

Scout has 3 main guardians in her life; atticus, calpurnia

Literature



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The novel 'To kill a mocking bird' by Harper Lee illustrates many different views about racism, differences in knowledge due to age, religion, education, peoples class and their genders. The novel is set in Southern America in the 1930's, at the time of the 'American depression'. At this time America was split in two parts the south and the north. Southern America was very agricultural however the north was very different, it was completely industrialized. The novel was set in the South of America in a little village called Maycomb. When the author Harper Lee wrote the book he was working as a lawyer and he was a father.

One of the main characters in the novel was called Atticus Finch, the author based this character on himself. In the story Atticus is portrayed as a devoted father and lawyer. The novel is written as a semi autobiography, Atticus's daughter, Scout is telling her story when she is an adult about how life was like from a child's perspective growing up in Maycomb. In the story Scout has a brother called Jem, the two children are brought up by their father Atticus, they don't have a mother and the family cook called Calpurnia takes on the role of a mother figure.

Towards the middle of the novel their Aunt Alexandra, Atticus's sister comes to live with them in the little village of Maycomb. Throughout the village one can find many social differences there is a lot of racism, sexism, difference in religious beliefs and many people of different social background and class. Maycomb is a very social village as it is a small place many people knew everyone else's business since they have lived together for many years. Maycomb has a good sense of community spirit, most of the time everyone would stick together in different situations.

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Most of the people living in Maycomb were very racist and they never respected the negro's, the negro's were not part of the community and had to live separately. The white folk were very disrespectful to them and often gambled in their churches. They were also treated as slaves in many households and their laws were never justified. Other than racism there were also many elements of the novel that show sexism, men thought they were the more important people in society than women.

Maycomb was a very traditional and ancient town, for example the town had stayed the same size for over 100 years, and this shows that no improvements were needed, so none were done. Also most of the people who lived in Maycomb were very proud of some buildings like the solid courthouse. The author Harper Lee wrote the book from a child's perspective by doing this it made the book have so much more meaning behind just the pages. It allowed the reader to learn about Maycomb society, life and different experiences as the story unfolded.

A child has a lot to learn so as you read through it you learn more because it being from a child's point of view, what scout learns you learn. Another point is that as the narrator (scout) is young her views were unbiased, truthful, honest, accurate, unprejudiced (innocent) having these makes us get a better view of the story and of her life, as scout asks questions so do we therefore we understand everything so much more in much more detail. Equally scout as a child she has a very clear sense of right and wrong, this portrays through the novel so we can be aware of what was right and wrong too.

Furthermore Scout is taught to see things from both points of views which we distinguish through her experiences as a child; we get to see two points of view. Additionally she has a clear sense of natural justice as her father Atticus is a lawyer. What scout learns we learn. Scout is influenced in many ways by many people in the novel. Her influences were her father Atticus, her brother Jem, her friend dill, Calpunia the families cook, her Aunt Alexandra and finally her neighbour Miss Maudie.

All these people influence scout in many different ways but her three main guardians whilst growing up they were Atticus, Calpunia and her aunt Alexandra. Scout respected her father greatly her had earned this by being a very level headed father, he was harsh but fair. He was a great role model as he always gave advice and was always there for his children if they ever needed him. He is a gentleman and has individual views but besides he always tries to see both points of view as this help in his job too.

He was quite an old father so he had experienced many things in his life to be able to pass on advice to his children and to teach them simple things like right to wrong. Calpunia, their cook has influenced scout as she acts like a mother figure to scout she comforts, loves, helps and gives advice to her. Calpunia is a black woman and Atticus respects her a lot this shows scout that it is right to treat everyone the same no one is different, just because their skin colour is different it does not change the person inside.

Aunt Alexandra only becomes apparent in the novel about half way through. At first she treats Scout badly believing that the younger you are the less you know about the world- not very knowledgeable but towards the end of

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the book her attitudes toward scout start to change for the better as some of the views and attitudes from people living in Maycomb start to change too. All of these changes are for the better and they reflect on Scout. Atticus, Scout's father is the main influence in Scout's life and throughout her experiences.

Atticus studied law as a young man and received a good education, as Scout idolises him this makes her want to do well in school and get a good education which would hopefully end up in a good job. He influences her to be honest and always tell the truth, not to pretend otherwise you become untrue to yourself. Atticus is honest, thinks about others always, calm, collected, a gentleman, modest and understanding. Furthermore he does not hold grudges we know he is a gentleman as he said 'so if spitting in my face and threatening me saved MayElla Ewell one extra beating, that's something I will gladly take.

He had to take it out on somebody and I would rather it be me than that houseful of children out there'. All of these qualities influence Scout to act and be similar to her father; she is a good person in society. Since Atticus gets on with most people who live in the village this shows scout that you should always treat everyone the same and respect everyone that is the only way you will get respected back, and there is no friendship without respect.

Atticus believes it is right that if his children ask him a question to always answer truthfully, he treats Scout and Jem as adults, this makes Scout grow up sooner than she would have liked too. Atticus never hit a child he believed it was wrong. He accepts as true that it is good enough for scout just

to try she does not always have to win! He was not over strict with Jem or Scout although many people thought he was too easy going, Mrs Dubose a neighbour thought he was too easy on them and it was stated that 'Atticus lets his children run wild!

Atticus teaches Jem and Scout various lessons sometimes but he usually tries to let them learn different things for themselves as he is not going to be there for them forever he said 'I wanted you to see what real courage is, instead of getting the idea that courage is a man with a gun in his hand', he teaches them to have real courage and to stand up for themselves and not to act sometimes as a completely different person to who he actually was.

He gives his children privileges so they are free to make their own decisions most of the time, moreover to fight with their heads not with their fists- that won't get them anywhere. Scout learns a great deal from Atticus about the society where she lives, she learns that the courtroom if it concerns negroes it is not fair and very prejudice and she learns some facts of life just from knowing that the world is not always fair to people who are not different just have different colour skin.

She also learns that if there was ever a place where everyman should get justice it should be in a courtroom. Scout additionally learns that you never can know a man fully until you stand in their shoes and walk around in them- she learns that after she met Arthur (boo) Radley when talking to Atticus later on that evening here is a sample of what Atticus said 'First of all if you learn a simple trick, Scout, you will get along a lot better with all kinds of folk.

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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'. What's more she learns not to intrude into other peoples business and to respect everyone, never to conform to mass hypercritical or prejudice against Negroes as they are exactly the same as us apart from their skin colour. Calpurnia the family cook is more than a family cook to Scout, as Scout never knew her mother, Calpurnia is a mother figure to her they have a lot of respect for each other, she is a positive influence to Scout.

She teaches scout how to be a lady we know this as it says 'it is not necessary to tell all you know, it is not lady like- in the second place, folks do not like to have somebody around knowing more than they do. It aggravates them. You are not going to change any of them by talking right , They are going to want to learn themselves, and when they do not want to learn, there is nothing you can do but keep your mouth shut or talk their language'.

Calpurnia put others always in front of here we know this because in the book when the rabies dog starts walking up the road calpurnia still goes to the Radley household to tell them to be careful instead of just running off and not caring for them. She tries to always do what she feels would be the best thing for the children. she tries to give to give good impressions of herself as she always tries to look her best and be very polite and modest and usually shy around people she does not know, Calpurnia can read but she does not boast about it she is a very modest person, she teachers scout to read.

Although she does not have the best life and not the easiest she always tried to make the best out of what she had and never feel she has it worst out of

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everyone she knows. As you read through the novel you will soon find out there is more to Calpurnia than what you read, she has two separate lives firstly she lives with Atticus, Scout, Jem, Aunt Alexandra and sometimes Dill and her second life when she lives back home in the black community away from the main part of Maycomb.

Calpurnia loves Scout and wants to do anything and everything she could do to protect her and Jem from getting hurt in any way, this is why when she finds out that Jem and Scout were in the courtroom while Atticus was defending a negro, Tom Robinson she was quite upset as she felt they were too young to be hearing some of the things that were said. Scout learns several things from Calpurnia about the society in which they live in. She learns that everyone in Maycomb deserved and was entitled to respect, courtesy and tolerance.

Calpurnia teaches Scout that it does not and should not ever matter whether someone is black or white. At one point in the book, Calpurnia takes Jem and Scout to her church for them to get to know her other life and to realise how different things could be and to meet her friends and real family and people she knows. She did this to teach Jem and Scout that her people are no different and that they are treated different just out of spite, for no reason as they are not different.

Plus Scout learns how to be a lady from Calpurnia this was important in the society where they lived as ladies were meant to be ladies and do as ladies were meant to do. She also teaches Scout that in Maycomb prejudice works both ways and many people do it, it is just part of life in that society and you

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have to get used to it and deal with it. Scout's Aunt Alexandra who goes to live with her, Jem, Atticus and Calpurnia at about half way through the book influences Scout in many ways. Alexandra is Atticus's Aunt, she is very traditional.

She was quite bossy at times to Scout and Jem throughout her time living with them she gave orders to Calpurnia because she believed that Calpurnia didn't know how to clean, cook as well as she did as Calpurnia is a black woman additionally she didn't want Calpurnia bring up the children especially Scout as her mother figure because Alexandra does not feel she is up to the job. Alexandra comes from a wealthy village and going to live in Maycomb was quite a big difference for her. She is very proud of her family, heritage, her status, family is very important to her.

Aunt Alexandra settled into Maycomb very well as she has many similar views to the society and people of Maycomb as Maycomb is a little village quite a lot of gossipers lived there and as Alexandra was a gossip she fitted in well. She was quite formal as she was wealthy but also had manners and knew how to be polite. Although, she did not agree with the way Atticus was bringing up Scout and Jem she thought he gave them too much leniency she wished he would be more strict with them as how she would be, she often criticised Atticus for being too truthful with Jem and Scout as they are only children.

She was quite modest and very conscious of what people think of her and how she lives and in the situations she has come across and how she has dealt with them. Scout's Aunt Alexandra, in addition to these qualities she

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had always liked to be in control of what was happening and to be involved that's why at one stage in the book when Atticus tells Jem and Scout that they can go back to the courtroom, she was not at all happy as he did not consult her and so she didn't feel involved.

Scout only learns a little about the society in which she lives from her aunt. She learns that education was of so much importance to get a good job and to have a good life in the end and to carry the family tradition on and be wealthy and classy. Her aunt teaches her that being a lady in Maycomb was one of the main things a woman should have learnt how to be properly. Aunt Alexandra additionally taught Scout to be very family proud and to respect family members. She taught Scout to keep the family traditions going and to keep her proud.

Alexandra thinks highly of the Finch family, we know this as it says 'Do not be silly, Jean Louise, the thing is you can scrub Walter Cunningham till he shines, you can put him into new shoes and a new suit, but he will never be like Jem. Besides, there is a drinking streak in that family a mile wide. Finch women are not interested in that sort of people'. At the end of the novel Scout has learnt so many things from each of her influences but not just from her father, Calpurnia and her Aunt.

She has also been influenced by Jem, her brother Dill, her friend, Miss Maudie, their neighbour. One of the main things that Scout has learnt is that you could never know a man until you 'stand in his shoes and walk around in them' Scout then realised this was true in too many ways as she realised the real meaning of this statement when she had met Arthur (Boo) Radley and

standing outside his house on the pavement just thinking about his life and looking deeper than what it just looks like from the surface.

Scout learnt not to judge people before you know them to be modest and not to be racist, and never to be rude to any one always be polite and act like a lady! Scout also learnt that education was very important, so she wanted to get a good education. That everyone living in Maycomb deserved and was entitled to respect, courtesy and tolerance. What's more Scout learns not to intrude into other peoples business to respect everyone, never to conform to mass hypercritical or prejudice against Negroes as they are exactly the same as us apart from their skin colour.

I think it is intended for the reader to learn different things while they read the book as, Scout learns so much from her different influences and as it has been written as a child writing it and we are children (young adults). As Scout learns more things as the book progresses we learn the same things as her. What Scout learnt we learn. Overall throughout the book Scout learnt different things from her influences, learning those things helped Scout to understand much more about the society in which she lived.