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An Analysis of Social Institutions in Shaping the Worldview of Characters in Harper Lee's *TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD*

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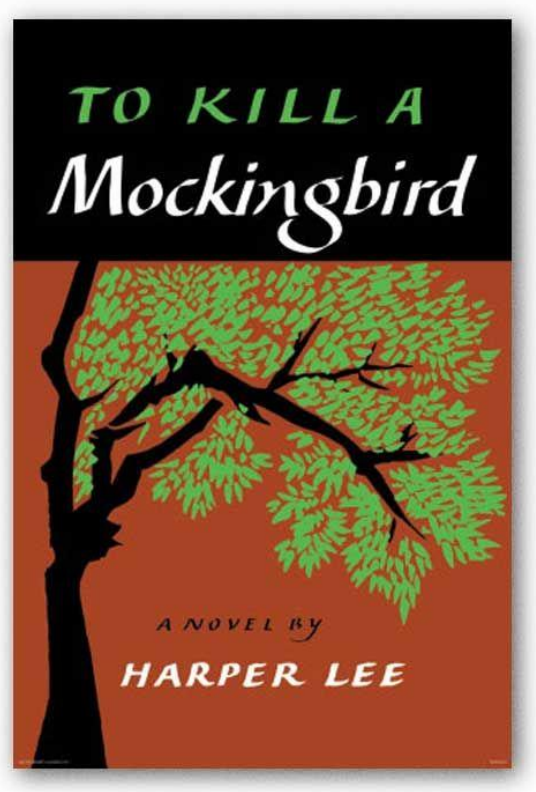

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Abstract

The book *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee is Pulitzer Prize-winning novel. It is set in the 1930s, a period when racism was very prominent. Harper Lee emphasises the subjects of racism and resistance in her novel using characters and their collaborations inside the Maycomb Community.This paper explores the role of social institutions in shaping the worldview of

characters and also examines how the society influences the children in this novel. Atticus Finch, although a solid figure in Maycomb, is criticised by his kin for being a respectable individual and sticking to his morals in safeguarding an innocent coloured man. The narrator of the story Scout, runs over many individuals and circumstances with prejudice and tolerance, as her father defends a black man. Scout's character grows broadly all through the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and she is enormously impacted by Maycomb's society. She observes behaviour that regularly puzzles her, yet as she experiences a progression of developing encounters, she starts to understand that not all individuals act or believe as she has been raised to, and tolerance and respect for these differences are important. All the characters are linked together in a different way, but all were ignorant and all were afraid of perceived evil. All were casualties of prejudice and all were not thoughtful and that is the reason it's a sin to kill a mockingbird.

Keywords: Racism, Social Institutions, Prejudice, Ethics, Injustice, Ignorance, Fear

To Kill a Mockingbird

To Kill a Mockingbird is set in a small town in Alabama in the 1930s, a town much like the one in which author Harper Lee came of age. Jean Louise Finch also is known as Scout is the narrator and protagonist of the story and a good part of this story's brilliance lies is the fact that it's told from a child's point of view. Through Scout's eyes, Lee is able to present the story objectively. By having an innocent little girl making racial remarks and regarding people of colour in a way consistent with the community, author provides an objective view if the situation. As a child, Scout can mention objective facts that a grown-up would keep away from or sugarcoat. Readers too are likely to be forgiving of a child's perspective, whereas they would find an adult who makes these remarks offensive. Scout Finch lives with her brother, Jem and their widowed father, Atticus, in the sleepy Alabama town of Maycomb. One summer, Jem and Scout befriended a boy named Dill, who has come to live in their neighbourhood for the summer and the trio acts out stories together. Scout is intelligent and by the standards of her time and place, a tomboy. As the novel progresses this faith is tested by the hatred and prejudice that emerge during Tom Robinson's trial. Scout, in the long run, builds up a more adult viewpoint that empowers her to acknowledge human goodness without overlooking human evil. Jeremy

Atticus Finch is something of a regular American boy, refusing to back down from dares and fantasizing about playing football. Four years older than Scout, he progressively isolates himself from her games, but he remains her close companion and protector throughout the novel. Jem moves into adolescence in the midst of the story and his convictions are shaken extremely by the evil and injustice that he sees in the midst of the trial of Tom Robinson. Atticus is a lawyer in Maycomb descended from an old local family. A widower with a dry sense of humour, Atticus has instilled in his children his strong sense of morality and justice.

Scout

Scout is an incredibly remarkable young girl, in her own specific qualities and in her social position. She is curiously intelligent (she learns to read before starting school), shockingly beyond any doubt (she fights with young fellows without fear), commonly thoughtful (she worries over the central goodness and devilishness of mankind) and extraordinarily awesome (she, for the most part, acts with the best intentions). In terms of her social identity, she is peculiar for being a boyish young lady in the clean and genuine southern universe of Maycomb. One quickly realises when reading To Kill a Mockingbird Scout is the kind of person, she is the result of how Atticus has raised her. He has sustained her brain, conscience, little voice and uniqueness without frustrating her by demanding social hypocrisies and notions of propriety.While most girls in Scout's position would wear dresses and learning conduct, Scout, on account of Atticus' hands-off child rearing style, wears overalls and figures out how to climb trees with Jem and Dill.

Facing and Countering Racial Prejudice

Toward the start of the novel, Scout is an innocent, good-hearted five-year-old child who has no involvement with the indecencies of the world. As the novel advances, Scout has her first contact with evil in the form of racial prejudice. The basic change of her character is regulated by the request of whether she will emerge from that contact with her internal voice and positive thinking set up, or whether she will be bruised, hurt or destroyed like Boo Radley and Tom Robinson. Scout finds that humankind has an inconceivable cutoff as to evil; it also has a great capacity for God and that the evil can often be mitigated if one approaches others with an

outlook of sympathy and understanding. Scout's change into a person prepared for tolerating that outlook demonstrates that, whatever evil she encounters she will retain her conscience without becoming cynical. Though she is as yet a youngster toward the end of the book, Scout's point of view on life develops from that of an innocent child into that of a nearly grown-up.

Scout is a genuine young woman who is exposed to despicable context at an early age and constrained to make an adult-like great perspective. Jem winds up in a considerably more turbulent situation. His shattering knowledge at Tom Robinson's trial happens similarly as he is entering adolescence, a period when life is entangled and traumatic enough. His disillusionment upon seeing that equality does not generally win, abandons him, leaves him helpless and confounded at a basic developmental point in his life. Nevertheless, he admirably upholds the commitment to justice that Atticus instilled in him; he keeps up it with significant conviction all through the novel. Unlike the exhausted Mr. Raymond, Jem is not without desire; Atticus uncovers to Scout that Jem basically needs to process what he has learned. The strong presence of Atticus in life appears to guarantee that he will recover his equilibrium. Later in his life, Jem is able to see that Boo Radley's unexpected aid indicates it is incredible good he can find in people. Even before the end of the novel, Jem shows signs of having learned a positive lesson from the trial; for instance, around the beginning of chapter 25, he declined to allow Scout to squash a roly-poly bug since it hasn't done any harm to her. After seeing the unfair destruction of Tom Robinson, Jem now wants to protect the fragile and harmless.

Atticus

Atticus is a wise man, committed to justice and equality, and his parenting style is based on fostering these virtues in his children. He even encourages Jem and Scout to call him Atticus, so that they can interact in terms as equals. Throughout the novel, Atticus works to develop Scout's and Jem's respective consciences by teaching them to put themselves in a person's shoes before either of them judges the person. As one of the most prominent citizens in Maycomb during the great depression, Atticus is relatively well off in a time of widespread poverty. Because of his penetrating intelligence, calm wisdom and exemplary behaviour, Atticus is respected by everyone, including the very poor. He works as the ethical spine of Maycomb, a

man to whom others hand over circumstances of uncertainty and trouble. But the inner voice that makes him stand strong is praiseworthy; at last it causes his dropping out with the general population of Maycomb. Not able to endure the town's persisting instilled racial prejudice, he agrees to shield Tom Robinson, a black man. Atticus' movement makes him the topic of hate in Maycomb, notwithstanding he is essentially and necessarily an astonishing figure, making it difficult to be despised for long. After the trial, he appears to be bound to be held in an indistinguishable high respect than before. Atticus sharpens the ethic of sympathy and understanding that he preaches to Scout and Jem and never holds a grudge against the people of Maycomb, despite their coldblooded separation through racial inequality. Atticus sees much to appreciate in them. He perceives that individuals have both good and bad qualities and he is determined to admire the good while understanding and forgiving the bad. Atticus passes this great moral lesson on to Scout; this perspective protects the innocent from being demolished by contact with evil. However, ironically Atticus is a brave figure in the novel and a respected central figure in Maycomb, neither Jem nor Scout intentionally adores him at the start of the novel. Both are humiliated that he is more seasoned than other fathers and that he doesn't hunt for fish. But Atticus's insightful parenting, which he sums up in Chapter 30 saying "Before Jem looks at anyone else he looks at me, and I' ve tried to live so I can look squarely back at him" (Lee 301), ultimately wins their respect. He stands inflexibly dedicated to equity and keenly ready to view matters from the viewpoints of others. He does not create in the novel, but rather holds these qualities in equivalent measures, making him the novel's ethical guide and voice of the soul.

The Finch Family

With regard to the Finch family, there is one member that deviates from the rest, close relative Alexandra. Atticus' sister comes to live with him and his young children in the blink of an eye before the trial against Atticus' customer Tom Robinson begins. Tom is an African-American man accused of the assault of a white woman. Aunt Alexandra comes to Maycomb to help her sibling through this troublesome time, however she acts reservedly and appears to show little empathy and understanding. Aunt Alexandra has an alternate comprehension of bringing up children. Whereas Atticus is a more laid-back, liberal parent and gives his kids chances to

experience themselves, Alexandra is strict and does not allow Scout to make her own particular experience herself, for example, when she needs to visit their dark servant Calpurnia at her home. Scout severely dislikes everything ladylike, as exhibited by her stressed association with her legitimate Auntie Alexandra. But for a young lady to do these things(even today, yet particularly in the American south amid the period of the Incomparable Gloom), she is viewed as deviant. Because Scout is extremely youthful and has been raised by a father, she is frequently excused by relatives and group individuals for her boyishness and dismissal of the feminine. However, people around her trust that it is the ideal opportunity for her to start learning how to be more of a lady. She battles with her resistance against the societal standard and her yearning to keep the boyish way of life instead of ladyhood. Yet she is starting to understand that individuals around there are anticipating that she would remonstrate in a way she shouldn't act. Scout learned how to look at other people from her father Atticus, who likewise considers individuals to be people and does not pass judgment on them just by their name or background. For him, great individuals are the individuals who do great things. Scout offers hatred towards being known as a "girl", always taking the word as an insult. Since close relative Alexandra is remaining for a given measure of time, Scout to her dismay realizes she must follow the aunt's rules. "I felt the starched walls of a pink cotton penitentiary closing in on me, and for the second time in my life, I thought of running away immediately". (Lee 150) The preceding quote expresses Scout's inclination and state of mind towards feminity. By depicting feminity as a prison suggests that girlhood is like a prison that keeps her hostage, suffocating her.

Moral Questions

The exploration of the novel's larger moral questions takes place from the point of view of young people; the instruction of kids is fundamentally required for the advancement of the greater part of the novel's subjects. This subject is investigated most intensely through the connection amongst Atticus and his kids, as he commits himself to ingraining a social inner voice in Jem and Scout. The scenes at school give an immediate counterpoint to Atticus' successful training of his youngsters. Scout is as often as possible stood up by educators who are either frustratingly unsympathetic to children's needs or morally hypocritical.

The Role of Education

As is true of *To Kill a Mockingbird*'s other major themes, the novel's conclusion about education is that the most imperative lessons are those of sensitivity and understanding and that a thoughtful, understanding procedure is the best way to instruct these lessons. In this way, Atticus' capacity to place himself in his children's shoes makes him a magnificent educator, while Miss Caroline's inflexible responsibility to the educational methods that she learned in college makes her ineffective. The education framework in Maycomb is exceptionally opposing and in reverse at times, and this makes a noteworthy point in the thoughts of the novel. The theme of education runs throughout the novel, although not always based in the school. It initially shows Scout realising that school is not what she was anticipating, as the teacher is patronising and insensitive, whereas the children are intelligent and used to a harsher environment. The information that Jem and Scout get all through the novel is as lessons learnt from Atticus, and these lessons are the ethical life lessons setting up the kids for grown-up life when issues, for example, bigotry, segregation and cruelty are part of a daily routine. This instruction gets Jem and Scout ready to be great individuals; wise as well as intelligent, and this is the thing that matters when they have the force of learning.

The Prankster

Charles Baker Harris, also known as Dill is the prankster of the group, the late spring companion that finishes Jem and Scout's dynamic. He makes a large portion of their naughtiness, recounting unlimited stories from his distinctive creative energy and does not always tell the truth. Dill is unhappy in his home, feeling dismissed by his mother and step-father. One of the most critical things we find out about Dill is his sensitivity to injustice and cruelty. During the trial, he needs to leave when he starts to cry at the way the prosecutor treated Tom. Dill is not subject to the scholarly prejudice of Maycomb like such a large number of other young people, he firmly trusts that everybody is equal, and he is sickened by what he sees uncovered in the trial. It is now that the kids take in the mystery of Dolphus Raymond, who praises Dill for his compassion.

Mr. Raymond

Mr. Raymond is another grown-up like Miss Maudie and Atticus, who educates the young kids a lesson in correspondence and stretching out empathy to all people. He demonstrates that there are others in Maycomb who remain behind Atticus choice to speak to Tom whether they can talk in broad daylight or not. Mr. Raymond has kept a little mystery, keeping in mind the end goal to keep up his position in life and he imparts this to the youngsters since he sees that they, unlike adults, will understand.

Miss Maudie

Jem and Scout consider Miss Maudie a companion in light of the fact that, not at all like most grown-ups, she treats them with respect. Just like Atticus, who she says is "the same in his house as he is on the public streets" (Lee 61), Miss Maudie acts the same to children as she does to adults Miss Maudie acts the same to young kids as she does to grown-ups. Miss Maudie sees the children as somewhat less-experienced grown-ups and treats them like that. Along with her, Calpurnia is a solid, positive female impact in Jem and Scout's lives. She is a strong character who learned many lessons through hardship. Calpurnia reverberated Atticus' child-rearing style and urged them to comprehend and be aware of others' sentiments and circumstances. She was a good example for the Finch children. At the novel advances, the young people's changing attitude towards Boo is simply a wellspring of adolescent superstition, yet toward the end, he turns out to be completely human to Scout, indicating that she has developed into a thoughtful and understanding individual. Boo Radley is a wise kid destroyed by his cruel father. Despite the agony, he has endured the purity of his heart that rules his interaction with the children. By saving Jem and Scout from Bob Ewell, Boo demonstrates a definitive image of good.

Investigates the Ethical Way of Individuals

To Kill a Mockingbird investigates the ethical way of individuals, regardless of whether individuals are basically good or evil. The novel analyses this question by defining Scout and Jem's move from a point of view of childhood innocence in which they assume that people are good because they have never seen evil, to a more grown-up viewpoint in which they have stood

up to malicious characters and must consolidate it into their comprehension of the world. As a consequence of this depiction of the move from honesty to experience, one of the book's vital subthemes includes the danger that contempt, bias and numbness take on an antagonistic stance to the pure individuals; for example, Tom Robinson and Boo Radley are not prepared for the evil that they experience and, therefore, they are destroyed. Even Jem is misled to an extent by his discovery of the evil of racism during and after the trial. Whereas Scout can keep up her fundamental confidence in human instinct in spite of Tom's conviction, Jem's confidence in equality and in the humankind is gravely harmed, and he withdraws into a condition of disillusionment.

The moral voice of *To Kill a Mockingbird* is embodied by Atticus Finch, who is for all intents and purposes special in the novel in that he has encountered and comprehended fiendishness without losing his confidence in the human limit of goodness. Atticus comprehends that instead of being essentially animals of both evil and detestable, the vast majority have both great and terrible qualities. The critical thing is to welcome the great qualities and understand the bad qualities by treating others with sensitivity and attempting to see life from their perspective. He tries to show this extreme good lesson to Jem and Scout, to demonstrate to them that it is conceivable to live with the still, small voice without losing hope.

To Conclude

At the start of the book, they are honest with an uncomplicated feeling of what's great and what's evil. By the finish of the book, the kids have lost their innocence and gained a more complex understanding of the world in which terrible and great are available and obvious to nearly everyone. As the children develop into the grown-up world, however, they don't just acknowledge what they see. They question what doesn't make sense to them -prejudice, hatred and violence. Like each child growing up, Scout goes to class for the primary time. But as opposed to adding to her instruction, Scout's school is portrayed as inflexible to the point of foolishness with teachers who criticise students who got an early start on reading and hate the Nazis yet can't see the prejudice exhibited in their own particular town. *To Kill a Mockingbird* does less to investigate institutionalised school education as condemning it, demonstrating how it

underlines part truths and arrangements intended to make conventionalist kids instead of advance imaginative basic consideration, sensitivity and mutual understanding across racial and socio-economic boundaries.

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