

To kill a mockingbird” by harper lee novel

Literature



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

" To kill a mockingbird" by Harper Lee is a novel in which a strong impact is created upon the reader. The novel is set in the Southern States of America where racial prejudice was still extremely strong. This left an impact on the reader as though the many examples of racial prejudice the reader began to understand what it was like for black people back then and realised - although it is not as severe- racial prejudice still occurs. One of the main characters, Atticus Finch who tries to always treat people equally regardless of race, gender or social class.

He calls the town's prejudice against black people: " Maycomb's usual disease" The use of the word 'disease' tells the reader that the people of Maycomb cannot help themselves and that their paranoia, distrust and unreasonable hatred of black people is contagious. 'Usual' tells us that this is nothing new and Atticus is used to the people reacting this way. Atticus goes on to say that Maycomb's inhabitants 'go stark raving mad when anything involving a nigger comes up'.

The expression 'stark raving mad' shows that Atticus feels that his attitude is ridiculous as the expression is usually used to describe a person or situation that is unbelievable. The use of the word 'nigger' leaves a strong impact on the reader as the derogatory term is used loosely even by someone who is not racist. The reader feels sympathetic towards both the black people of Maycomb for being treated like second-rate citizens and towards the uneducated white people if they honestly believe they are better humans because of their skin colour.

A few chapters later Mrs Dubose spits at Scout 'Your fathers no better than the niggers and trash he works for'. Again the use of the word 'niggers' shows that Mrs Dubose does not respect black people and by not classing them as trash shows she thinks that black people are even equal to the white 'trash'. The reader feels angry towards Mrs Dubose for saying this to a little girl. Later in the novel the Finches black cook Calpurnia takes Jem and Scout to her church and Scout is surprised to learn that only four people can read.

They encounter a hostile attitude from Lulu: You ain't got no business bringin' white chillun here - they got their church, we got our'n. " By the use of 'they' and 'we' the reader understands that some black people do not want to be classed together with white people. The reader cannot comprehend the reason for this attitude and especially since Jem and Scout are children and clearly do not share the same prejudice as their elders, I do not see what the problem was.

Towards the middle of the novel Jem tells Dill about the mixed - race children, from his description the reader realises that these children will never be fully accepted: Coloured folks won't have'em because they're half white; white folks won't have'em because they're coloured" The reader feels angry that the children are treated this way for something they had no control over. Later in the novel at Tom's court case, Mr Raymond is talking to Dill and Scout and tells them: " Cry about the hell white people give coloured folks, without even stopping to think they're folks too. " The use of the words 'people' and 'folks' separate black and white people again. The reader agrees with Mr. Raymond.

Towards the end of the novel Tom Robinson - a black man who was accused of raping a white woman - is put on trial and Atticus is appointed to defend him. In the courtroom Atticus makes the point that most white people in Maycomb seem to think that: " all Negroes lie, that all Negroes are basically immoral human beings. " The repetition of 'all' emphasizes that Atticus is aware of the prejudice; it also makes it seem even more ridiculous. Calling Tom Robinson a 'Negro' in front of the whole town shows that Atticus respects black people. The comma after 'lie' creates a pause allowing what Atticus has suggested to sink in with the reader.

The word 'basically' shows that Atticus feels this is not right, 'human beings' reminds the reader and should remind the people of Maycomb that black people are still human. As a reader I feel great respect for Atticus as he knows that this move will probably make him unpopular and that Tom Robinson will still probably be found guilty. Throughout the trial it is obvious that Tom Robinson will be found guilty even though it is even more apparent that he is innocent, however, in the eyes of the white people he committed a worse sin, the sin of 'feeling sorry for her'.

For a black man to feel sympathy towards a white woman is socially unacceptable. The reader feels angry as people are human no matter what colour their skin is. Even though Tom is found guilty Atticus is still positive as it took the jury an hour to consider the verdict and is comforted by Miss Maudie's word: 'a baby step has been taken along the road of tolerance' " To kill a mockingbird" by Harper Lee is a novel that leaves an impact on the reader as it is told through the eyes of a young girl Scout Finch as she grows

up and the message is clear throughout the novel that white people are worth no more and no less than black people.