Shine

7th hour

Accepting Others

“The moment a little boy is concerned with which is a jay and which is a sparrow, he can no longer see the birds or hear them singing,” says psychiatrist Eric Berne. The quote by Berne displays how discovering the difference between two topics can make the less important one become obsolete and seem wrong. The idea is displayed in many pieces of literature and in life itself. In the historical fiction novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, author Harper Lee tries to convey the message of what life was like in the South in the 1930’s. Her piece of literature represents children discovering how discrimination and difference in society play a crucial part in which groups of people are trusted and respected in the South.  Displayed in the story, the cases of Charles Baker Harris, Boo Radley, and Tom Robinson, are each thought of as sinful by some folks. People are sometimes excluded from society due to being different, yet no matter what level of difference it is, all people should be accepted for themselves.

In some cases, exclusion can be targeted toward colleagues and even family members. This applies to Dill’s situation, in that his parental guardians are making him feel this way. For example, Dill says, “Mr. Finch, don’t tell Aunt Rachel, don’t make me go back, please sir” (141). This displays the emotional neglect his parents are bestowing upon him. This makes Dill feel like an outcast because he can’t even get respect from his own parents. Dill tells Scout later, “That wasn’t it, he, they just wasn’t interested in me” (143). This causes him to run away from home in order to escape this painful situation.  He seeks the help of the Finches, who take him in and allow him to stay with them for a short period of time. This allows Dill to realize how to get through this period of judgment and denial. Harper Lee shows that even though he isn’t accepted by some, there will always be a place for Dill to call home.

People are judged and maltreated because of being unique and doing unordinary things. This scenario is represented by the character of Arthur Radley.  Arthur Radley, also known as Boo, has hardships that are set on his plate. His father and brother both make him feel as if he is a ghost, so that he feels so useless that he isn’t able to step out of his own home. For instance, Boo attempted to give gifts to the children as an act of kindness. But instead of being rewarded, his brother punished him yet again, bringing him to an even lower state. This presents the harshness of this form of neglect towards Boo. It shows that Boo can’t even have a sense of belonging. He can’t even count on his own brother for a feeling of acceptance. However, Boo does not give up so quickly. Time and time again Boo insists on going against what he is told, until eventually he saves the lives of Jeremy and Scout Finch. This illustrates that a person outside the majority of the crowd can still do a lot of good, and that he or she can still have a sense of worth, even if they aren’t accepted by others.

At times, people can be judged and accused of wrongdoing because of their race. A character in the story named Tom Robinson was put against this challenge. When Tom is accused of raping a white woman, he is seen as a disgrace to the community, not only because of what he did, but because he is an African American. As Tom says during his trial, “Mr. Finch, if you was a negro like me, you’d be scared too” (195). Since this story takes place in the South, blacks aren’t respected or trusted. But now since Tom has supposedly caused this incident, all he has done is enraged the people of Maycomb. In addition to this, Tom is tried in the courtroom and is bound to be killed for what he has done.  However, Atticus Finch, the father of Jem and Scout, serves as his lawyer and attempts to dig Tom out of this grave he has lured himself into. At the end of the case, Tom is not proven innocent, mainly due to Mr. Gilmer’s saying to the judges. “*You* felt sorry for *her,* you felt *sorry* for her?” (197). This shows that it does not matter what and individual stands for, if they are different and being excluded, comfort and assistance must be given to this person.

People can be shut out of the community due to being different from the majority of the crowd; however, giving them a sense of worth is what is needed to be done. After all, everyone is equal. This is supported by the situation of Charles Baker Harris, the uniqueness of Boo Radley, and the appearance of Tom Robinson in the eyes of the town of Maycomb. Not only does this exclusion happen in literature, but it also happens in real life. In the future, situations may come about when someone known is being neglected. But what needs to be realized here is that it is okay to be different. Sometimes it can be good to be the odd one out so that there will be separation from the ways and ideas of everyone else. In the words of Walt Disney, “The more you like yourself, the less you are like anyone else, which makes you unique.”