

# Innocence in a child

[Life](#), [Childhood](#)



“ When we are children we seldom think of the future. This innocence leaves us free to enjoy ourselves as few adults can. The day we fret about the future is the day we leave our childhood behind” (Rothfuss). Young children are full of innocence, which is a known fact. When still in childhood innocence they mostly see in black and white. They see everything as either right or wrong. Yet some children have to grow up faster than others. In *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, there is a theme of loss of childhood innocence. Jem Finch, Scout’s older brother, is the character that goes through the biggest change in loss of innocence. At the beginning of the book he is just a child. He plays silly games with his sister and friends and does not think or know much about the world. Different events that happen through out the story contribute to Jem growing up and losing his innocence.’ The first event that shows Jem losing his innocence is the trial scene. “.. ‘ Don’t fret, we’ve won it... Don’t see how ay jury could convict on what we heard’... ” (279). Jem at this point doesn’t quite understand how the world works. He still thinks that everything in life is fair. He does not see Tom as a lesser being just because of his skin color. He is still in the childhood stage where he does not know of the prejudices. ““ It ain’t fair’... ‘ In our courts, when it’s a white man’s word against a black man’s, the white man always wins. They’re ugly, but those are the facts of life.’ ‘ Doesn’t make it right... you can’t convict a man on evidence like that...” (294). After Tom is ruled guilty Jem starts to see the evil inside of the world. He sees the hatred and prejudice but he still doesn’t quite understand why people do what they do. He is beginning to see that life is not always fair, and that life is not in black and white. Things are right and wrong, but people work their way around the

right and wrong sometimes because of what they believe in. This is the first hint of realization in Jem where he starts to go from the innocent child we see in the beginning to understanding life and how the adult life works. Later in the book Jem understands more fully the ways of life, and why people do what they choose to do. “. I’ve got it figured out. There’s four kinds of folks in the world. There’s the ordinary kind like us and the neighbors, there’s the kind like the Cunninghams out in the woods, the kind like the Ewells down at the dump, and the Negroes. ” (302). These words from Jem to Scout show that he is maturing. He is really starting to understand how the world works now. He shows here that he is starting to understand the classification system among people. He is learning that there are prejudices in the world and that people will be treated differently for who they are. “ Scout, I think I’m beginning to understand something. I think I’m beginning to understand why Boo Radley has stayed shut up in the house all this time . . . it’s because he wants to stay inside. ” (304). By this point Jem has matured enough to understand the world. He realizes why people are doing what they do. He realizes now that staying secluded from the world was Boo’s choice rather than him being forced. He understands that there is prejudices, and that some people (like Boo) would rather just let people think what they want than have to face what the world has to bring. Jem shows the theme of loss of innocence the best in this novel. He starts out young and naïve playing silly games with his sister and friends. He really did not care how the world worked he just was having fun like little kids should. When he witnessed the trial he was confused. He didn’t understand how people could be so mean. He was just trying to understand how the world works. Then throughout the

story from different events he slowly started gaining knowledge of the world around him. By the end of the book Jem has had to grow up a lot. Jem learns that there are many different kinds of people in this world. Not everyone is fair and equal just like his father Atticus. He finds that there is a lot of prejudice and hatred in the world. Although Jem lost his childhood innocence, he has gained the knowledge of how adults work, and is growing up to be a good example for his little sister Scout. Works Cited Lee, Harper. *To Kill a Mocking Bird*. London: Mandarin, 1996. Pg. 84. Print. Lee, Harper. *To Kill a Mocking Bird*. London: Mandarin, 1996. Pg. 294. Print. Lee, Harper. *To Kill a Mocking Bird*. London: Mandarin, 1996. Pg. 302. Print. Lee, Harper. *To Kill a Mocking Bird*. London: Mandarin, 1996. Pg 304. Print. Rothfuss, Patrick. "Patrick Rothfuss Quotes." Goodreads. Web. 29 Mar. 2012.