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English 12

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Importance of Time and Place

*To Kill a Mockingbird* takes place in a time like no other in American history, and it takes place in an area of America where racism was thriving. This story takes place during the time of the depression, when blacks were being mistreated, and finally the story is really made by taking place in Maycomb County in Alabama. First it is important to understand that this novel takes place during the in the 1930’s during the Great Depression.

This novel takes place during the Great Depression which was a hard time for many people because the economy was bad. An example of this is when Scout goes to school for the first day and discovered that Walter Cunningham has no lunch or lunch money. The Cunningham family is a family that doesn’t have any actual money because of the Depression, to get things they trade goods with others. Mr. Cunningham repaid Atticus for his legal services by giving the Finch family turnip greens, hickory nuts, stove wood, and other farm produce (24). This is very common to accept farm products instead of money in Maycomb County. During the Great Depression colored people were still being mistreated which is my next point.

During the time of the Great Depression colored people were treated poorly and segregation was still in affect which meant that the whites had separate schools, churches, and even restaurants then the blacks. This novel shows how much racism can affect people’s life. It can be easily said that racism will affect the blacks but it also affects the whites and in this case it affects Atticus because he has to defend a black. Atticus’s children are affected by this because Atticus is the father of them and they are attacked by Bob Ewell. Mr. Raymond is also affected by racism because he married a black woman and that is looked down upon so he pretends to be drinking and being drunk all the time. Tom Robinson is majorly affected by racism because his trial is solely based on the fact that he is black. Tom Robinson is solely accused of the rape because he is black, the trail is also segregated to separate the blacks from the whites. The jury also was in favor of accusing Tom because it was an all-white jury. Racism is heavy in this book because of where the story takes place.

The South wanted to keep slaves and when they couldn’t own slaves anymore the blacks were treated terribly. This story was needed to take place in a poor county in Alabama because it shows the struggle that everyone had. Jem and Scout ran around and got in trouble because there was nothing else to do. One thing that Jem and Scout did was that they were always hanging around the Radley place. Along with hanging around the Radley place they tried to get Boo Radley to come out of the house, they even trespassed and about got killed. The racism of the story needed to be in a Southern state because that is the only place it was during the 1930’s. Maycomb is a poor county where the farmers do more bartering for other goods and services than selling goods like they do now.

The setting of this story really shows how life was in America during the Great Depression. This story shows that the Great Depression affected the small town life in Maycomb. Another thing that was very common during this time was segregation and how blacks were treated bad compared to whites. Finally this novel’s setting in a small town in Alabama pieces together the all the different struggles that people can face. People in today’s modern world are facing similar struggles such as racism, and the hard economic times we are having.

Work Cited Page

Lee, Harper. *To Kill A Mockingbird*. New York: First Warner Printing, 1982. Print.