

Prejudice Runs Deep in To Kill A Mockingbird

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Prejudice Runs Deep in To Kill A Mockingbird

To Kill A Mockingbird takes place in small town Maycomb, Alabama, a depression era town where people move slowly and twenty-four hours seems longer. The narrator of the story is a six-year-old girl named Jean Louise Finch, a tomboy who hates wearing dresses and goes by the nickname "Scout." Scout's being a tomboy is of no little significance because while we are treated to a sweet and affectionate portrayal of Maycomb at the novel's opening, we will find it is a town where racial [prejudice](#), hostility and ignorance run [deep](#) below the surface. Not only are the majority of the townspeople prejudiced against blacks, maintaining a feeling of superiority to the whole of their race, but there are also well-defined social roles based on gender.

To Kill A [Mockingbird](#) reflects many themes, but three of the most significant ones are courage, prejudice, and education. Through characterization and behavior the author demonstrates the connection of these themes as crucial for manifesting real humanity within individuals. Education and courage produce a higher level of humanity in human behavior, particularly because they allow individuals to walk in the skins of other people before judging them. Education and courage allow for a neutralization of prejudice

because they lend a broader understanding to the individual concerning others. Atticus, the father of Scout and Jem (Jeremy Finch), often teaches the lessons of education and courage to his children. Atticus' brand of courage and education is different than that of most people's in the town. Atticus' brand of courage disdains the use of guns, as we see when he refuses to use one to protect Tom Robinson (a black man accused of...

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...th, as surely as mockingbirds are shot because they are considered "ugly." Education and courage allow individuals to manifest a level of humanity that is color blind and does not criticize or judge based on circumstantial evidence or before walking in the skin of another. In the author's view the type of justice and social conditions that exist in Maycomb, Alabama, are, mirroring the words of Jem after the guilty verdict for Tom, not right "It ain't right" (Lee, 1960, 214). Prejudice and discrimination run rampant underneath the seemingly sweet and affectionate portrayal of Maycomb at the novel's outset. It is these two elements that will unjustly condemn an innocent man to death, two elements Lee considers a sin as surely as Atticus views killing a mockingbird as sinful.

Works Cited

Lee, H. (1960). *To Kill A Mockingbird*. New York, Warner Books, Inc.

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