

To kill a mocking bird



To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee is an inspiring and thought-provoking novel, written to challenge the human mind. Racial prejudice, conflict and the Maycomb locals'™ personal beliefs are major themes that are seen throughout the novel and are the topics that will be discussed throughout this essay. As local lawyer Atticus Finch takes on the case of accused rapist Tom Robinson, conflict arises, as the Maycomb locals show how they really feel. This novel should inspire people to not judge a book by its cover and embrace the process of change with your society. Being called a disgrace to the world, how would you feel Racial prejudice is one of the major themes woven throughout the novel.

Racial prejudice becomes a major issue throughout Maycomb as soon as local lawyer, Atticus Finch, takes on the case of Tom Robinson. Prejudice is said to be 'the Maycombs usual disease'™. A situation that racial prejudice is most present is the trial of Tom Robinson.

In his trial, Tom Robinson is misjudged and mistreated because of the colour of his skin. An example of this is when Tom's™ prosecutor, Mr Gilmer, refers to Tom as 'nigger boy'™. He uses a tone of voice, which would be used if he was talking to the lowest form of creature. This makes Tom look foolish and is a way of discriminating him because he is black and lower class. At Robinson's™ trial verdict, all the evidence that Atticus had produced clearly shows that Tom is innocent. This was not the case as the evidence did not help and Tom was found guilty.

In my opinion, the verdict was solely based on the colour of his skin and he should have been given a fair trial. Not only was it based on his skin colour,

as a black man, he was not allowed to feel sorry for a white woman. As stated by Tom, "I felt sorry for her, referring to Mayella Ewell. According to the white community, Negroes weren't allowed to have pity for any member of the white community.

Another example of discrimination is when Jem talks about a mixed child. Jem is asked by Scout what a mixed child is. Jem talks about how they are half-white, half-coloured, and how the mixed child that delivers for the drugstore is really sad. As Scout asks why, Jem explains. "They do not belong anywhere. Coloured folks don't want them because they are half white; white folks don't have them because they're coloured, so they're just in-betweens, don't belong anywhere." (Page 167, Green hard cover) This is saying that no one wants them and they don't belong because of their race.

The segregation of the blacks and the whites is present throughout Maycomb. Blacks are not allowed to live with whites in normal circumstances and are not allowed to attend the same school. The whites believed the black community were inferior and don't deserve a freedom of speech. There was a deep-rooted fear of the other by both communities.

An example of segregation is during Tom's trial. The whites were seated up in balconies, while the blacks had seats on the floor. You would not have seen a member of the black community sitting next to a member of the white community. This novel should help people see that being racially prejudiced can damage the relationships that have been formed.

It is inspiring people to accept others for who they are and stop making judgements. The theme, personal beliefs, is seen throughout the novel in various points. It is important to live up to your morals and values and always accept the process of change within your society. In the novel, Atticus Finch has high moral standards and believes that everyone should have a fair go.

Atticus has a belief that there should be harmony and equality between the Maycomb locals. An example of the theme, personal beliefs is when Atticus Finch decides to take on the case of Tom Robinson. He knew from the beginning that he wouldn't have a chance in succeeding, but if he didn't defend Tom Robinson, he would be going against his beliefs and values. Maycomb locals believe that blacks and whites should not associate with each other or even live together in the same house. As Atticus believes that everyone should be treated equal, he kindly gives permission for a black woman, Calpurnia, to reside with him and his family.

This shows that Atticus is not bothered by the fact that Maycomb doesn't agree with him helping Calpurnia and he still stands up for what he believes in. Maycomb is not open with the process of change. The first process of change is when Atticus takes on the case of an African-American, Tom Robinson. The locals are furious to hear about this and are ashamed of Atticus' decision. Jem and Scout are at first hand when it comes to hearing what the locals have to say about their father. Maycomb local, Mrs Dubose declares to Jem and Scout that Atticus is a disgrace to the world on account of Atticus taking on the case of Tom Robinson.

Mrs Dubose, a Maycomb local, is not open to others and believes what Atticus is doing is a disgrace to Maycomb. The anger that Mrs Dubose has towards Atticus is shown by the conversation she has with Jem and Scout on page 108 (Green hard cover). As stated by Mrs Dubose, "?? Your fathers no better than the n\*\*\*\*\*s and trash he works for!?"™ Conflict is a distinct theme throughout the novel.

The Maycomb locals deal with conflict throughout their everyday lives. Conflict starts to arise when lawyer, Atticus Finch, takes on the challenge of defending accused rapist and African-American, Tom Robinson. The whites believe he is disgracing his community and surely lets him know that. An example of conflict is the situation between the whites and the blacks.

They have different opinions on what Atticus is doing for Tom Robinson. The blacks are thankful and very grateful, while the whites are disgraced and ashamed. This causes conflict between the blacks and the whites and even more conflict between Atticus and the community. Conflict between Jem, Scout and Mrs Dubose had hit a high when Mrs Dubose had bad mouthed their father to their face.

When Mrs Dubose stated, "?? Your fathers no better than the n\*\*\*\*\*s and trash he works for!?"™ (Page 108, Green hard cover) Jem and Scout angered quickly and defended their father. This did not bother Mrs Dubose, as she continued to insult Atticus and clearly she wasn't impressed about his decisions. The conflict between the blacks and the whites rose when in the courtroom for Tom's trial. The blacks muffled angry about the whites throughout the court case. The whites were very racial towards Tom during

the trial and whispered about Atticus throughout the trial. The blacks believed that this was horrible, but couldn't do anything because they had not authority, they had to respect the whites and they were 2nd class citizens to the whites. To Kill a Mockingbird is a thought-provoking and inspiring novel, written to challenge the human mind.

It has and will inspire people to embrace their personal beliefs and accept people for who they are. The issues that have been stated above are present in everyday life and need to be taken seriously. This novel has inspired me to accept people for who they are and not to judge them because of their race. Now, just put yourself in Tom's situation and see how you feel about discrimination.