

# Ing bi

Literature, American Literature



ing Bi Andrew Spearman Mrs. Pendlebury Honors English 9 December 6th, 2010

The Power to Change One person can change the society you live in by expressing their own opinions, ideas, and beliefs. During the Great Depression, there was widespread hardship and largely segregated communities. However, some people had the power to change society which is explained by Harper Lee, through the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*. She tells how one person can change society overtime by expressing their ideas, and influencing others by using the amount of power given to them by their social rights, which can be dependent on race, education, age, and many more factors within their community. In the novel, there is one character who changes Maycomb's society in an interesting way. His name is Dolphus Raymond. Dolphus Raymond, a seemingly drunken man, had a relationship with a colored woman and eventually had children. The outcome of this one man's relationship was "mixed children" (Lee 161). Because of one person's relationship, a new kind of race was created and influenced upon the community of Maycomb. These children were "real sad", and "they [didn't] belong anywhere" (161). Since they were half white, and half black, "colored folks won't have 'em because they're half white; [and] white folks won't have 'em 'cause they're colored" (161). Dolphus Raymond has changed the world physically and almost in a bad way, because these children aren't wanted by any race. But Dolphus thought it was fine to have children, regardless of their race. By giving us this example, Harper Lee is telling how society can be changed negatively by one person by following what he thinks is right. Even one little eight year old child can have the power to change people's minds. Once in the novel, there was a mob trying to lynch Tom

Robinson, and lynching was very powerful, and difficult to stop because this was a belief of everyone's in the mob. However " an eight year old child" brought down that mob by putting the leader, " Mr. Cunningham in [Atticus'] shoes" (157). It's amazing how a little girl can stop a giant prejudice-filled mob from getting what it wants. This is a perfect example of how one person has enough power to change society. By making Mr. Cunningham see the situation how Atticus sees it, she brought these rage-driven men to their senses. Scout brought their minds into the real world by putting herself in front of their path. An eight year old child can change grown adults, instantly. Openly debating a topic and convincing others is one way to change one's beliefs and opinions, therefore changing society. But this may have to happen over a longer period of time since segregation was a very strong belief in that time period. When Atticus defended Tom Robinson, he helped change society into what it is today. Usually, trials with a white man's word against a black man's word, like this case, get decided in minutes. But this time, " the jury took a few hours" (222). Just because he was still voted guilty doesn't mean that people's minds aren't changing on how they view social equality. It took them hours to decide, because Tom was obviously innocent, but it was a white man's word against a black man's. This case was a spark for equality from one person's belief and opinion. People had to think twice about taking a white man's word over a black man's, and it will take steps to change society in such a big way as social equality, but Atticus has put that idea into everyone's minds. One person needs to be respected in order to convince others of their beliefs. This novel is explaining how one person can change society by using these examples as ways to

communicate how to change society. However, it also shows how it may take steps, such as Atticus and the trial of Tom Robinson, and they must have power in some way, like how Atticus is respected because of his education. I don't think Dolphus wanted to change society in such a big way, and he didn't have much power. He also made others think he was drunk all the time to help keep people from asking why he was in a relationship with a colored woman. He fell in love with her, and had children. It's nothing abnormal, except in Maycomb, it was not socially allowed to do such things. He tried to keep it quiet, not like how Atticus changed society by convincing the whole town of Tom's innocence. Dolphus Raymond showed how society can be changed physically by one person with not much power, fairly quick. And Atticus showed how society can be changed mentally, but it takes time, and power. Power can come from social classes, which is why Tom was voted guilty, and it can also come from un-likely places such as Scout, the power of bringing raging men back to reality because of her innocence. So long as they have those key things, one person can influence his or her ideas on another and can change society. Any one person has the power to change an entire society even today. Works Cited Lee, Harper. *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Philadelphia: Warner Books, 1960. Print.