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Auszug aus:

Harper Lee - To Kill a Mockingbird

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Thema:

Harper Lee – *To Kill a Mockingbird*

TMD: 32556

Kurzvorstellung des Materials:

- The Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *To kill a mockingbird* by the American authoress Harper Lee was first published in 1960 and has become a classic of modern fiction.
- This paper gives a detailed analysis of this famous novel by Lee containing plot summary, description of the main characters, discussion of the main topics, and so on.

Übersicht über die Teile

- Short biographical note on the authoress
- Summary of the plot
- Description of the main characters
- Important topics
- Meaning of the title

Information zum Dokument

- Ca. 6,5 Seiten, Größe ca. 88 KByte

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does not take over the racist attitude of the town and she also does not judge people by their appearance or by their social status. This may be due to the positive influence of her father Atticus. She has her own opinion about things and people and she has a strong feeling for justice and honor. This becomes clear, when she starts a fight with her cousin Francis, who calls her father a “nigger-lover”. She looks up to Atticus and learns from him. At the beginning of the novel, one gets the impression that she might be easy to influence, which is due to her young age. So she does not understand the events that happen in their full extent. Nevertheless, she learns much about justice, fairness and respect. One can say that she breaks with the racial attitude and the categorization into different social classes of her hometown; she develops a modern and open-minded attitude and follows the example of her father Atticus.

- Jem Finch

Jem is four years older than his sister Scout is. Like her, he is very intelligent and open-minded and learns from his father Atticus the same code of conduct like Scout. Jem is especially shocked by the outcome of the trial of Tom Robinson and cannot understand how and why such injustice can take place. Both Jem and Scout are still too young to understand the full extent of the events, but Jem, who in contrast to Scout has lost his child-like innocence, understands that he and even Atticus are too small to change the social circumstances and the attitude of the people. He gets angry, rude and aggressive because he cannot find answers to his questions and because he must discover the dark sides of the human nature. He cannot understand why his father does not fight against the meanness of Bob Ewell. It takes a while until he is able to learn from the events, but he becomes more and more like Atticus in character and conduct. He learns, that one cannot fight violence with violence and in the end of the novel, the reader gets the impression of Jem as more mature, calmer and more sympathetic. Like his little sister, he follows the example of his father and occupies himself with being a gentleman like Atticus.

- Aunt Alexandra

Aunt Alexandra is the sister of Atticus and stands in contrast to his brother and his children concerning attitude and conduct. She embodies the racist way of thinking of that time and believes in a two-tier society. This she passes on to her children. The difference between the education of Jem and Scout and the children of Aunt Alexandra becomes clear when Francis and Scout argue about Atticus. One can say that Alexandra is a representative of the old South and stands for the common opinion of the people during that time. Moreover, she thinks that she is a true lady by dressing well and showing good manners. But it becomes clear, that she is not what she pretends to be: she cannot be a lady or a good person if she judges other people by their skin color, their social status or their property.

- Dill

Dill is a close friend of Jem and Scout. He comes to Maycomb for the summer vacations and lives there with his aunt. In the course of the novel the reader gets to

know that Dill has been abandoned by his parents who seem to be bothered by his existence. So Dill does not have a family to rely on. Knowing this, the reader can imagine why Dill so often lies and invents stories: he tries to get the attention of other people because he does not have a family who care for him. This is why he holds on to the Finches; he even runs away to see Jem, Scout, Atticus and Calpurnia. He feels comfortable and secure when he is with the Finches; this is another sign for the kindness of this family.

- Calpurnia

Like already mentioned, Calpurnia is the cook of the Finches but she is almost a member of the family. For Jem and Scout, she becomes kind of a mother. Especially for Scout, the influence of Calpurnia is very important. So she teaches Scout many lessons, for example to treat other people with respect and to better understand other people. She also introduces Scout and Jem to her own culture and her life, so she takes them with her to her church, although in the 1930's, it was scandalous that white children were present in a black congregation. Scout does not understand this; because she loves Calpurnia and wants to know something about her and her life. Here one can see the close relationship of Calpurnia and the Finches family.

- Maudie Atkinson

Maudie Atkinson is the neighbor of the Finches family and the second female, who has like Calpurnia a positive influence on Jem and Scout. Like Atticus, she despises the attitude of the majority of Maycomb's inhabitants. She also stands up for Tom Robinson during his trial and is not afraid to oppose to the common opinion. She is a person with a strong character and a critical mind. She looks down on the gossip of the other women and reprimands them. One day, Maudie's house burns down but she does not complain about that but shows again the strength of her character and the toughness of her person. Like Calpurnia, she teaches Jem and Scout important lessons about respect and tolerance. One can say that Maudie is like Atticus but she is more outspoken; whereas Atticus keeps quiet, Maudie speaks out her thoughts and her opinion.

- Boo Radley and Tom Robinson

Boo Radley and Tom Robinson are very different characters, but they serve the same aim: to make clear to Jem and Scout and also to the reader that people should not be judged by their outer appearance, their skin color, their social status, their culture, habits, and so on. Nobody in Maycomb knows neither Boo Radley nor Tom Robinson, but the citizens have numerous prejudices against them. Because Boo Radley is never seen in public, people invent many stories and spread rumors about him. He hides from society; that makes it easy for the inhabitants of Maycomb to discriminate and victimize him. Tom Robinson is a black man and most white people during that time had many prejudices against colored people, they hated and feared them without any reason and thought themselves better than black people. Tom Robinson has to suffer from these prejudices and feelings of hatred, fear and despise, although he is innocent and an honest and lovely



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