Matyson Kleinschmidt

Mrs. Ippensen

English 101

5 May 2014

Strengths and Challenges in *To Kill A Mockingbird*

Harper Lee’s, *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a very detailed book. Many people who have read it have different views on it. Because it is very detailed, there are a variety of strengths and challenges throughout. I highly recommend reading this book because it shows peoples’ views of what the setting was in the 1960s.

 *To Kill A Mockingbird* is given from the point of view of Scout Finch, a young girl growing up in Maycomb, Alabama, in the years after the Great Depression. The story tracks her life as she lives through many social issues, including racism in the Deep South. This issue is displayed when her attorney father is forced to defend an innocent black man in a very controversial case.

 If you get along with people, you stick up for them. You can definitely see this throughout this book. Atticus is sticking up for Tom Robinson, his family, and his neighbors. Jem sticks up for Scout, and all of the neighbors stand up for Jem, Scout, and Dill. Even in Chapter 15 when Atticus was at the jail, Scout and Jem went there too and saved Atticus from trouble. “‘Son, I said go home.’ Jem shook his head” (152). Jem didn’t want to leave Atticus because they had been listening to their conversation and he knew something bad would happen if they left. When Jem was in trouble, that’s when Scout stepped in. “‘I’ll send him home,’ a burly man said, and grabbed Jem roughly by the collar. He yanked Jem nearly off his feet.” Scout screamed, “‘Don’t you touch him!’ I kicked the man swiftly” (152).

 Atticus treats his kids very well. He knows that they are his number one priority and he would do anything for them. Atticus even started to teach the kids how to read and write because he wanted the best out of them. He rarely got mad at them and would read to them and let them sit on his lap whenever they were all at home. But things started to change.

 Things have changed tremendously over the years. Nowadays if you call somebody a nigger, you get in serious trouble. The setting in the book was in the 1960s and people got away with it. If you supposedly raped somebody you get in huge trouble as well. You still have to go through court but it’s much more serious.

 Communication was a very big factor in this book, but the language was not always correct. A very big challenge is how the characters talked. For a younger level, this book may not be appropriate because people will most likely not know what the characters are saying. The education level was not high back then so people did not understand correct English. For example, “‘Mr. Finch, I tried. I tried to ‘thout bein’ ugly to her’” (195). As you can see, older people that would read this book could probably understand what that means, but a younger person would not. Younger people may also not understand why certain people treat others the way they do.

 Anybody that you ask can probably tell you that people get treated different based on their color in some places. Racism is a big part in this book. The blacks get called niggers and if whites defend them then they get called nigger-lovers (83). Some individuals take offense to this and some don’t but not everybody understands these words, like younger children.

 Personally, I think that *To Kill a Mockingbird* was written for older folks. Simply because they will understand it better than younger people. This could be very difficult to comprehend for them because I don’t think they would understand the terms, nigger, nigger-lover, and rape. But on the other hand I think that if someone were to explain these key words, languages, and told them what racism was, then they would be able to understand the text better.

 *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a great novel. It may not be appropriate for all ages but as you can see, it has its strengths and challenges. The strengths about sticking up for each other, getting treated well by everyone, and how things have changed are all very clear and noticeable. All in all I believe that all of the shortcomings like language, how everyone gets treated, and racism can all be explained to individuals throughout their reading so they are able to understand the entire text.