Name

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Why do people behave in ways that are considered beyond the boundaries?

Social expectations and social norms dictate the behavioral patterns of masses and often these practices normalize themselves in the form of social discourse and normative behavior. In the context of America, racial prejudices by White Americans have become a normal behavior against Black Americans. Likewise, African Americans are given inhumane treatment as compared to the White dominant group in America. Racism is a burning issue in American literature as well since it highly affected the sense of Black identity. The novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, highlights the racial mindset of the White majority group and its serious impacts on the lives of the Black minority group. Lee has developed the character of Atticus to show the necessity of breaking social boundaries to help the submissive people in lieu of racial issues in America. Similarly, he acts against the social norms because he wants to set an example for his children to always side with the truth.

Atticus is a lawyer by profession, but most importantly, it is his high sense of morals and principles that motivate him to raise his voice against injustice. In the fictional city of Maycomb, he enjoys the status of a well-established and well-disciplined lawyer. However, people from his own community turn against him when he decides to defend a black man, Tom against the influential White man, Bob Ewell. Similarly, it can be said that the judicial system of America clearly did not protect the civil rights of Blacks since it was highly influenced by the racial stereotypes prevalent in American society. In hindsight, Atticus knows that he is not going to win this case because of the biased judicial system but he stands for the civil rights of Tom. He shows high regard for the services of Calpurnia, the Black nanny of his children. Likewise, in his opinion, social justice and civil liberties are the fundamental rights of every person despite his color and ethnicity. Similarly, Tom Robinson is falsely accused of attempted rape whereas, in reality, Mayella is guilty but she knows about her White privilege. His character stands apart from his community because of his sense of humanity. In a dialogue, he says, "[You never really understand a person until you consider things](https://jgdb.com/literature/study-guides/book-to-kill-a-mockingbird/quote-you-never-really-understand-a-person-until-you) from his point of view... Until you climb inside of his skin and walk around in it” (Lee 36). African Americans have suffered a lot in the context of racial prejudices in a so-called liberal American state.

Atticus is a father as well and he believes that these stereotypes are passed on from one generation to another in America. Likewise, he takes extra measures to ensure that his children refrain from developing a prejudiced mindset unlike the people of their community. His parenting style is significant as compared to other characters in the novel since he talks to them in an adult fashion. Moreover, he lets his children explore their surroundings and asks their opinion about it. His daughter, Scout, says in the novel that his father’s most dangerous style of inquiring is direct questions that seek her opinion. Atticus is appreciated by her values by another character Miss Maudie in these words, “Atticus Finch is the same in his house as he is on the public streets” (Lee 25). He lets his children attend the Sunday church proceedings at Calpurnia’s church and trusts her services as a housekeeper and caretaker of his children. In one of his famous dialogues, he advises his children “I wanted you to see what real courage is, instead of getting the idea that courage is a man with a gun in his hand” (Lee 61). In another instance, he explains the importance of liberty, freedom, and justice to them as “Shoot all the blue jays you want, if you can hit ‘em, but remember it’s a sin to kill a mockingbird” (Lee 93).

In the novel, Atticus appears as a self-righteous man who dares to raise his voice against racism in America but this behavior portrays him as a person who goes beyond the social boundaries. Furthermore, Atticus decides to break social norms and stereotypes because he wants to end Racism and restore justice in America. Likewise, as a father, he wants his children to value humanity over the social systems of racial prejudice and ethnic marginalization.

**Work Cited:**

Lee, Harper. *To kill a mockingbird*. Random House, 2010.