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Banned In the USA

To Kill A Mockingbird Chp 19-31 Reading Journal

When reading the chapter 19 to 31 of To Kill A Mockingbird, what stood out to me was after hearing about the death of Tom Robinson, despite Aunt Alexandra crying and Scout shaking, they have to get themselves together to face the ladies again in the living room as Ms.Maudie commanded Scout to “Stop that shaking”(Lee, Chp 24) and Aunt Alexandra “She took her handkerchief from her belt and wiped her nose. She patted her hair”(Lee, Chp 24). It is interesting to examine the need for these characters to put on a facade and hide vulnerability and emotions. In a way it suggests the need to maintain an image that is acceptable. It also raises the question of what it really means to be a lady. I think it is a set of social expectations and code for one to adhere to when they are in this very different world that is highly critical and consists of traps disguised as innocent questions as Scout describes it and to continue playing this role even in times of distress is in some ways honorable.

1.1

Dolphus Raymond is someone who exemplifies the idea of putting on a facade. He pretends to drink alcohol outside a Coca Cola bottle in a brown paper bag and acts drunk but in reality, he is doing this to “give 'em a reason”(Lee, Chp 20). He proceeded to say “It helps folks if they can latch onto a reason.” His “alcoholism” allows others to come to the justification of “why he won’t change his ways.”(Lee Chp 20) and why “He can’t help himself, that’s why he lives the way he

does.”(Lee, Chp 20). The behavior of Dolphus Raymond, who spends his time around black folks and has mixed children inevitably comes under scrutiny because of his socially unacceptable behavior. The purpose of Dolphus Raymond’s facade is not to fit in, but rather free himself from it. The general acceptance of him as an alcoholic and outcast removes himself out of the judgmental eye and gossips of Maycomb County. What is deemed to be socially acceptable goes hand-in-hand with the caste-like social hierarchy in Maycomb defined by the predetermined perception: “No Crawford Minds His Own Business, Every Third Merriweather Is Morbid, The Truth Is Not in the Delafields”(Lee, Chp 13). In this perspective, Tom Robinson was inevitable because it seems like the blacks are deemed to always lie, they were always non-christian and the guilty party. It has been this way and it always will. I think this is a way Lee offers commentary on race relations. Majority of the people in Maycomb accept the notion of African American as being inferior and segregation as it is, chalking it up to “the facts of life”(Lee, Chp 23). This is an easy thing to do, to follow what is normal and neglect their humanity. This inherent prejudice defines the treatment towards the blacks without conscience even in the courtroom.

2.1

2.2

Index of comments

- 1.1 Yes: this is a good discussion. Consider also the nature and content of the conversation that is happening at this event.
- 2.1 Excellent analysis of Dolphus Raymond, and it fits well with the point you raised in the previous paragraph.
- 2.2 You utilize and document textual evidence extremely well in this entry.