

International Baccalaureate

Group 2 Category 3

Extended Essay English B

**Research Question:** In what ways does Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee 's play '*Inherit the Wind*' reflect the effect of religious bigotry in the fictional town Hillsboro?

Bigotry; the fact of having and expressing strong, unreasonable beliefs and disliking other people who have different opinions or a difference in life<sup>1</sup>. In the play, 'Inherit the Wind' by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee, the concept of bigotry is depicted with the reflection of religious belief. 'Evolutionism' descent with modification from preexisting species: cumulative inherited change in a population of organisms through time leading to the appearance of new forms: the process by which new species or populations of living things develop from preexisting forms through successive generations.<sup>2</sup> 'Creationism' a doctrine or theory holding that matter, the various forms of life, and the world were created by God out of nothing and usually in the way described in Genesis.<sup>3</sup> The depiction of bigotry is mainly based around these two concepts clashing with each other which both bring different perspectives upon the development of the human life. In the play, the fictional town of Hillsboro, thought to be based around South or Midwest America, holds one of the biggest trials 'Tennessee vs. Scopes' in which this clash is explored heavily.

Due to the political situation and the postwar period, American people's mindset and economic situation changed drastically. Current state of the economy was in the verge of dipping, and the stock market was rising. These changes generated a situation in which different approaches regarding different topics were questioned. People who were able to adapt themselves effectively to these changes and accepted the globalized modern approach, were able to proceed the increasing life standards. Conservative side, on the other hand, did not have the capability to adapt these adjustments which were taking over the world.

---

<sup>1</sup> Bigotry, Cambridge University Dictionary, Web. , 24<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2019, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/tr/s%C3%B6zl%C3%BCk/ingilizce/bigotry>

<sup>2</sup> Evolution, Merriam-Webster Dictionary, Web. , 24<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2019, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/evolution>

<sup>3</sup> Creationism, Merriam-Webster Dictionary, Web. , 24<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2019, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/creationism>

In the middle of the rapid growth of the scientific approaches, modernists managed to cope with the evolutionist theories and tried to beat the bigoted way that was forced on the conservative side of America. The fundamentals of this way of thought begun in the Middle Age in Europe where scholastic thinking was conventional and the church had the rule power to manipulate people. On top of that, fundamentalists pressured the local people not to come across against the Bible. As the manipulative government was aiming for the same, their interest was combined and resulted as certain laws forbidding any kind of scientific teaching. Whilst, the evolution theory put forward by Charles Darwin.

Considering the fact that, the effect of transportation, migration, and industrialization, other significant improvements were not as functional as in locations like the South part of the United States of America, the people who live there did not have the chance to adapt these powerful changes, therefore, were considerably more conservative and bigoted than other parts of America. As a result of these dominant factors, the people of the United States of America have divided into two parts which can be described as adapters and non-adapters. The ones who can be identified as adapters are the ones who live in metropolitans and are the ones who are surrounded with different approaches and perspectives regarding different issues. The non-adapters, on the other hand, are the ones who are discouraged to consider any opposing ideas upon their thoughts and accept whatever has been said to them since they grew up.

The trial, '*Tennessee v. John Thomas Scopes*'<sup>4</sup> also known as the 'monkey trial' is the event that inspired Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee to come up with this play. The play 'Inherit the Wind' can be described as the fictional replica of this trial which took place in the fictional town of Hillsboro and in both the real-life trial and the play identify the problematic situation

---

<sup>4</sup> History.com Authors, Scopes Trial, A&E Television Networks, November 17. 2017, Web., February 27 2019, <https://www.history.com/topics/roaring-twenties/scopes-trial>

regarding the clash between creationism and evolutionism. This real-life event occurred in Tennessee, a state located in the south of America which is completely parallel to the play and is considered to be a conservative part of America during this time. The similarity between this real-life trial and fictional trial that take place between the government and Bertram Cates. The government uses religious beliefs to manipulate and persuade people's thoughts. Concerning the play, the politician named Matthew Harrison Brady represents the conservative religious approach concerning politics and is capable of using religion to manipulate the rural areas of America. However, metropolitans that are located mainly on the East side of America are not too keen on the religious approach and because of their geopolitical location, they receive different perspectives and ideologies which push them to question the reliability of the church. Considering the fact that, politicians are not capable of being everywhere at every time, they require people who are capable of fooling people with the power of religion. In the play, this character is perfectly depicted with Reverend Brown. Reverend Brown is the man who deals with the church and has religious authority which he uses to manipulate the town's people and making them ignorant. People of Hillsboro do not question his authority or whether what he says to them is accurate or not which makes us consider them as religiously bigoted.

In act one, a conversation that takes place between Melinda and Howard, who were the local kids of Hillsboro and also Howard was studied science in the class of Bertram Cates, is somewhat unusual and could be defined as the situation of bigotry affecting the little kids.

*“Howard: What're you skeered of? You was a worm once!*

*Melinda: (shocked) I wasn't neither.*

*Howard: You was so. When the whole world was covered with water. There was nothin', but worms and blobs of jelly and you and your whole family was worms!” (Lawrence, Lee, 4).*

In this scene of the play, Melinda who is a natural member of the conservative, religious and the bigoted town's people, arguing with a teenager named Howard who can be seen as a kid who is thrilled with what he has learned in Bertram Cates' class because it is the absolute opposite of what he has been raised with. Melinda is not used to the fact of how Howard denies the theory put forward by the Holy book of Bible which is the idea of creationism. Melinda can be a perfect example of bigotry starting from a young age, and people are manipulated with the significant help of religion and made to become ignorant to other ideologies and perspectives. Towns located in South and Middle America were especially counted on religious approach rather than the scientific approach. This situation can be explained by the fact of, the burdens of not following the significant improvements that are done in the fields of industrialization or education in these parts of America. Depending on the quotation, given above from Act 1, lack of education or in other words, not modern education is a massive problem in these parts of America. As in this incident that aspired, this play took place at the beginning of 20th century, the current state of these parts of America is contradicting with other parts of the country which are going through intense changes that change the way people's perspective upon issues like education. In the fictional town of Hillsboro, the conservative and religious education system is valid and applied. On the other hand, other parts of America which have been introduced to different types of educational systems from different parts of Europe, take a different route in the field of knowledge. As these parts of America can be defined as metropolitans, they encounter different cultures and relationships throughout the world, and they receive lots of immigrants from different parts of Europe who bring different ideologies regarding the field of education. These teachers, professors and also scientists immigrate to America to develop their ideas upon different subjects in different fields of interest. In the play, the major conflict that we can see can be described as the battle between creationists and evolutionists. Another fact to consider is that evolution is the theory that was stated by a biologist who holds a great role

in the field of biology, Charles Darwin. Charles Darwin is an English scientist. He is a man who has a great impact on the issue that took place in the fictional town of Hillsboro. The theories and opinion that this man had put forward were easily caught up by the specific parts of America which can be classified as metropolitans. It can be said that, as they were metropolitans which have taken lots of immigrants from different parts of the world, the ideologies spread relatively easier than other parts of America as in the case of the fictional town of Hillsboro which is set to be located in South or Middle America. Another key factor is that transportation holds a crucial role in transferring ideas throughout a state or a country. History shows us that countries which are improved in the field of transportation were in a better state than the ones that were not as improved as them. American government at this time of history were mainly focused on metropolitans regarding the field of transportation. These significant improvements, enabled metropolitans to adapt these scientific approaches in a more enhanced way. Scientists who immigrated to America have especially chosen the developed parts of the country on purpose, therefore, leaving the other parts to be content with the topic that has been with them for years which is religion. As they do not receive any immigrants in the field of science or education. They do not receive any contrary ideas upon religion, which is the ground where they have based their fundamental educational system on. The town of Hillsboro is a town that does not receive any contradicting ideas upon their perspective in education. They have set their mindset as humanity has achieved where they are now with the theory that has been put forward by the Bible which is called creationism and people who believe it was called creationists. Bertram Cates, a science teacher in the town of Hillsboro, can be identified as a breakthrough concerning the field education. He has taught his class Charles Darwin's theory of evolution which is strictly against what they have learned from their parents. As they have grown with a conservative and a religious education system they did not understand this theory which is against the theory that has been put forward by the bible. With

the given quotation that takes place at the beginning of the play, we see a teenager named Howard who has been impressed by this theory that conflicts with everything that he has been told in his entire world, therefore, finds it to be enlightening. The girl named Melinda on the other hand, has accepted what she has been told from her childhood which is the conservative and religious approach, he finds Howard to be a sinner and believes that everything that is against the Bible's way of saying is unacceptable and their community, the town of Hillsboro, does not accept these as credible and valid. This specific conversation that we can observe between these two kids shows us that the people of Hillsboro were grown with a bigoted and a biased approach and did not receive any contrary ideas upon their perspective because of their geopolitical location which denies them of these rapid improvements. *"Now tell me. Do you feel that every word that's written in this book should be taken literally? Everything in the Bible should be accepted, exactly as it is given there."* (Lawrence, Lee, 87). Seeing that, Brady clearly states that the Bible is the only source to gather knowledge from, it is clear that the people in Hillsboro do not receive anything that is inconsistent with the ideas given in the Bible. Geopolitical location is an essential factor in this bigotry as the only way to access more knowledge is via the help of outsiders that can introduce you to these different approaches and perspectives.

Due to this critical quotation from Act one, *"The man who has everything figured out is probably a fool."* (Lawrence, Lee, 55) which can be considered as a great example of the people of Hillsboro and their bigoted way of education and life. As the people of Hillsboro, only accept the religious approach on every topic they all believe that their all-world is figured out and they do not need to seek any answer for anything as the answers are already provided in the Bible. The unavoidable bigotry is again observed in this powerful quotation. Humanity's evolvement can be seen as a mystery that still to this day is not figured out. In the past, there have been certain times where people have chosen to believe in the church and not question any other

perspective that contradicts with the Bible or the church. They were comfortable with being provided all the answers that they sought from a religious point of view and did not feel to be skeptical about anything that has been going around them. As time passed, the value of researching and questioning the religious approaches was understood. It has been assumed that not only a biased but also a bigoted perspective did not make people achieve better but just made them stay where they are and be the puppets of the church or the religious authorities. Just sticking to a certain point of view or an idea will lead the society to be less productive. The town of Hillsboro, because of their geopolitical location, did not receive any skeptical ideas contrasting with their preferred and accepted religious beliefs. In the past scholastic way of thinking exploited the society and all they acknowledged was what Pope and his Christian comrades have declared to them. This has created the religious belief that we see in the town of Hillsboro and several other towns across the South and Middle America, creationism. In the fictional town of Hillsboro, Reverend Brown can be seen as both the religious and communal leader of the society. This community generally accepts his sayings regarding what the Bible says. Like scholastic approach, people of Hillsboro did not query the Bible and accepted almost everything that it means. Drummond is trying to point out the fact that freedom of thought and the ability to question to achieve the accurate information is vital and the people of Hillsboro need to defeat their religious bigotry which human being alleges to know everything and connecting it to Bible is not accurate and can be seen as an ignorant attempt.

The second act of the play is the literal representation of the battle between the freedom of thought and religious bigotry. The second act holds one of the most significant conflicts between two extraordinary human beings who represent different sides. Henry Drummond, who is a highly respected attorney of the time, is in an encounter with the politician Brady who is on the side of religious thought. This trial can be described as the parts of America that were not so affected by the rapid changes, and their freedom of thought is allowed. The expression



'freedom of thought' is actually whether people can have different ideas about different issues. In the case of the play, the teacher is imprisoned since he has chosen to believe the scientific approach upon the evolvement of humanity. On the other hand, the state claims that it is illegal for people even to consider a different approach than the Bible; therefore, the biggest trial of all times takes place. Drummond is sent from New York which is located in the East part of America and can be considered as the leading metropolitan. With the drastic changes in perspectives, the people who live in metropolitans are aware of the fact that people that live in areas which are not supported with capable transportation and has not caught along with the changes that industrialization and migration have provided the metropolitans.

Drummond, who believes in the freedom of thought and the scientific approach, is determined to protect the people of the town of Hillsboro. He tries to enlighten the people that the government and the state are manipulating them by the use of religion. In the trial that argues the freedom of thought, during his speech Drummond makes a point which establishes how people were manipulated and made to become religiously bigoted.

*"I am trying to establish, Your Honor, that Howard-or Colonel Brady- or Charles Darwin- or anyone else in this courtroom-or you, sir-has the right to think! "(Lawrence, Lee, 71).*

With this quotation, we can observe the fact that, the state has taken a right away from the people of Hillsboro and left them with a bigoted way of life. Using the advantage of the fact that they are not able to benefit from the enormous changes regarding urbanization has made the state benefit from these minds with the help of manipulating religion. Drummond points out the fact that people of Hillsboro deserve the chance to be able to be taught what they want, think what they want and believe in what they want. He is sure of the fact that as they do not receive any contrary ideas, their manipulation starts from a young age. He gives the jury the example of the little boy Howard who Bertram Cates has taught the evolution theory. It can be said that

no matter what age you are at you deserve the ability to think what you want or believe in what you want and express yourself the way you desire.

In Act Two, Scene II, Drummond tries to beat the bigoted and the fundamentalist way of thought seen on the likes of Brady and a serious number of people in Hillsboro. He slaps the courtroom with the capability of the human intelligence and what mankind can achieve. The quotation given below, explains Drummond's perspective upon this issue. The main clash of the play is clearly in sight: evolutionism versus creationism. He gets the control of the trial by impressing and convincing the townspeople and exposing the contradictions under their too easily accepted beliefs. With the implementation of the political powers and the press, Brady and his government manipulated the people of Hillsboro for a long time. The courtroom was filled with people who were blindly accepting what Brady has been saying them for many years. Brady believed that he had the advantage of the ignorant people and the superiority of the fundamentalist approach over the scientific approach. At the end of the trial, Drummond exposed the major controversies that Brady has in his defense about the creationist way of thinking. On paper, he may not have won the trial but Drummond managed to indorse the people of Hillsboro by proving that human mind has no limits.

*“The individual human mind. In a child's power to master the multiplication table, there is more sanctity than in all your shouted "Amens!", "Holy, Holies!" and "Hosannahs!" An idea is a more magnificent monument than a cathedral. And the advance of man's knowledge is more of a miracle than any sticks turned to snakes or the parting of waters!” (Lawrence, Lee, 93)*

With this part of his speech in the court, we can identify the fact that Drummond tries to bring up that not everything is told in the Bible needs to be correct, and individual scientific researches completely disagree what is said in the Bible. People of Hillsboro have been affected by the scholastic way of thinking for a serious amount of time and do not grasp the fact that religious

explanations can always be refuted and may not still hold accurate answers. Ignorant and conservative people in the town, in the end, observe the fact that religion may not always have the answers that they seek.

In the play, Brady states that the scientific approach that Southern and Middle side of America has believed to be the answers that they seek, is the path that drives the human mind to lose its individuality. Conservative representation of the people of United States of America is manipulated to the belief that, scientific approach is the way that people claiming to be futuristic trying to blast the religious approach and therefore is not credible. In the fictional town of Hillsboro, Matthew Harrison Brady tries to force the idea that science is an area that is only there to clash with the religious approach. With him imposing them the idea of an evil scientific approach, the people of Hillsboro became religiously bigoted.

*“I have been to their cities and I have seen the altars upon which they sacrifice the futures of their children to the gods of science. And what are their rewards? Confusion and self-destruction. New ways to kill each other in wars. I tell you gentlemen the way of science is the way of darkness.”<sup>5</sup>*

Brady depicts the scientific approach as “*darkness*”. This clarifies the fact that, the conservative government utilizes science as a path that leads to evil and is the term that people of Hillsboro should avoid to be in contact with. Bertram Cates, a representation of the scientific approach, is thought to be violating the sacred rules that the government has put forward. People are made to have confidence in the Bible without actually knowing its content. Bertram Cates’ approach from the perspective of science is known to be sinful and is not allowed by the government. Brady also states that the advancements that are done in the field of science only leads to

---

- <sup>5</sup> Lawrence, Jerome, and Robert E. Lee. *Inherit the Wind*. New York: Ballantine Books, 2003. Print.

confusion and self-destruction. By stating that it creates confusion, he suggests that with science improving day by day it becomes threatening to the ideas that are put forward by the church and the government. For them to keep on manipulating the town's people it is essential that scientific approaches must not go on in the case that people may start to believe in the power of science and destroy the manipulation by the government that is used to control their ideas. With the quotation given above, we can also grasp the fact that, Brady defines the advancements in science as "*new ways to kill each other in wars*". He and the conservative government that he represents hold on to the idea that scientific improvements are the key factors that dragged the society into military action. People of Hillsboro accept this to be the inevitable truth and do not find the need to question what Brady declares to them.

In the Middle Age, scholastic approach to certain realities regarding different topics were accepted to be the blind truth, and everyone who denies the Bible or the church was described as sinners or blasphemous. The scholastic approach, throughout the centuries, has been fought by several people concerning the fields like science, astronomy or arts. The manipulated people of the church blindly denied these people's thoughts and did not value their views to be credible nor valid. In the fictional town Hillsboro, we can observe the inevitable scholastic approach that has taken over the town's people. As they are manipulated by the characters like Reverend Brown and Matthew Harrison Brady which both represent different themes one being the government that uses the conservative and the religious approach to manage people intolerant to other perspectives and the other one is the tool that the government uses to sustain this manipulation. In the play 'Inherit the Wind' Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee, carve out the ever-lasting clash between the ideas of evolutionism and creationism and how the drastic changes that conquered America did not affect some parts and how the blasphemous way of thinking is still active and how people were made to become religiously bigoted.

**Word Count: 3991**

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bigotry, Cambridge University Dictionary, Web. , 24<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2019,  
<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/tr/s%C3%B6z%C3%BCk/ingilizce/bigotry>
  
- Evolution, Merriam-Webster Dictionary, Web. , 24<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2019,  
<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/evolution>
  
- Creationism, Merriam-Webster Dictionary, Web. , 24<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2019,  
<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/creationism>
  
- History.com Authors, Scopes Trial, A&E Television Networks, November 17. 2017,  
Web., February 27 2019, <https://www.history.com/topics/roaring-twenties/scopes-trial>
  
- Lawrence, Jerome, and Robert E. Lee. *Inherit the Wind*. New York: Ballantine Books, 2003. Print.

