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 Ms. Smith

Inequalities in Maycomb, Alabama

Although discrimination still exists, it is not nearly as bad as it was in the 1930s. The novel To Kill a Mockingbird gives the reader a first hand look into inequalities in the USA in 1930s. The novel is about a family of three, Atticus and his son and daughter Jem and Scout, along with other residents of Maycomb, Alabama. The children often spend their time trying to make the town "spook" come out of his house. Atticus, their father, spends his time working very hard on a case about rape from a black man in his courthouse. The novel To Kill a Mockingbird shows various forms of inequality, such as gender inequality, socio-economic inequality and racial inequality.

In the town of Maycomb, Alabama the reader sees many gender inequalities. Jean Louise Finch narrates the novel To Kill a Mockingbird. Jean Louise would rather be called Scout. A name like Jean Louise portrays a very feminine character, but with a nickname like Scout, she sounds like one of the boys and often times feels like one too. Scout loves spending time hanging around her older brother Jem and friend Dill, trying to prove that she is just as tough, if not more so, than the boys. Jem and Scout got into a fistfight. "He slapped me and I tried another left, but a punch in the stomach sent me sprawling on the floor. It nearly knocked the breath out of me, but it didn't matter because I knew he was fighting, he was fighting me back. We were still equals!" (184). Scout showed that she was just as strong and as much of a grown up as Jem because he was not too "high and mighty" to fight. It also shows that Scout was just "one of the guys" because Jem would not have fought a "girl". Aunt Alexandra and Scout also have an ongoing feud because Alexandra believes that Scout needs to be more ladylike. Scout likes the way she is and knows that Atticus, Jem and Dill do not mind either. The first thing Aunt Alexandra says about Scout needing a ladylike influence was "We decided that it would be best to have some feminine influence. It won't be many years, Jean Louise, before you become interested in clothes and boys" (170). Scout made a retort in her mind about Cal being a feminine influence, how it would be many years before she became interested in boys and that she would never be interested in clothes, but kept quiet so as to not upset Aunty. Scout thought she was perfectly fine how she was, but Aunt Alexandra had different opinions on how a lady

comma before "but"

should act. The inequalities between men and women and the socio-economic inequalities are very alike and tie into one another. ✓

The socio-economic inequalities in Maycomb are very abundant and unfair. Early on in the book Scout gets in a fight with Walter Cunningham because she got in trouble from Ms. Caroline for trying to tell her that Walter was poor. Walter cannot afford lunch, but knows that he cannot pay back what is owed, which is why he does not accept handouts or loans. Walter's father once needed legal aid from Atticus, and since he was not able to pay Atticus back in money, he would leave things like stovewood and hickory nuts on the back porch. Yet, still, people viewed the Cunningham's as trash simply because they were poor. For example Aunt Alexandra upset Scout by calling Walter trash; "She doesn't like me, that's all there is to it, and I don't care. It was her callin' Walter Cunningham trash that got me goin'" (302). Aunt Alexandra had no reason to call Walter trash other than the fact that his family is poor. It just goes to show that people were discriminated based on the fact that they had little money, when they are actually wonderful people. Although there are few people in Maycomb that that are both poor and trash, one family in particular fits that description, the Ewells. The Ewells live in a dump and rely on their drunken father since they have no mother. They also rely on older sister Mayella, who is lonelier than anybody Scout knows. Scout figures she was as sad as "mixed children" because; "White people wouldn't have anything to do with her because she lived among pigs; Negroes wouldn't have anything to do with her because she was white" (256). Just like how white people would not have anything to do with mixed children because they were part black and vice versa. Mayella tempted a black man, which was unspeakable of a white woman. Mayella's father did not want anyone to find out so he turned the blame on the black man. Similar to socio-economic inequalities, racial inequalities play a big part in the novel. ✓

In the novel To Kill a Mockingbird there is quite a lot of racial inequalities. Bob Ewell was Mayella Ewell's father. It was said that Tom Robinson, a black man, had raped Mayella. It turned out that Bob had made the story up because he had found Mayella tempting Tom, and had beat her up over it. He needed something to tell everyone, so why not just blame it on the black man, since they (coloured folks) were inferior anyways. Jem was quite curious as to why white men always cheated black men, but Atticus just said that it was just the way it was; "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 just the facts of life" (295). Tom was given a guilty verdict, even if any man had thought him innocent, because the white man always wins. Another place where coloured folks

were inferior was in the churches. It was not so much discrimination as was lack of money and education. Jem and Scout had attended church with Cal one Sunday, and when both of them were quite confused as to why there had been no hymnbooks, Cal had tied it to lack of funds. Cal had also explained that even if their black church had owned hymnbooks, they would not be used, for only a few people in the black community were literate, herself included. The inequalities between black and white people are a main aspect of the book To Kill a Mockingbird. ✓

In conclusion, the novel shows various aspects in which one sees gender, socio-economic and racial inequalities. The novel shows inequalities relating to gender in the town of Maycomb, Alabama, especially within the Finch family. ✓ The reader also sees the inequalities in society within all of the town's social classes. The main aspect of To Kill a Mockingbird is the racial inequalities between Tom Robinson and white men, but also between white folks and coloured folks in general. Although one does not often hear about discrimination, it is always there, especially with the 2016 election, where we see discrimination more than ever. ✓

Works Cited *space*

Lee, Harper. *To Kill a Mockingbird*. New York: Warner Book Inc, 1960.

Leanne,
For your next essay, remind
me to teach you how to paraphrase!