

Student Essay on Racism Revealed to Jem

Racism Revealed to Jem by Harper Lee

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Essay

Throughout the book *To Kill A Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, one of the main characters, Jem, learns the harsh reality of racism and how cruel people can be when dealing with others. Jem begins to understand that racism is an extreme issue when Judge Taylor appoints Tom Robinson's case to Atticus. Jem finally comes to see that "Judge Taylor naming Atticus to defend [Tom] was no accident," (215), and that Atticus was the only one who could make the jury think. Jem realizes racism is a much bigger issue than it seems, and understands that Atticus, due to his internal strength, is one of the few people that can publically stand against racism. After Tom's conviction, Jem is beyond appalled and cannot believe people can be so cruel. Jem cannot understand how the jury can call Tom guilty, but hears from his father that "they've done it before, and they did it tonight, and they'll do it again, and when they do it--seems that only children weep" (213). Jem feels that regardless of the people of Maycomb knowing the wrongfulness of racism, they will never act upon it or try to fix it. While talking to Miss Maudie, Jem discovers that there is very little he himself can do to try and resolve racism issues. At one point in time, Jem "thought Maycomb folks were the best in the world," (215) but when he comes to see that they are far from the best, he begins to feel like "a caterpillar in a cocoon," (215) knowing he can't change the Maycomb folks. Jem did believe the Maycomb citizens were all out wonderful, up until they give him reason to think otherwise. Jem's maturity is a valuable part of *To Kill A Mockingbird* because it teaches never to feel over knowledgeable, because there is always an unseen point of view.