

The trial of tom robinson to bring out the themes and issues essay sample

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To kill a mockingbird brings out many themes and issues during the course of the book. The trial of Tom Robinson helps the readers to understand the prejudice that black people face in Maycomb County. The themes of courage and prejudice reflect the trial of Tom Robinson who was racially and falsely accused of raping a white woman. Part 2 consists of the trial.

Calpurnia takes the children to the Black community church. The quote, " Negroes worshipped in it on Sundays and white men gambled in it on weekdays," really depicts the racial side of Maycomb and how racially prejudice this community is. Furthermore, this quote also suggests that in Maycomb the black churches do not mean anything and they are more of a waste of space to the white people. The quote, " She was talking like the rest of them," was said by Scout who is a child. This shows that even the children of the community can recognise this clear division between the black and white people.

In the eyes of the white people the trial, " Was like a Saturday," and was, " A gala occasion," suggesting that they saw it as a big exciting event which had a convivial and joyful atmosphere. The black people treated it as a serious occasion. This difference in approach to the situation shows the difference in attitude between the black and white people. This really portrays the difference in racial status. Moreover, we see more racial boundaries, " They waited patiently at the doors behind the white families," the black people know their status is under the white people and this shows there are patient about it.

The black people are very aware of the fact that they are disrespected. Tom Robison says, " Mr Finch, if you were a nigger like me, you'd be scared too," and he is emphasising the fact that it is very hard to be a black person in this situation. For Tom he knew there was little chance of success. Furthermore, Tom says something which shocked the jury, " Yes suh. I felt sorry for her; she seemed to try more'n the rest of 'em." Mr Gilmer replied, " You felt sorry for her, you felt sorry for her?" The use of repetition is effective and shows that it should be the other way around. He shouldn't be feeling pity over a white woman because it is not possible to be better than a white woman. This is taken as prejudice against Mayella and all the white people seated in the courtroom. It is unacceptable for a Black man to say that.

A further issue is the placing of mixed children. " They're real sad," this phrase proves the segregation in Maycomb. This phrase shows pathos towards the mixed children who don't belong or are wanted anywhere as they have black and white blood in them. It all about how you look and your background, " He looked black to me." Furthermore the quote, " but around here if you have one drop of Negro blood that makes you all black," shows that you are not accepted even if you may look white but have a black background.

The Ewells are very low down in the society. It says, " Maycomb Ewells lived behind the town garbage dump in what was once a Negro cabin," this expresses to us that the Ewell family is not very respected and perhaps were even lower in status as they were living in a place which was second hand to the black people. Nevertheless, the Ewells are white so no matter how poor

or rejected they were they would always be more welcomed than any black person. The quote, " All the little man on the witness stand had that made him any better than his nearest neighbours was, that if scrubbed with lye soap in very hot water, his skin was white" suggests this. The Ewells had an unfair advantage. They had white blood which was the most important thing. When Tom Robinson is questioned in the trial he seems very understanding of Mayella. The line, " Why, yes suh, I'd tip m'hat when I'd go by, and one day she asked me to come inside the fence and burst up a chiffarobe for her," suggests that he is not bothered about race and he is respectful of her. He, like Atticus, believes in equality. Black people are exposed as those who are bad and commit evil, " The evil assumption- that all Negroes lie, that all Negroes are basically immoral beings," Atticus says this in order to sweep away people's assumption of the Black people.

We can also see that throughout the period of the trial Jem and Scout mature and their understanding of the situation develops. We can straight away see Jem's maturity from the phrase, " Mister-Jem," as you age you receive a higher status. Jem's maturity continues. The line, " In addition to Jem's newly developed characteristics, he had acquired a maddening air of wisdom," we can observe that Jem is becoming a new person. This is also suggested through the phrase, " Oh, go on and leave me alone. I'm readin' the paper." He doesn't spend much time with Scout anymore and is acting like a man, like Atticus. Furthermore, Jem is very comprehensive of what he is witnessing. The line, " Never, never, never, on cross-examination ask a

witness a question you already know the answer to," suggests that he was brought up with the knowledge of legal terms.

Scout matures immensely and her understanding of situations improves. The quote, " which was a lie, but one must lie under certain circumstances and at all times when one can't do anything about them," suggests that she knows she has to accept it and she learns to not throw a tantrum. This reflects her maturity of the trial further on. Scout becomes very mother or wife-like towards Atticus. She cares for him dearly. We can see this from the line, " Your stomach's growling; you better take some soda." This maturity is important as she is caring for Atticus especially during the time of the trial.

Scout's childish side returns and we see that she is trying to be mature however she fails to understand something. The quote, " He sighed, and said rape was carnal knowledge of a female by force and without consent," illustrates that Atticus is trying to find a different way to make Scout acquainted with the meaning of rape. He approaches this in a lawyer's manner. Scout's immaturity reappears when the main question in court is asked, " Did you see the defendant having sexual intercourse with your daughter." Here Scout realises what has happened because she had no knowledge of the term and concept of rape.

One of the main themes in this book is empathy. From the line, " I know now what he was trying to do, but Atticus was only a man. It takes a woman to do that kind of work," we can see that Scout's developed maturity has led to

her to understand what Atticus is doing for her and Jem. She is reflecting back and realises that Atticus is trying to be both their mother and Father.

Dill returns during the time of the trial and is saddened by what he witnesses. He is empathising with Tom Robinson, " That old Mr Gilmer doin' him thataway, talking so hateful to him," Dill realises that Tom is being cruelly punished. However, Scout tries to explain to him, " Well, Dill after all he's just a Negro," the racial prejudice that occurs in Maycomb has influenced her and she is used to black people being treated this way.

Atticus puts his reputation at stake by defending Tom Robinson, a black man, in court. This shows a great deal of courage, being another main theme of this book. Atticus believes in Tom's innocence and will do anything to win the case. The phrase, " And you know what the truth is," shows that Atticus is standing his ground and he believes that the truth is the most important thing. He goes against what the community thinks and defends a black. This takes courage and a vast amount of confidence. Jem sees Atticus being interrogated and maturely tries to save him. He makes up a lie, " Atticus the phone's ringing!" he is trying to get Atticus out of the situation. However, Atticus fails to be threatened by the comments and stands up for himself.

The theme of courage continues and we see that Atticus' courage is noticed among everyone. The line, " Yeah, but Atticus aims to defend him," shows that even though he was appointed to defend Tom Robinson he will do anything to effectively defend him. He takes on this case with open arms ignoring the comments from the community. Atticus wants and chooses to

defend him because he believes in Tom's innocence. This line is again repeated, " Atticus aimed to defend him," which emphasises this point.

Throughout this novel we can see the changes in behaviour and attitude from Jem and Scout. Jem is a very good superior model for Scout as he plays a similar role to a father in her life. Scout attitude maturity vastly as she empathises with Atticus and she looks after and cares for him. I think the main theme of this book is prejudice, mainly racial prejudice against the black people. The black people receive no respect but it is inspiring to see them dealing with their situation. Atticus Finch is a very inspirational character. He believed in Tom's innocence and fought for his innocence in court. He risked his reputation which takes moral courage.