

Discrimination and prejudice in to kill a mockingbird by harper lee

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Both discrimination and prejudice were a common occurrence in the early part of the 1900s and continued for many decades into the 1960s and 1970s. In "To Kill a Mockingbird" by Harper Lee, many instances of discrimination and prejudice are evident. In today's society, the issues, words and situations in the book are horrifying and upsetting. However, there was a time when it was not only commonplace, but also acceptable.

Though the book takes place in the 1930s, long after slavery was abolished when the Civil War ended, racism was still rampant through many parts of the United States. Not only does Lee present the obvious bigotry of the times, but she also slides in subtle ways that black people were mistreated during the times. The reason this works for Lee is because the discomfort that the novel makes readers feel engages them wholly in the story and keeps them reading until the last page. Calpurnia, the Finch's black housekeeper is treated fairly well by the family, but it still completely acceptable to treat her as someone from a lower social class. She isn't allowed to eat at the table with the family and has to ride in the backseat when they go places. Regardless of how long Calpurnia had been with the Finch family, they never treated her as their equal.

Another large instance of discrimination readers encounter in the novel are the terms used to describe the black people. The whites called them "nigger" and "darkie." While many white people saw nothing wrong with these terms, Atticus knew they were offensive and that the black people didn't like them. You can see this when he scolds Scout for calling a black person "nigger." When Atticus agrees to represent a black person at trial, it's even more obvious that he was more advanced in terms of equality than <https://assignbuster.com/discrimination-and-prejudice-in-to-kill-a-mockingbird-by-harper-lee/>

the average person in town. Despite Atticus Finch's feelings, many of the other people in the town were prejudicial against the blacks.

They had to sit in separate areas of the church, use separate doors, they couldn't frequent restaurants where whites were, they had to have separate schools and water fountains, were not allowed to vote and were subject to the Jim Crow laws in the area. On top of all that, many of the white people truly thought they were better than the blacks and treated them accordingly. Though there is a lot going on in "To Kill a Mockingbird," the underlying theme of the entire novel is prejudice and discrimination. It occurs on every single page and drives many of the scenes within the book. The story does a thorough job of portraying the times. The way that white people treated black people was definitely like it is told in the book and even worse in some cases.

The fact that Atticus was white and was the lawyer for a black person was completely unbelievable and taboo at the time. So too was the fact that Dolphus Raymond was in love with a black woman. Those sorts of things just weren't talked about back then. They were seen as scandalous because blacks and whites weren't supposed to mingle with each other.

Discrimination and prejudice hasn't disappeared and is still occurring in many parts of the world.

However, it's certainly not as rampant and widespread as it once was. In contrast to the 1930s, showing racism is no longer an acceptable thing. Though modern society isn't like it was in "To Kill a Mockingbird," the book is an important link to the history of racism in the United States.

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