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## How Discrimination (Prejudice and Social Injustice) Affects Relationships in *To Kill a Mockingbird*

Discrimination occurs everywhere. In *TKAM*, people can see the world of discrimination through many different aspects and characters. To start, gender discrimination affected the relationship between Scout and Alexandra by how Alexandra constantly harassed Scout because she isn't enough of a "lady" in her perspective. Secondly, racial discrimination affected the relationship between Tom Robinson and most of the people in Maycomb by how the people harassed him because he was another race, and lastly, social class discrimination affected the relationship between the Cunninghams and society by how society treated the Cunninghams differently since they are in a lower social class than others. Gender, racial, and social class discrimination strongly affected relationships all over Maycomb.

To start, gender discrimination affected the relationship between Scout and Alexandra by how Alexandra constantly pestered Scout for the reason that she isn't "lady" enough, according to her perspective. Furthermore, in chapter 9, Scout spoke about how Aunt Alexandra thought of her style of clothing. "Aunt Alexandra was fanatical on the subject of my attire. I could not possibly hope to be a lady if I wore breeches. (Lee 92)" Scout said that Alexandra was radical on the topic of how Scout did not wear "ladylike" clothing and how she cannot be a "lady" if she wore her "unladylike" breeches (overalls). This demonstrated gender discrimination by Alexandra harassing/insulting Scout because of her choice of clothing, and how she isn't similar to most girls. This affected the relationship between Scout and Alexandra because Alexandra was trying to push Scout into become more of a typical "Southern Belle" by her criticism and undesired opinions, which puts a step down on their relationship since Scout dislikes Alexandra because of her narrow-minded opinion of her. Another example would be that gender discrimination affects Scout's and Alexandra's relationship when Aunt Alexandra revealed how she viewed Scout's character. In the text Lee stated: "Aunty said I was born good but had grown progressively worse every year. (Lee 92-93)" In Aunt Alexandra's perspective, Scout was born "good" meaning that she was untouched from all the stereotypically male habits that she had adapted to as she grew older. Some examples could include, how she played with boys instead of girls at school and at home, how she usually wore clothing young boys would wear, how she cursed sometimes (considered ill-mannered for a girl at that time period), etc. . This demonstrated gender discrimination by Alexandra being immensely rude towards Scout just because she's a girl who prefers to do predominantly "male" activities. This affected the relationship between Alexandra and Scout because Alexandra has insulted Scout, so that automatically stumps the relationship, especially since that hurt Scout's feelings (also stated in the text). Another example could be when Scout talked about how the toys Aunt Alexandra

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suggested for her to play with according to her gender. "Aunt Alexandra's vision of my department involved playing with small stoves, tea sets, and wearing the Add-A-Pearl necklace she gave me when I was born; (Lee 92)" Scout said that since she's a girl, Aunt Alexandra suggested for her to play with toys that are portrayed as feminine, since women at that time had strict gender roles, such as they would be the ones inside cooking, making tea parties, etc. This demonstrated gender discrimination by Alexandra encouraging Scout to "be a lady" and understand the differences with what woman should and what men should do in their society. This affects their relationship by conflict. Scout would just follow her gut, she isn't afraid of Aunt Alexandra nor does she care about what she thinks of her, so she just would not follow her strict gender-role way. This could result in conflict since Alexandra would want things in her way and her way only. This would also lower a step of their relationship because of that. Gender discrimination strongly affects the relationship between Alexandra and Scout by Alexandra discriminating him because of her gender.

Secondly, Racial discrimination affected the relationship between Tom and the people of Maycomb by the people harassing him because he's of another colour. Furthermore, in chapter 15, A small mob attempted to murder Tom Robinson. ""You know what we want" another man said, "Get aside from the door Mr. Finch." (Lee 173)"

The mob wanted to kill Tom, so they asked Atticus to move aside so they could do their deed. This showed racial discrimination by the men wanting to kill him because they assumed that since he was black, he obviously raped Mayella. This affected the relationship between Tom and the people by putting a step down on their relationship. The mob wanted to murder Tom Robinson, which would have brought fear to him. Another example would be when Judge Taylor refused to close the courtroom in chapter 17 and said "People generally see what they look for, and hear what they listen for. (Lee 199)" This meant that the people in the court (most of the people in Maycomb) just jumped to conclusions and assumed that one side of the story is correct (Bob Ewell's) without even considering the other side of the story (Tom Robinson). They did not want to believe that Ewell's and Mayella's testimony was false because they're white. This demonstrates racial discrimination by how the people of Maycomb didn't believe Tom Robinson's testimony just because he was black and jumped to conclusions with Ewell's testimony. Even the jury chose not to believe Toms' realistic testimony just because he was black. The people of Maycomb put their own racist and prejudiced ahead of what is correct and realistic. This affected their relationship by the people betraying Tom and not believing his testimony because he's of another race; therefore, their relationship lowered a step. One other example would be when Jem says after the court case ""In our courts, when it's a white man's word against a black man's, the white man always wins." (Lee 224)" Jem said that when a white man has a testimony, and a black man has a testimony, no matter how much more realistic and believable the black man's testimony is, the white man will always win. This demonstrated racial discrimination because by the white man only winning because he's white, and the coloured

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man losing because he's coloured. This was an accurate representation of Tom and Ewell's case. Tom lost because he was coloured, and Ewell won because he was white, all because of society's decision. This affected the relationship between Tom and society by society jumping into conclusions and believing that the lying, racist, prejudiced man was correct of his not-well-put-together testimony, just because he was white, and ignoring Tom's perspective; lowering the status in the relationship. This is how racial discrimination strongly affects the relationship of Tom and society by people discriminating him because of his race.

Thirdly, social class discrimination affected the relationship between the Cunninghams and society by how society treated the Cunninghams differently since they were in a lower social class. For example, Alexandra did not let Scout play with Walter because he is "trash". "Because he-is-trash, that's why you can't play with him. Ill not have you around him, picking up his habits and Lord-knows-what (Lee 257)" Alexandra doesn't want Scout to play with Walter because he's of a lower social class. She felt as if that the Finches are a more admired group than the Cunninghams, and thought that since they're a lower class, they will be a bad influence. This demonstrated social class discrimination by how Alexandra didn't let Scout play with Walter since he's in a lower social class. This affected their relationship by a possibility of not seeing each other again since Alexandra doesn't approve of Walters presence. Another example could be when Scout explains to Miss Caroline Fisher that Walter is a Cunningham. " "Miss Caroline, he's a Cunningham." "I beg your pardon, Jean Louise?" "That's okay, ma'am, you'll get to know all the county folks after a while. The Cunninghams never took anything they can't pay back—no church baskets and no scrip stamps. They never took anything off of anybody, they get along on what they have. They don't have much, but they get along on it." (Lee 22)" Scout explained to Miss Caroline that Walter is of a lower social class and that he can't pay her back. This demonstrated social class discrimination by showing Miss Caroline that everyone must treat Walter differently since he's poor and he's in a lower social class than most kids in the class. This affects their relationship by Scout fighting him afterwards. She was angry that she had to say it to Miss Caroline and nobody else did. This is how social class discrimination affected the relationship between the Cunninghams and society by others discriminating him because of his social status.

Gender, racial, and social class discrimination immensely affected the relationships between an atrocious amount of people in Maycomb. Firstly, gender discrimination affected the relationship between Alexandra and Scout by Alexandra pushing Scout to become a "Lady" in Maycomb. Next, racial discrimination affected the relationship of Tom and society by society disliking and abusing him because he was another colour, and finally, social class discrimination affected the relationship between the Cunninghams and society by others frowning upon them because of their social class. Gender, racial, and social class discrimination occur all around the world today.

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