

Mastery is maturity

Life



In life, there is a time when one loses his or her innocence, later resulting in new awakenings that cause an individual to see their world in a different view. Throughout the novel, Harper Lee illustrates the journey of two characters, Jem and Scout Finch, to adulthood. Scout, Jem, and their childhood friend, Dill, often mess around with their neighbor, Boo Radley. Boo is a mysterious man that isolates himself inside his house, but makes an appearance at the end of the book in order to save Jem from Mr. Ewell. Ewell wants to assert his power through threats of violence to anyone associated with Tom Robinson.

Scout and Jem do not have much of a connection with Tom directly, but attacking them is a powerful way to hurt Atticus, their father, a defense attorney, who accuses Bob Ewell of abusing Mayella. Through Scout and Jem's adventures and journeys, they eventually mature from mere children to wise adults. Prior to Tom Robinson's trial, Jem and Scout are both innocent and naive. However, as they witness Tom Robinson's trial they are able to perceive the inequality and racism within their community. Through this experience, Scout and Jem later experience life differently by realizing that everything is not always the same what it seems like.

In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Harper Lee demonstrates that the transition to adulthood involves the loss of sweet innocence while gradually understanding the adult world through the characters of Jem and Scout. Initially, Jem acts childishly, but when he experiences the harshness of the adult world, he begins to have a greater understanding of the real world and changes him so that he becomes more mature. In the beginning, Jem, Scout, and Dill are fascinated by Boo Radley and believe that he is a ghost-like

person since he is never seen outside his house. Once, the children decided to concoct a plan to force Boo Radley come out of his house.

Read also [How Powerful Do You Find Atticus Finch's Closing Speech?](#)

While Dill and Scout deliberate a plan, Jem warns Dill about the consequences that may arise from executing this plan. Jem says, “ I hope you’ve got it through your head that he’ll kill us, each and everyone, Dill Harris. Don’t blame me when he gouges your eyes out,” (Lee 17). When Jem says that Boo will “ kill us,” it shows the absurd perception and child-like view that he has of Boo, whom he hardly knows. It further shows that when children are young and naive, they tend to exaggerate reality and draw unrealistic conclusions about situations or people.

When Lee writes, “ he gouges your eyes out,” Lee illustrates that Jem is childish because he characterizes Boo as a monster. Jem’s judgment of Boo is considered accurate because society perceives Boo as a monster. Children readily believe what adults regard as the truth without considering what the truth really is. Most people of Maycomb County view Boo Radley as a monster. As for now, Jem also sees him as such. However, as Jem grows older, he starts to look at situations in a more sophisticated manner. Subsequently, Dill secretly runs away from home and sneaks into Scout and Jem’s house.

Jem must decide whether he should tell Atticus about Dill’s escape or not to show that he is responsible. Jem believes that telling Atticus is the right thing to do because he wants Atticus to know that he's responsible. Eventually, he tells him and announces to Dill, “ Dill, I had to tell him, you can’t run three
<https://assignbuster.com/mastery-is-maturity/>

hundred miles off without your mother knowing. ' [Scout and Dill] left him without a word. "(Lee 188). When Jem argues, " I had to tell him," it shows that he is becoming more responsible. Even though Scout and Dill would be upset with him, Jem is aware that ultimately telling Atticus is the right decision.

Jem says that he " had" to, which shows that he is starting to make the right choices in life rather than succumbing to what his friend and his sister may want him to do. He makes his decision based on what is right for Dill, which reveals his maturity. Clearly, Jem evolves and matures as he starts to understand the adult world and begins to form his own opinions of what is right and wrong. On the other hand, Scout also begins to understand the adult world as she begins to grasp her father's lessons about empathy, relating his teachings to the real world. This causes her to become more mature and grow over time.

Scout is originally enraptured by Boo Radley's isolated existence, but later sees the world from Boo's perspective and begins to understand Boo's decisions. Like most of the people of Maycomb, Scout has misconceptions about Boo Radley because he hides inside his house. Scout rationalizes that Boo Radley must be dead. In one instance, Miss Maudie and Scout discuss Boo Radley's history. Since Scout has never seen Boo before, she explains to Miss Maudie why she thinks Boo is dead. Miss Maudie's responds to Scout's inquiry, " What a morbid question... I know he's alive, Jean Louise, because I haven't seen him carried out yet. However, Scout childishly responds, " Maybe he died and they stuffed him up the chimney. " (Lee 57). While Miss Maudie, being an adult, makes reasonable conclusions using logical

reasoning of situations, Scout does not understand Miss Maudie's reasoning due to the rumors she hears around town. Scout justifies her thoughts about Boo Radley by theorizing that Boo's father must have, "stuffed him up the chimney." She expresses her childish outlook because she easily falls for what others say about Boo Radley rather than understand the situation from Boo's perspective.

Because children are inexperienced in situations concerning the real world, they believe everything they hear, and cannot distinguish between what is true and false. This shows that Scout is still very much a young child. Near the end of the story, when Bob Ewell attacks Jem and Scout, Boo saves them. This leads Scout to change her perspective about who Boo Radley really is. She starts to connect her father's teachings to real life. Once Scout finally meets Boo and is asked to take him home, she realizes that "Atticus was right. One time he said you never really know a man until you stand in his shoes and walk around in them.

Just standing on the Radley porch was enough." (Lee 374). The words, "Atticus was right" imply that, prior to the attack, she did not comprehend Atticus' message. However, when Scout applies her father's teachings to her understanding of Boo Radley, it demonstrates that she now grasps what Atticus was trying to teach her. Scout learns one cannot judge others by their outer qualities or their appearance, but to understand a person entirely. It is important to refrain from judging others but "[stand] in [their] shoes and [walk] around in them. She puts to action Atticus' words of "standing in one's shoes" by literally standing on Boo Radley's porch steps, leading Scout to understanding all the previous events through Boo Radley's perspective.

Through this experience, Scout grows and learns by losing her innocence and becomes more mature by understanding. In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Jem and Scout's coming of age begins with their childish outlook of life, leading into their eventual understanding of the adult world. By the end of the novel, Jem and Scout have evolved into young adults that become more responsible.

They have not fully understood every aspect of life, but they are beginning to, as through the events concerning Boo Radley, the Tom Robinson's trial, and the Bob Ewell's attack. Thanks to Atticus's life teachings, Scout has been equipped with the tools to navigate the world by maintaining compassion and empathy in their lives. On the other hand, by learning from his experiences and what he has witnessed, Jem is also now responsible and able to understand the real world. Now their world is indeed different, but as the old adage states: With experience brings maturity and wisdom.