

Thesis: Racism is crippling

SUPPORT
PARAGRAPH
EXAMPLE

Topic
Sentence

Tom Robinson symbolizes the theme that racism is crippling.

Supporting
Sentences
(2-4 Sentences)

In Maycomb County his skin color limits his opportunities. His social mobility is impaired due to his economic status. In Alabama

his worth as a human is weakened because he is a black man. Harper Lee's description of Tom allows the reader to feel the pain of his disability.

Introduce
the quote
(1-2 Sentences)

"Thomas Robinson reached around, ran his fingers under his left arm and lifted it. He guided his arm to the Bible and his rubber-like left hand sought contact with the black binding. As he raised his right hand, the useless one slipped off the Bible and hit the clerk's table." (Lee, 254)

Quote
(1-4 Sentences)

In Maycomb, Alabama; even the Bible rejects Tom by dropping his hand to the clerk's table. This is a powerful statement by Lee about the crippling affect of religion when used falsely.

Explain
Quote
(2-4 Sentences)

Relate
to Lee
"meaning"

Allude
to
thesis

Combined with Tom's other disabilities; his arm and hand's failure to stay on the bible proves that racism is crippling.

Mr. Cerrasco
To Kill A Mockingbird Essay
03.13.15

Example Essay
(working draft)

It is a Sin

It has been written over and over again that killing a mockingbird is a sin. A motif is a recurring idea or theme in a work of literature. In *To Kill A Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, the theme people are not always how they appear is a reoccurring motif throughout the novel; leaving the reader with the message that it is not wise to make assumptions about people. Several characters in the novel are used to create a motif that supports this theme. Characters like Arthur Boo Radley, Calpurnia, and Tom Robinson represent minority outcast characters that experience prejudice and discrimination based on other people's presumptions about them. The majority of Maycomb County residents believe they know these characters based on stereotypes and popular accepted discrimination. Through these characters, Lee help the reader learn that it is unwise to jump to conclusions about people without firsthand knowledge or experience and provides the reader with valuable lessons about generosity, compassion, and empathy when one is able to be open minded enough to avoid prematurely judging people negatively.

Thesis Statement

Transition Sentence

Boo Radley is believed to be one thing when in fact he is something different is a representation of the motif people are not always how they appear. Arthur Radley is believed by most people in Maycomb to be a skulking monster. When in reality he is a misunderstood generous hero. "Boo was our neighbor. He gave us two soap dolls, a broken watch and chain, a pair of good-luck pennies, and our lives." (Lee, 373) Older Jeanne Louise is reflecting back and confirming for the reader that Arthur Radley was a generous man with a tragic life story and not a murderous miscreant. People believed stories and rumors about Boo and turned him into a monster instead of getting to know Arthur and his generosity. Lee is teaching the reader the value of getting to know a person before believing things that are said about a person.

Set up Quote

Transition and connect

Another character that represents the motif that people are not always how they appear is Calpurnia. Calpurnia is an African American woman. By Maybombian standards the assumption is that she is uneducated because she is black. However, Calpurnia is educated and is responsible for teaching Scout how to write. "Calpurnia was to blame for this. It kept me from driving her crazy on rainy days, I guess. She would set me a writing task by scrawling the alphabet firmly across the top of a table, then copying out a chapter of the Bible beneath." (Lee, 24) This is the opposite of regular expectations because a black woman taught a white woman how to write. In Maycomb County that would have been considered backwards. Calpurnia is a character that seems like a stereotypical southern black woman but is subtly educated and respected; reinforcing the motif of things are not always how they appear because most people in Maycomb would not know this about Calpurnia. Lee is reminding the reader that the majority of Maycombians would not be able to see past their presumptions about her skin color and would miss her compassion and value as a person.

to Lee message Quote

Transition Theme Lee

Tom Robinson is a character that most Maycomb County residents consider trash because of his skin color; however, he is an intelligent, humble, civilized man. He embodies the motif that people are not always how they appear. Unlike his white

Set up Quote

Author Attention Getter

order

topic sentence

Explain Quote

topic sentence

quote

Quote

topic sentence

accusers, he is able to feel empathy. "Yes, suh, I felt right sorry for her, she seemed to try more'n the rest of 'em--." (Lee, 264) Many prejudice Maycomb County citizens think that because Tom is an African American he is not capable of being empathetic. Mr. Gilmer tries to use Tom's words against him during the trial; but like any good motif; Gilmer's attempt to discredit Tom supports the message that people are not always how they appear because it was clear that Tom was not a bad person and was a good person for helping Mayella. Convicting and killing Robinson enables Lee to make a timeless statement about people are not always how they appear and the power of empathy.

It continues to be written that killing a mockingbird is a sin. The novel *To Kill A Mockingbird* had many motifs. Several of them were represented through characters such as Arthur Boo Radley, Calpurnia, and Tom Robinson. Lee combines motifs with realistic characters to create a powerful reading experience with many valuable lessons for all readers. The experiences of these characters demonstrate the importance of how it is dangerous and negligent to make assumptions about people based on rumors and accusations. Negatively stereotyping and discriminating based on differences like: race, ethnicity, social status, religion, gender, age, or education can lead to injustice and ultimately lead to the death of a mockingbird and that is a sin.

Analyze
Quote
Empathic

comment
Transition

Attention
Getter

thesis

statement
of
order

Lee
comment
Remind
reader
about
"message"