

# Inequality in hard times' by charles dickens and 'to kill a mockingbird' by harpe...

[Literature](#), [Books](#)



This assignment will explore exploitation primarily throughout 'Hard Times' by Charles Dickens and 'To Kill A Mocking Bird' by Harper Lee, hereinafter referred to as HT and TKAMB, while slightly touching on hypocrisy in some parts. This assignment will also apply Marxist, Post-colonialism, and colonialism literary theory throughout the texts and include an analysis of narrative voice and structure as well as key images and devices such as the use of metaphor, or foreshadowing. This text will also include quotations from both texts and show how they back up the point that is being made, as well as using third person formal narrative throughout. Both books will be discussed equally, and finally will include an analysis of the effects of specific language used in both novels.

HT by Charles Dickens is set in the Victorian age primarily attacking on the then existing social problems that existed, educational system, caste system, economic systems and much more. Dickens obviously states his hatred towards the divorce law which remains a pleasure of the rich people. Stephen Blackpool, a 'hand' in an industry had a drunk and brutish wife, wanted a divorce from her, but can't because of his unfortunate poor financial condition and was not able to afford the costly fees of a divorce. The cruelty of poor working class by the rich industrialist is the main point of resentment in the novel. The hard workers are referred to simply as "Hands" without any emotions whatsoever, which shows that they are counted only in terms of work, production and manufacturing. The novel is a radical representation of the economic difference of the age where the rich are extremely rich and the poor have abject poverty. All the system is in contradiction of the blue collar workers. The 'Hands' were always

suppressed by law, trade union and their employers. This story represents the struggles and realism that Victorian people had to face, such as sexism, poverty and horrible working environments, and also this story portrays a very accurate colonial experience, showing the town in a state of takeover by Mr. Gradgrind, who imposes on the town and creates his own rules and philosophies to run the school.

Firstly, this assignment will explain the occurrences of HT as much as possible. The first example of inequality that occurs is in Chapter 4: Mr. Bounderby, ' Then comes the question; said the eminently practical father, with his eyes on the fire, ' in what has this vulgar curiosity its rise?'. Bounderby theorizes that Sissy Jupe, the circus entertainer's daughter who attends Gradgrind's school, may have led the young Gradgrind's astray. Gradgrind agrees with this accusation and sets out to inform Sissy's father that Sissy is no longer welcome at the school, this is already foreshadowing what Sissy's future is to become, and what Grandgrind's thoughts of Sissy really are. This child is being treated differently due to her difference in circumstances to others, creating a clear inequality between her and the way Gradgrind treats other students in comparison, especially since this is a circumstance with his own children it makes him biased to the situation at hand as he is also the person who runs the school, creating a completely unjust decision. Following this decision in chapter 5 and 6, Gradgrind finds himself following Sissy and witnessing her misfortune, only to find her father the circus master in a dark tavern representing his mysterious introduction, who plans to abandon sissy as he has lost his ability to perform. This in itself

is already hypocrisy, because Gradgrind is doing the exact thing he shunned his children and Sissy for, being curious. Gradgrind from this information then decides to take Sissy into his own home and raise her according to his philosophy of fact. Sissy agrees to the arrangement, principally because she believes her father will come back for her. Following on to Chapter 11: No Way Out, Stephen, disturbed by his alcoholic wife's re-appearance decides to visit Mr. Bounderby the following day to ask humbly if he has any legal recourse and any possibility of obtaining a divorce, Bounderby goes on to explain that only the wealthy can obtain divorces and that Stephen would be better off just accepting his miserable situation. This is clear inequality between the poor and the most fortunate, making it almost impossible to gain a divorce without money. ' Suppose from a thousand to fifteen hundred pound,' said Mr. Bounderby. ' Perhaps twice the money.' ' There's no other law?' ' Certainly not.' Time passes, moving relentlessly like the machinery of a factory. In Chapter 14: The Great Manufacturer, Mr. Gradgrind tells Sissy that she is hopeless at school but that she may continue to live at Stone Lodge and care for Mrs. Gradgrind. Sissy is also being stereotyped to the female role of caring, feminists especially reading this will be impacted and outraged.

Using Marxist theory ' A Marxist analysis of a text will explore the ways in which the ruling influencers of society can be said to oppress the lower class in some shape or form, while acting with their own interests. This includes the act of commodification and exploitation of the labour of the working class'. Sissy is a great representation of problems the lower class had to deal

with during these times. For example, her father is forced to abandon her due to the fact that he is no longer able to perform, he has no backup job or education. Sissy is then forced to attend school where only facts are taught and no other approach to education is taken, all at the same time as Mr. Gradgrind is adopting Sissy. Sissy following this didn't do so well in school, so Gradgrind decides her only option is to care for Mrs. Gradgrind. This chapter explores both the lower class and the feminist point of view in these times, if school wasn't for you, which it is not for everyone then you are either forced to care/clean as a female, or forced to labour as a male, this being if you were lower class of course. Gradgrind as a ruling influencer of the society, has final say on what Sissy does with no disbelief from anyone as well as owning the school this makes him even more powerful and influential, and because of this is able to exploit Sissy and other members of society as he chooses and use them to his advantage as he has done so with Sissy. Mr Gradgrind as the owner of the school also has control over education and chooses what he teaches, which allows him to exploit the working class as he chooses. Following this he also becomes a member of parliament, giving him access to more influence in his town and more control. Also, despite Stephen's clear misfortune when it comes to his marriage is advised by Gradgrind that he can do nothing about the divorce as it will cost money, and does not offer any other help or advice. The language that Charles Dickens uses to portray Mr Gradgrind makes him seem a very powerful, outspoken and respected character, but this language and the way he's portrayed just seems to give the impression something about him just isn't right. Colonialism can also be applied to Mr Gradgrind, as

he is a foreign invader who has gained power over education and because of this influences Sissy a local girl in a very negative way, and uses her for his own benefit and exploits her.

TKAMB by Harper Lee is primarily about growing up under extraordinary circumstances in the 1930s in the southern United States. The story is narrated by a young girl named Jean Louise Finch who is always almost called by her nickname, Scout. The story covers a span of three years, during which the main characters undergo significant changes. Scout Finch lives with her brother Jem and their father Atticus in the town of Maycomb, Alabama. Maycomb is a small, close-knit town, and every family has its social station depending on where they live, who their parents are, and how long their ancestors have lived in Maycomb. A widower, known by the name of Atticus raises his children by himself, with the help of kindly neighbours and a black housekeeper named Calpurnia. Scout and Jem almost instinctively understand the complexities and machinations of their neighbourhood and town. The only neighbour who puzzles them is the mysterious Arthur Radley, nicknamed Boo, who never seems to come outside often. When Dill, another neighbour's nephew starts spending summers in Maycomb, the three children begin an obsessive quest to lure Boo outside.

The first example of inequality that occurs in TKAMB is in Chapter 2: ' she discovered that I was literate and looked at me with more than faint distaste. Miss Caroline told me to tell my father not to teach me anymore, it would interfere with my reading. " Teach me?" I said in surprise. " He hasn't taught me anything, Miss Caroline. Atticus aint got time to teach me anything," I

added, when Miss Caroline smiled and shook her head.' Scout is being victimized and exploited by her teacher's inexperience, Scout means well but receives only punishment in return. The rigid protocols demanded by the law and by Miss Caroline's method of teaching are shown to be insufficient and irrational. For example, Burris Ewell can keep the law happy by coming to school only one day a year, while Scout induces her teacher's wrath simply by learning to read at an early age. This educational disaster fails to meet the needs of either student, and is a great example of post-colonialism theory; post-colonialism in a nutshell, imagine a random bunch of people enter your house, re-arrange your furniture and eat all your food, and when you ask them kindly to leave they just tell you they have very big guns. Eventually, they up and leave, leaving the house in a state unrecognisable with everything re-arranged, except you are almost use to the way they've mistreated the house. Now, you will have to deal the way the house is left, now take those feelings you feel and apply it to an entire nation, and then multiply that nation by all the nations that have been settled or colonized by other nations. A new teacher has come along with a distaste for children and an inability to connect and created new rules and regulations for teaching which sees Scout and many other children at a large disadvantage, causing problems for the original families that have been in Maycomb for generations. This situation also foreshadows the relationship between Miss Caroline and Scout, as well as Scout's future connection with education despite having nothing but good intentions. As Scout being the narrator as well, this bring sympathy to her situation, this gives a clear insight into her perspective.

Inequality and hypocrisy take place during the game Jem, Scout and Dill made a game called ' Boo Radley'. Radley's place is described as a dark, gloomy mysterious place, and has many rumours spread throughout the town about it. ' Jem gulped down his second glassful and slapped his chest. " I know what we are going to play," he announced. " Something new, something different." " What?" asked Dill. " Boo Radley." The game was basically a dialogue of the Radley family, and Jem, Dill and Radley all played different roles each day. All 3 of them are treating Boo Radley unequal because of rumours and the way he is, ridiculing him if it is to go that far. This is also a level of hypocrisy coming from scout, who was treated unequal at school because she learnt to read at an early age.