The Influence Of A Role Model Essay, Research Paper

The Influence of a Role Model

Some parents are seemingly hard on their children, while others are a little bit easier. Both ways most parents look out for the best interest of the child no matter what the situation and try to protect them and teach them accordingly. In the novel To Kill A Mockingbird by Harper Lee, Atticus is portrayed as a good father, and idol and role model compared to Bob Ewell, Aunt Alexandra & Miss Stephanie Crawford.

Throughout the book Atticus has been portrayed as a good role model compared to Bob Ewell. Atticus was treated with respect all through Maycomb; thus he maintained a good reputation. All who knew him thought he should be treated highly. Judge Taylor thought that Scout should respect him too when saying: “Miss Jean Louise, stand up. Your fathers passing.” (Page 214). Atticus was never violent. Even in tough situations where it would be easier to fight with your fist then your mind, he stayed calm. When he was approached at Maycomb jail by a group of white men,

including Mr. Cunningham, he acted with no violence. He also told his daughter, Scout, to be non-violent also when saying: ” ‘That’ll do Scout’ Atticus put his hand on my shoulder ‘Don’t kick folks.” Lastly Atticus is portrayed as a very good father. His attitude towards his children is positive. He encouraged them to read and write and told them they had to go to school. He is shown as a good father when he tells Scout she must go to school: “In your case, the law remains rigid. So to school you must go.” (Page 35)

Bob Ewell was disrespected in the society. Unlike Atticus, he was known to be low and harsh. He proved he didn’t deserve any respect when he spit in Atticus face: “Mr. Ewell approached him, cursed him, spat on him and threatened to kill him.” (Page 220). Also Bob Ewell is a violent man. Though not proven he was believed to beat up Mayella, his daughter, and the rest of his children. Atticus tried to get Mayella to admit this when he asked: “Who beat you up? Tom Robinson or your father?” (Page 190). Lastly Bob Ewell has proven himself to be a horrible father. His children had no education nor did he. His children never went to school after the first day. This was

explained to the teacher Miss Caroline: ” He’s one of the Ewells Miss they come the first day every year then leave.” (Page 30) As seen Mr. Bob Ewell and Atticus had different places in society, different attitudes and ways of teaching their children.

Aunt Alexandra is a poor role model in comparison to Atticus in respect to he antics that drive Jem and Scout crazy. Atticus treats everyone with respect. He treats Calpurnia the housemaid and nanny, with dignity as though she was part of the family. This was shown when he let her in a family discussion saying: ” Anything fit to say at this table’s fit to say in front of Calpurnia. She knows what she means to this family.” (Page 159) Not only is Atticus a good teacher for Jem and Scout, but he lets his children be free and be what they want. He said to Scout ” there were enough sunbeams in the family and to go on about my buisness, he didn’t mind me much the way I was. “(Page 86). This showed Atticus loved Scout no matter what she wore or did. Lastly Atticus had a good attitude toward the

Cunningham’s. He respected them and treated them kindly as he thought all people should be treated! He talked with Walter Cunningham like any other person: “Atticus greeted Walter and began a discussion ” (page 28) Aunt Alexandra’s views were different then Atticus’. In respect to Calpurnia, Aunt Alexandra never gave her any respect. She did not want to discuss any family or racial issues in front of her: “Don’t talk like that in front of them.” This meant that she did not want any racial discussion to go on in front of a black person such as Calpurnia. Aunt Alexandra also wanted Scout to dress the way she thought fit for a girl Scouts age. She told Scout she should be wearing a dress: “Aunt Alexandra was fanatical on the subject of my attire. I could not possibly hope to be a lady if I wore breeches.” (Page 85-86) Aunt Alexandra had different views about the Cunninghams. She thought that everyone in the town who was of lower class then her had a bad streak running in their family. “Everybody in Maycomb, it seemed had a Streak, a Gambling Streak, a Mean Streak, a funny Streak.” (Page 132) The Cunninghams were included in this too! This showed that Aunt Alexandra and Atticus had

different views on Calpurnia, the children and the Cunninghams.

When Atticus is compared to Ms. Stephanie Crawford, he looks even more of a strong role models considering Ms. Stephanie Crawford’s tales. Atticus never lied to his children. He told Scout the answer she wanted to hear when she asked what a nigger-lover was. He told her: “nigger-lover is just one of those terms that don’t mean anything, like snot nose.” (Page 113) Though it was hard to explain to her, Atticus did the best he could as a father to tell her the meaning of the word nigger-lover. Atticus was never a gossiping man. He liked to keep to himself. Never once did he talk about another neighbor or disrespect their privacy. He taught Scout and Jem to respect others privacy and not play games with fake stories on their behalf. Atticus saw Jem, Scout and Dill playing the ‘Boo Radley’ game with a scissors. He asked for the scissors back and said: “Does this by any chance have anything to do with the Radleys?” (Page 45). Lastly he proved to the children that

after the case life would be okay. He told Jem when he was upset “But things are always better in the morning.” (Page 215). Ms. Stephanie is quite a comparison for Atticus. She told people many untrue things unlike Atticus. She once told Ms. Maudie that: “she woke up in the middle of the night and found him [Boo Radley] looking in the window at her. (Page 50) She also spread many rumors. She loved to gossip and everyone in Maycomb knew it. She told everyone many good gossip news such as: “It was Ms.Stephanies pleasure to tell us: this morning Mr. Bob Ewell stopped Atticus on the post office corner, spat in his face, and told him he’d get him if it took the rest of his life.” (Page 219). Lastly, Ms. Stephanie Crawford acted differently toward the children after the case. Instead of leaving them alone she asked many questions: “Miss Stephanie’s nose quivered with curiosity. She wanted to know who all gave us permission to go to the court – she didn’t see us but it was all over the town that we were in the Coloured balcony. Did Atticus put us up there as a sort of ” (page 217) This showed the distinct difference between

Atticus’ views and Ms. Stephanie’s views on privacy, and respect, lies and gossip.

In the novel To Kill A Mockingbird by Harper Lee, different approaches are taken by Atticus, Bob Ewell, Aunt Alexandra and Ms. Stephanie Crawford to guide and teach Jem and Scout. Most older figures in a child’s life try their hardest to guide their children in the right way. Some succeed at this while others fail but most look out for the common good for that child.