**Eric Schumann 7th hour**

**Understanding Perspectives**

From two children taking part in a fight to a court case trying to prove a criminal guilty, no one will never know who “started it” or who convicted the crime unless they understand the other’s perspectives. In the historical fiction novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the author Harper Lee creates two children, Scout and Jem, growing up in the Great Depression when poverty is at its worst. She uses Scout and Jem to show how kids have a different view on the world compared to adults. The most compelling evidence to show the importance of other’s perspectives is how Atticus, the children’s father, talks about standing in other people’s shoes and walking around in them, how Scout stands at the Radley frontdoor step, and how Jem and Atticus think differently about Mrs. Dubose. To fully understand an issue or someone else greater than before, multiple perspectives must be viewed and understood.

Throughout the story what Atticus says compels the children to view the perspectives of others and try to understand them. “...he said you never really know a man until you stand in his shoes and walk around in them” (374). Furthermore, this quote implies that someone doesn't really know how another person feels unless that person experiences exactly what they experienced in the exact same way. What must be remembered is that their family is living in the Great Depression in Alabama. This means that most of the population down there is very poor and unfortunate, and in spite of this, Scout and Jem need to understand that the situations of others may be worse than theirs. As a result, another person cannot be fully understood until the other perspective is viewed and understood.

Sometimes to interpret another perspective, someone has to be at the physical location of where that perspective took place. For instance, Scout stood on the front door step of the Radley household, which has the best view of the town, and said, “I had never seen our neighborhood from this angle” (373). When she said this she did not only mean the view, but the point of view that the Radley’s had on the town as well. And at this very moment Scout also summarized her Bildungsroman in their town through the Radley’s eyes. This includes the times that the kids played in their yard, the town fire, and a lot of other important aspects of the story that could be viewed from the Radley’s perspectives. After all, an issue or person cannot be understood unless other perspectives are involved and grasped.

Whenever viewing a situation, at least two or more perspectives must be sought out. In fact, a great example is the character of Mrs. Henry Lafayette Dubose. Mrs. Dubose is an ill-tempered lady that is very old and always decides to be rude to Scout and Jem, “Jem and i hated her” described Scout (132). but this was only because Mrs. dubose was recently trying to get rid of her morphine addiction, and in spite of this, Atticus saw her as, “...the bravest person I ever knew” (149). These two perspectives helped Jem understand Mrs. Dubose’s situation greater than he did before, and it also helped him understand why she had always been rude. This is because at least two perspectives were sought out for understanding the dispute.

For a situation to be fully understood, more than one perspective needs to be viewed first and grasped after. A few points that clarified this idea are how Atticus speaks about standing in others’ shoes, how Scout stood at the Radley’s front porch, and how Atticus and Jem think differently of Mrs. Dubose. Keep this in mind when thinking about having children and having to settle their disputes. Or even if you want to become a judge for the court and understanding the whole story. Whatever the choice, always remember to view the perspectives of others when trying to understand another person or issue.