

ABSTRACT

The aim of this diploma thesis is to analyse and compare Harper Lee's canonical coming-of-age novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* to its original forerunner, the novel *Go Set a Watchman*, which was, however, published several years later. The theoretical part provides a brief synopsis of each of the novels and outlines Lee's life, as well as the main aspects of the historical and social background relevant to the stories, namely the Great Depression, Jim Crow laws, and the Scottsboro Trial. The practical part then investigates and juxtaposes the two novels from thematic and structural perspectives, and considers them specifically through the psychological, sociological, and stylistic prisms. Besides, it compares the factual similarities and differences in storylines and characters, who are often based on Lee's real-life acquaintances. The overall comparison shows how *To Kill a Mockingbird*, a gently tuned novel of children growing up yet packed with diverse topics, evolved from a rather intricate novel, *Go Set a Watchman*, dealing with a difficult task of one's individuation and realising that one's father is only a human. *To Kill a Mockingbird* is set in the 1930s and takes place over several years, while the story of *Go Set a Watchman* is situated some twenty years later, and its plot culminates in the course of a few days. Last but not least, unlike the first novel, which employs the first-person narration, the second novel makes use of the third-person narration.