

Writers often treat the problems of inequality in books. The problems of inequality are treated to a great extent in the book, *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee through characterization. This book takes place in a small town called Maycomb which goes through several events related to the trial of an innocent African American, Tom Robinson, who is accused of rape and who Atticus, Scout's father, tries to defend. This book is shown through Atticus' daughter, Scout's perspective which shows the reader the biased and mean actions of people towards the African Americans. Throughout the book, the inequality and injustice of white people towards the African Americans are shown and reflected upon through a perspective of a little girl, and so the topic of inequality reflected to a great extent as she develops her way of thinking through seeing the unequal things that happen around her. Harper Lee deals with this topic through characterization, literary features, and setting. A variety of characters appear in the book; they all have different personalities and that is mostly what builds the theme of inequality in the book. The settings also effectively show the inequality that people are affected by during the 1930's and how people had different conditions by race. Irony, in particular, is showed a lot throughout this book to show how people treated African Americans and how their thoughts were different from their actions.

The characters in this book can be divided into two categories; the African Americans and the middle-class white people that live in Maycomb. They are a small community, however it reflects the inequalities by social class back then. This can be seen in how characters are treated throughout the book; Scout, as a middle-class white girl, states "When they saw Jem and me with Calpurnia, the men stepped back and took off their hats; the women crossed their arms at their waists, weekday gestures of respectful attention." when she visits the black church with Calpurnia(158). This quote shows how the African Americans treated when Jem and Scout takes a visit to Calpurnia's church. Even if the kids are much smaller than them, it can be seen that they respectfully bow towards the kids. This shows how white people were treated differently from African Americans, and the fact that the children just walked without doing any actions reflect that people were treated unequally as in the fact that they had to bow toward children and showed respect for them when they just came to attend the church. This also shows how the children also have been unconsciously used to the inequality that is happening around them because everyone treats the African Americans differently. Then, an African American, Tom Robinson, gets accused of raping a white woman, Mayella Ewell. Tom Robinson, however, is a very polite and respectful character as it can be seen on the quote "'Were you paid for your services?' 'No suh, not after she offered me a nickel... I knowed she didn't have no nickels to spare.'" and this quote develops the thought that Tom Robinson was accused of rape even if he was a innocent character, as of his actions of not taking money of his support because he knew Mayella was also poor(256). By the trial resulting in guilty when Tom is shown as a kind and polite character also supports the fact that people were treated unequally by their race and also represents not only Tom Robinson but all the African Americans who were found guilty and punished when they did not do any harm. Lee utilizes the characters and each of their personality to mirror the inequality and segregation between the African Americans and the whites during the book's point. Furthermore, he also makes use of settings to treat inequality..

By using literary features such as irony and motifs, Lee shows the inequality of the society and how innocent people are treated harshly by others and covers the topic of inequality in the book. Along with literary features, characterization reflects on how people treated each other, mostly on social statuses, and the settings also show and reflect on the inequality between race during that time. The inequality can be seen through the author's work to a great extent, and through these features it is shown that America during the 1930's had a social discrimination and a huge inequality between races.

Works Cited

Lee, Harper. *To Kill a Mockingbird*. New York: Grand Central, 1982. Print.