

To kill a mocking bird

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To better understand a person you have to climb up inside their skin and walk around in it. The quote previously stated by Atticus in the book *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee is an unveiling of the upcoming forms of prejudice. The setting for the novel is a fictitious town called Maycomb. This town is situated in Alabama. The racial prejudice shown in the novel has a lot to do with the town being situated in the southern United States. The backwardness and narrow-mindedness of the community fueled racism in Maycomb. These negative qualities account for the social and religious prejudices in the novel. Maycomb people have very inward looking views and so these views are passed on from generation to generation. Prejudice is the preconceived opinion of a person or thing. There are three main types of prejudice: racial prejudice, social prejudice and religious prejudice. These three are the types of prejudice most dominant in *To Kill A Mockingbird*.

Maycomb is a very religious town with the foot-washing Baptists appearing to have a strong influence on the community. The foot-washers have very strict views and believe that anything which is pleasurable is a sin. They are therefore prejudiced against people who are different from them with different opinions or beliefs. The first example of their prejudice is when Miss Maudie says, some of em came out of the woods one Saturday and passed by this place and told me and my flowers we were going to hell? Their belief is so extreme they feel they should threaten those who are different. Scout is shocked by this as she thinks Miss Maudie is the best lady she knows. Miss Maudie is a good role model for Scout as she is not prejudice against anyone presented in the novel. Another example of prejudice toward somebody is the isolation of the Radleys. This isolation is due to this family not attending

church. They also don't conform to other codes of behavior. The Radleys suffer religious prejudice because of this and social prejudices because they keep themselves to themselves, apart from everyone else. The society sees church as a pastime and therefore pleasurable; as Mr. Radley was a foot-washing Baptist he would not agree with attending church. The community seeing church as a pastime reflects their inward views and their narrow mindedness. The isolation of the Radleys is accentuated by the unusual positioning of their house, jutting into a sharp curve. This reflects how the town considers the Radleys. They are deemed strange by the community. This is because they don't conform. They do not go to church. They do not socialize. Mrs. Radley never attends Missionary circle and the house is always closed on Sundays. This shows the intolerance in Maycomb of anyone who does not conform to their rules and standards of behavior. Boo Radley is treated with the most dislike as he has been to court when he was younger and was considered a troublemaker. Scout describes him at the beginning as: a malevolent phantom. The use of the word malevolent stresses the way in which they consider him evil. These three examples of religious prejudice accentuate Lee's perspective of life, as she knew it at the time.

The next form of Prejudice, social, is illustrated in many instances throughout the novel. Mr. Radley is intolerant of others in his own way. This is reflected by the way he treats Boo. When Arthur was convicted, Mr. Radley promised to look after him whereas the other boys in the gang were sent away. The boys who were sent away received a good education but Boo was punished by his father and began to be thought of as an outcast. Prejudice in Maycomb is also due to the snobbish and intolerant attitude towards those of a lower class. The second example that illustrates this form of prejudice is

that the Ewells are outcasts; they live on the outskirts of town. Maycomb Ewells lived behind the town garbage dump in what was once a Negro cabin. They are treated slightly better than the black people only because they are white. The location of the house shows their lowly place in society. The Ewells obviously struggled, as they had to scrounge to survive. Ewells gave the dump a thorough gleaning everyday. This shows the Ewells extremely poor quality of life and shows how they don't really look after themselves. The town holds a lot of contempt for the Ewells because of the way they are. Well convict this Negro but get back to your dump! They are not looked well upon by anybody in Maycomb. Even Atticus, the most unprejudiced person in the novel doesn't like the Ewells. The disgrace of Maycomb for three generations. This shows just how much the Ewells are disliked. The long-standing prejudice towards the Ewells is experienced by people as young as Scout. She comments on one of the Cunninghams as not being trash, even though they are a lower class, because: He ain't like the Ewells! This shows that the town is not prejudice toward the Ewells merely because of their class but also for other reasons. One of these reasons is the lack of dignity they display in the way they live made the plot around the cabin look like the playhouse of an insane child! They also show little respect for themselves because they live purely off the state and do not attempt to help the bad reputation they have acquired. He's one of the Ewells This quote refers to a younger member of the family at school. He is misbehaving and the others think of this as normal. He is just living up to the stereotype of a Ewell. Other lower class families are not treated with such contempt, as they are different from the Ewells. The Cunninghams are respected by Atticus and others. Never took anything they can't pay back! The Cunninghams are proud,

honest, poor but very independent. They don't expect charity from the church or the government, in contrast to the Ewells. No church baskets and no scrip stamp. Even though they lead respectful lives, snobs such as Aunt Alexandria are still prejudiced against them. She discriminates against them merely for being a lower social class. She also believes they are a typical stereotype. A nest of those Cunninghams, drunk and disorderly. She continues her stereotype, there's a drinking streak in that family a mile wide. She doesn't believe they are good people simply because of their inferior background. She is one of the most prejudiced people in the book. She judges a person by social class and not personal qualities. She states: Our kind of folk don't like the Cunninghams This shows her personal narrow mindedness. The town of Maycomb is prejudice against people simply because they don't originate from Maycomb. Outsiders are treated with suspicion and contempt. The townspeople often have pre-conceived ideas about people from other parts of the country. This is shown in the apprehensive manner in which the children treat their teacher from North Alabama. should she prove to harbor her share of the peculiarities indigenous to that region! This again proves the community is very inward and insular. There are even stereotypes for people such as the teacher. North Alabama was full of liquor interests, big mules, steel companies and other persons of no background.

This shows the poor light in which people from another part of the world are looked upon by the community. This is the same even though the teacher is from the same state as everyone else in Maycomb. The prejudicial attitudes shown toward Miss Caroline contrast greatly with the respect shown to: Miss Blount, a native Maycombian. The class treats Miss Carolines authority as a

joke, but when Miss Blount walks in they show great respect for her. These previous examples clearly show Lees point in exhibiting the social forms of prejudice that existed in the 1920s and may as well exist today.

The white townspeople's intolerance of other white people who do not fit their rigid codes of behavior is nothing compared with the intolerance and prejudice exhibited in their dealings with the black people of the town. Segregated far from the whites the black community, beside the town dump. This is a good example of how the white people view the black people. The Caucasian townspeople see the African American inhabitants as rubbish and so isolate them with the rubbish of the town. This shows how the whites see themselves as better than the black people.

The white community is fearful of the black community, because they are different.

The black community is shown great disrespect as they are given the worst places for buildings. Their houses are all in very poor conditions. They have only a place of hard ground for their church. This shows the whites' great disrespect for the black community's dead as it is very difficult to bury them on hard ground. The black people of Maycomb are shown a complete lack of respect by the way in which the whites gamble in their church. The black community is also very poor compared with the white community. In their church they have the same service but limited materials. First Purchase was unceiled and unpainted. Pine benches served as pews. Behind the rough oak pulpit a faded pink, silk banner proclaimed God Is Love. These quotes emphasize the black people's struggle with money and getting things for

themselves. The banner is obviously very old and they cant afford a new one or even a coat of paint. They also dont have a ceiling. This would make it very cold in winter months. There was no sign of piano, organ, hymn-books, church programs-the familiar ecclesiastical impedimenta we saw every Sunday. This quote emphasizes how different the church was to the church Scout and Jem were used to. Scouts immaturity is shown by the way in which she doesnt understand how they are going to sing hymns as there are not any hymnbooks. She is not very open minded to the possibilities of how they could sing hymns. Even though she shows immaturity here she doesnt hold any prejudice toward the black community like others in the white community. She shows maturity in the way in which she observes that the services of the black and white churches are the same except for the way the Reverend expresses his views more freely and the morning offering, which this particular morning would go to Tom Robinsons wife and children. This shows a huge difference in the two communities attitude toward each other. Here the black communitys togetherness is shown where as the white community always seems divided in some way. At the trial the segregation and the financial situation of the black community is again emphasized. It is shown by the differences in the food they eat and where they are made to sit at lunch. The whites sit in the shade, which would be a lot more comfortable than sitting in the sun like the blacks. The blacks must sit in one corner of the square in the sun and they arent allowed to move into the shade. The black community has sardines, crackers and Nehi cola for their picnics whereas the whites have completely different food. Washing down biscuit and syrup with warm milk from fruit jars. Some people were gnawing on cold chicken and cold fried pork chops. The more affluent chased their food with

drugstore Coca-Cola in bulb shaped soda glasses. This shows how the whites' food is more expensive than the black community's. The whites drink Coca-Cola whereas the blacks can only afford a cheaper brand which Scout comments on as having more vivid flavors this shows how different it is compared with the more famous Coca-Cola brand.

The black community must also wait until all of the whites have gone into the courthouse and taken their seats. This again articulates the way the blacks are segregated from the whites. This is shown further when the blacks are made to sit upstairs when the whites are allowed to sit downstairs. The blacks are also segregated in a very strange way as they have a separate section of the newspaper. This could seem ridiculous but it shows the heights the whites go to segregate the blacks completely. At the trial a white man known as Dolphus Raymond is introduced. He is one of the most open-minded characters in the novel. He has children by a black woman and is not racist in any way. He is also fairly well off so does not struggle as much as the other people in Maycomb. He is seen as a social oddity because of his partner and children but mainly because he is supposedly always drunk. He has got a Coca-Cola bottle full of whiskey in there. Although everyone thinks there is whiskey in the bottle there is only Coca-Cola. Dolphus Raymond allows the town to think whatever they want because he believes that this helps the whites to understand why he lives the way he does. He is forced to pretend he is a social oddity because of the racist members of the community. In the trial there is a lot of racial prejudice toward Tom Robinson. There is not a doctor present who could testify that Tom Robinson couldn't have committed the crime because of his disability. This is so that Tom Robinson is definitely convicted just because he is black. With a doctor it

would be easy to clear Tom Robinson of the charge. Mr. Tate blinked again as if something had suddenly been made plain to him. This shows how obvious it was that Tom Robinson had not committed a crime against Mayella Ewell. However Tom Robinson is convicted anyway because he testifies that he felt sorry for Mayella. This disgusts the white people in the crowd. He knows how the town is racist and is very nervous about how they will react to him. Tom's discomfort was not from humility.

Tom knows that the white community will think it completely impertinent for him to feel sorry for Mayella because he is black and she is white. This is a good example of the racial prejudice in Maycomb. When Tom dies during an escape attempt after being convicted, the white community isn't sympathetic. They just dismiss it with typical of a nigger to cut and run by saying he was just doing it because he was black. This shows the very narrow-minded attitude toward the black community by the rest of Maycomb.

The town doesn't care about Tom or his family and just think that it was a typical thing for a black man to do. The town thinks he is cowardly to run away. They put it down to Tom being black. Nigger always comes out in them. This once again shows how narrow-minded and thoughtless the town's attitude is. The town ignores what Mr. Underwood wrote in the obituary where he tried to stick up for Tom. He said it isn't right to shoot a cripple no matter what they are doing. He likens the death to that of songbirds killed by hunters. He likened Tom's death to the senseless slaughter of songbirds. This quote emphasizes the Mockingbird imagery of Tom Robinson because he is killed for no real reason. Mr. Underwood uses simple language so that the obituary is suitable for children to understand. He does this because, like

Dolphus Raymond, he believes that the children of Maycomb are young enough to understand and maybe change the attitude in the future.

In *To Kill A Mockingbird* there are three main types of prejudice exhibited; social prejudice, religious prejudice and racial prejudice. The town of Maycomb has pre-formed ideas and rigid codes of behavior. These codes of behavior are imposed by the towns people on each other. This often leads to the persecution of characters in the novel such as Boo Radley, Dolphus Raymond and to a lesser extent Miss Maudie. These people are often excluded by the society. This social prejudice leads to the exclusion of families such as the Ewells and the Cunninghams because they don't conform to Maycomb's belief of normality. They are treated like outsiders with suspicion and are stereotyped. The religious prejudice in Maycomb leads to the persecution of Miss Maudie Atkinson by the foot washing Baptists. Racial prejudice in Maycomb is constantly displayed by the white community toward the black community. The most glaring example of racism in the novel is when Tom Robinson is convicted of raping Mayella Ewell just because he dared to feel sorry for her. The result of this racial prejudice leads the people of Maycomb to be very hypocritical and have double standards. They say they have sympathy for other races in other countries but then they treat the ethnic minority in their town with great disrespect. The prejudice of the town is produced from fear, historical context and their social conditioning. They are afraid because of ignorance and not being able to understand new and different things.