

The effects of discrimination -to kill a mockingbird

[Literature](#), [American Literature](#)



“ If you believe that discrimination exists, it will.” -Anthony J. D’Angelo.

Discrimination has actually been around given that the start of time. In Harper Lee’s unique, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the storyteller, a girl by the name of Scout, concerns understand all of the different types of discrimination. Her daddy Atticus is an attorney and fights for the rights of others; Scout is taught by her father at a young age, that discrimination is erroneous. With the guidance of her dad, she sees what can happen when prejudice mindsets are taken too far, and how it can impact the lives of individuals.

Some of the types of discrimination that Scout encounters throughout the novel are race, age, and social status. At first, an individual can actually modify someone’s life by being bias towards them due to the fact that it dehumanizes and embarrasses them; nevertheless this is difficult to alter when years of bias, discrimination, and racism exist in society.

Consequently, when individuals drop the requirement to mention others differences and judge them on superficial things, individuals have a much better understanding of one another. Frequently in life, individuals do things without fully considering the consequences and how it will impact the other person. This is the very first instinct, and usually happens naturally without fully believing it through. However, this harms the person emotionally, and produces things like racial stress. Eventually, individuals discriminate because they are insecure, and feel the requirement to feel better about themselves. Individuals also feel the need to point out another’s differences due to the fact that they are odd to them, and do not totally understand the beauty of being unique.

Equality between men and women is probably the oldest type of discrimination there is. Women have been treated without respect, due to their gender. Women are expected to act proper, and to do what they're told. Throughout the book *To Kill a Mockingbird*, gender discrimination is prevalent with the character Scout. Her aunt Alexandra constantly points out the fact that Scout's behavior is very unladylike. Alexandra is quick to call out at the fact that Scout should wear dresses and not her overalls. This becomes hurtful to Scout because all she wants is her aunt's love and approval. Scout also starts to become citizen by her brother. He constantly rags on her because she's a girl. When the children are younger, Scout is seen more as her brother's equal, but as Jem matures and grows apart, he too becomes more critical of Scout's behavior and actions.

" Scout, I'm tellin' you for the last time, shut your trap or go home—I declare to the Lord you're gettin' more like a girl every day!" -Jem Finch. Jem uses this as a derogatory term towards Scout, because he knows that she takes offense to it. When Jem uses this, Scout immediately does what Jem wants because she's too proud to back down, and loves to prove Jem wrong. Jem is showing superiority because he is her older brother, and also the fact he is male. When Jem starts to grow up and grows apart from Scout, he tells her she needs to grow up and start acting like a girl. This hurts Scout because she takes pride in her tomboy attitude, but also the fact that she has acted more like a male to gain her brother's respect. Lee sets the novel in Alabama in the 1930's to show the importance of acting like a southern belle.

The ladies are well dressed, have social clubs, and know their place within society. Through Scout's experience, racial prejudice is the main type of discrimination, but Lee is showing that gender discrimination has the same amount of impact. She's also showing that becoming prejudice starts at a young age. Scout is only six when her family starts to voice their opinions on her behavior and attempting to change who she is as a person. This leads Scout to have to cling on to what makes her unique, and also makes her resentful towards her aunt and brother throughout the book. While Scout personally encounters gender discrimination, it does not have the greatest impact on her.

“ What good is social class and status? Truthfulness is measured within. Pride in one's status is like poison - holding it in your hand and eating it, you shall die.” Status is something that the individual craves. The ability to be taken into consideration and listened to because you have some sort of power. There are people high on the status scale, and then you have those who sit in on the bottom; these people are known as trash. People are disgusted to see them, and usually cannot even bare to look at them. People do whatever they have to do to reach the top; lie, cheat, steal, just to have some pride within themselves. Though, if the individual has to sin in order to get there, how much pride would people really have? Others hurt and sacrifice members of the human race without realizing how much damage they have done.

Humanity repeatedly hurts one other and becoming further apart. In the book *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Scout encounters social status discrimination

when she decides that she's going to befriend Walter Cunningham after feeling bad about being prejudice toward him. Her aunt Alexandra, stops Scout saying that Walter wasn't suitable enough to play with, based on his upbringings. " The thing is, you can scrub Walter Cunningham till he shines, you can put him in shoes and a new suit, but he'll never be like Jem". This confuses Scout because she's finally made a grownup decision, and because Walter is white. Scout understands that Walter was raised differently than her, but does not care. She is a child and just wants to make friends. In the town of Maycomb, the Ewells are considered the town's white trash. They live next to the town dump, have little money, and no mother. The kids are uneducated, the father is an alcoholic, and spends the relief checks on alcohol. When Mayella kisses Tom, her father is extremely upset, and Mayella regrets her actions. She blames Tom for her actions because she is too ashamed to admit it to herself.

Mayella uses this as an excuse as an attempt to keep her dignity, and not to fall any lower on the social ladder. Lee is showing that every human needs to be understood and accepted. Through the character Mayella, she shows a girl that is hungry for love and attention, and a burning desire to be accepted within society. Though Mayella is doing this to protect herself, Atticus manages to expose her to the people of Maycomb. Mayella will never be like a Finch. " As you grow older you'll see white men cheat black men every day of your life, but let me tell you something and don't you forget it- whenever a white man does that to a black man, no matter who he is, how rich he is, of how fine a family he comes from, that white man will always be trash." - Atticus Finch. Mayella

Throughout the book, Scout has come into context with discrimination. Scout learns that discrimination can hurt and affects the lives of people, and the only way to change it is to not be a part of it. Atticus is a big influence in Scout's life with this. He shows her that she needs to be the bigger person. Racial discrimination. One of the most felt hates around the world. People are judged because of their ethnicity and heritage, and not on what kind of person they are. Racial discrimination was popular in the Southern States before and after slavery was abolished. Even after slavery was abolished, Caucasians felt the need to show African Americans that in no way were, or would they ever be equal. Caucasians felt that they were better than African Americans because of their skin color and felt the need to treat them with absolutely no respect. Caucasians called African Americans were called hurtful names such as "darkie", "nigger", and "negroe" without realizing the .

In the book *To Kill a Mockingbird*, racial discrimination is very prevalent in the character's hometown, Maycomb. Racism becomes recognizable during Tom Robinson's trial. Tom is convicted of raping Mayella Ewell, even though Atticus had proven that Tom was innocent and the jury had limited evidence to prove Mayella innocent. Atticus says he has never had a jury consider a black man's case as they did with Tom's. The jury knew what was right, but still went with the knowledge that they've always known, not trying to challenge it.

The jury hurt Tom and his family by convicting him. Tom lost his self-worth, and his family would have to live without their father and his financial

support. Scout is also guilty of being racist. Throughout the book, Scout uses the term, " nigger," a couple of times. Scout picked up these terms at school, where these kids had learned them from their parents. In the novel, Lee is trying to point out how society, and parents poison the minds of young children. Kids are not born prejudice, they are either influenced by their peers or parents. These kids grow with the attitude that this behavior is acceptable because that is all they have ever known. These kids grow into adults and they use their racism as an excuse to attempt to raise themselves higher on the social scale.

Many of us cannot count the amount of people that we've hurt on our hands. People have hurt others in many different ways, whether it be with words or physical actions. Society does not stop to think of how this will affect the victim with their violence. It is an initial action to just prejudge others before even getting to know them. These people have to live with the hurt that has been inflicted on them, and the constant reminder that they are considered worthless. In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Scout realizes the damage that discrimination can do to others. This teaches Scout to take others feelings into consideration and learn to empathize.

Scout also decides that she wants to start to make a change. Scout refuses to use hurtful terms and learns not to judge others before she gets to fully know them. When people learn to accept others for who they are, or even taking the time to sit and consider what it is like to be that person, they fully do not understand how they effect and seriously hurt others. If people sat down and considered the consequences of their actions and words, people

would connect to each other better. As the great character Atticus Finch once said, “ You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view – until you climb into his skin and walk around in it.”