a letter for Mr. Arthur Radley. They decide to insert it from the window of side house. They insert it by using a fish hook. They think this is the best way for knowing Mr. Arthur Radley, but not for Atticus. He grabs that letter and asks them to go home. Atticus tells them that is impolite and does not respect Mr. Arthur's privacy. If they want to know Mr. Arthur well, they can knock his front door and become guest.

Next is the fourth finding. It is rules and order. Children are children. They cannot differentiate good and bad for sure. They just do what they think it is true. Actually, Scout and Jem are curious about Mr. Arthur Radley. They know him as a spooky man who always spends his time at home. One day, Jem and Scout write a letter for Mr. Arthur Radley. The letter said that they want to know him more and will not hurt him. His home is always closed, so they decide to insert it from the window of side house. They insert it by using a fish hook. They think this is the best way for knowing Mr. Arthur Radley, but not for Atticus. He grabs that letter and asks them to go home. Atticus tells them that is impolite and does not respect Mr. Arthur's privacy. If they want to know Mr. Arthur well, they can knock his front door and become guest.

The next finding is shaping and reinforcement. Atticus never hurts Jem and Scout in shaping their personality. He tends to give praise for their brilliant ideas and anger when they have mistake.

The finding number six is cooperative. Scout has talked with Atticus about her temperament. Atticus does not like it and wants her to keep her

emotion or she will get punishment. Because of this, Scout tries not to quarrel with Cecil although her fists are ready to fly. Then, she leaves Cecil alone.

Then, number seven is rational control. Jem and Scout have bad temperament, but Scout is worse than Jem. She againsts everyone who talks about her family negatively. Cecil says in front of Scout that Atticus is 'nigger-lover' many times. Actually, she does not know the meaning, but the way how Cecil says makes her angry. When she says to Atticus, he just wants her to keep her emotion as well as she can.

Next finding is self-assertiveness. Scout has talked with Atticus about her temperament. Atticus does not like it and wants her to keep her emotion or she will get punishment. Because of this, Scout tries not to quarrel with Cecil although her fists are ready to fly. Then, she leaves Cecil alone.

Meeting needs is the finding number nine. Actually, Atticus Finch is a single parent who provides freedom for his children. He always let them do what they want. He realizes that children need freedom for their better future. They have to grow as it should be. Jem and Scout spend their holiday and after school time by playing and having new experiences all day long. Atticus never bans them to do what they want but after arriving home or having dinner, he will ask them what they have done all day long. He will become good listener for every story of Jem and Scout. Then, he will end the story by giving praise or some advices.

Then, warmth is finding number ten. Jem and Scout spend their holiday and after school time by playing and having new experiences all day long. Atticus never bans them to do what they want but after arriving home or having dinner, he will ask them what they have done all day long or what they have learnt at school. He will become good listener for every story of Jem and Scout. Then, he will end the story by giving praise or some advices.

The next finding is give and take discussions. Atticus always has discussion with Jem or Scout after dinner. At the end of their discussion, they make an agreement about something.

The last finding is independent thinking. Scout, Jem, and Dill insert their letter for Mr. Nathan Radley from his window. Atticus knows that and angry with them. From that long statement, Scout and Jem realize that what they do is impolite and should not be done again.

Atticus Finch works as lawyer in a little city in Alabama named Maycomb County. He lives with two children, Jem and Scout, his cook named Calpurnia. Being single parent is quite difficult but he tries the best he can do.

Jem and Scout are curious about everything new for them. Mr. Nathan Radley is one of the unique things for them. They want to know him and send him a letter through his window. Atticus knows and he is angry to them. Through this event, Atticus gives Jem and Scout rules and order and demand and chores about what they should and should not do. Atticus also can control the activity of them. He also tries to raise their independent thinking. It means they have to think first before say or take an action.

Besides curious, Jem and Scout also have bad temperament. But the worst control is Scout. Atticus asks her to turn down her anger whatever everyone says to her about Atticus. When she hears Cecil says something about Atticus, she tries to control her emotion. Finally, she leaves her alone although Scout wants to hit her so much. Here, Scout obeys Atticus and shows her cooperation with her father. She uses her rational control in turning down her emotion. It means she has high self-assertiveness because she can turn down her emotion.

In school, Scout has problem with her teacher and shares it with Atticus. He provides special time for his children in order that they can share everything and he can also supervise them. It means Atticus shows his care, warmth, and provides meeting needs to his children.

Those activities make the personality of Jem and Scout become better. Jem becomes more mature when Scout and Dill want to become the first player. Then, Jem asks Scout as first player and gives extra time for Dill.

Scout also becomes active to ask Atticus many questions when she does not understand about something.

D. Conclusions and Implications

After taking several times to analyze novel entitled *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the researcher finds a conclusion. Based on the behavioral analysis, it is clear that in this novel, the author illustrates a psychological phenomenon in which an individual is very much influenced by the environment, either at home, schools, or other kinds of environment. One of environment unsure which gives impact on child personality is parenting style. Parenting style is one of stimulus forms in shaping behavior, habit, and providing model. It becomes reference of child personality.

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