

There is no guarantee that justice can be found in a court of law.

A text comparison by Medina Siregar

Justice may not always be served in the court of law. There is simply no guarantee due to factors such as the communities' social settings, the people who consist in the jury and the deliberation that is done in the court and in the jury room. While the court of law deals with the affairs in the community and a place for society to bring forward justice, in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, justice isn't brought forward and proves that it is not always assured for everyone even when the evidence is indisputable. The text outlines the way racial prejudice can interfere with the serving of justice. In contrast, *Twelve Angry Men*, presents the fine chance that justice can be found or lost in the court of law. If it weren't for juror 8, the jury wouldn't have deliberated and the social prejudice and hierarchy would've affected the deliberation. Which proves in both cases that there is never a guarantee on the serving of justice through a trial in court, with the existence of prejudice.

Prejudice and racial discrimination were highlighted in both texts and represent the flaw in the court system that fails to uphold justice and fairness. While the settings of the times are different, the same impact is created, where prejudice can obstruct justice and 'obscure the truth'. In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the racism was between the African Americans and the white people. The treatment enforced were the Jim Crow laws that segregated between the two and this divide was also due to the perception that the different colours of skin differentiated the class and whether one was inferior to the other or not. Where Bob Ewell, exclaims 'You nigger lover' where it was seen as indifferent to associate with the African Americans and to 'love' them was not common as only hate was bred among the whites, of them. This hate was taken into the courtroom and further into the jury room where deliberation was blinded by the fact 'a black mans word can be taken over a white mans', therefore denying the guarantee for a fair trial without the basis of skin colour or race. The same theme revolved around the jury room of *Twelve Angry Men*. The stigma attached to the accused's background, also influence the deliberation to be made out of prejudice and therefore interfering with a just trial. Juror 3 and 10 are

stubborn upon their personal prejudice, making them the last to clearly evaluate the situation and change their vote. Both generalise the boy against stereotypes referring to the boy as 'them' where they show their verdict on the boy is on behalf of their thoughts on Latin people as a collective. Hence, the texts address the issue of prejudice and racism, a leading factor in not assuring a just verdict in the court of law.

Along with themes, the characters represent the same views and values in each text. In particular, the protagonists, Juror 8 from *Twelve Angry Men* and Atticus from *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Juror 8 has a lot of morality and is a man willing to value the life of the accused, understanding the situation then giving a deliberation. He is an intelligent man and sees the case unlike the others who have bias or are swayed in the unfair trial that is presented in the text. Atticus is alike to Juror 8, he also believes in 'justice' and the 'right thing to do' where Juror 8 says 'its not easy for me to raise my hand and send a boy off to die without talking about it first' and additionally, Atticus states that even though the case is foregone he defends Tom Robinson, '...when you know you're licked before you begin but you begin anyway and you see through it no matter what.' Therefore, Atticus reveals that he has taken this unpopular case because he was appointed and could

have, conceivably, turned down the judge's request to he defend Tom. He accepted the case because of a moral imperative to display for Tom and his commitment to do what he believes is right, which aligns with Juror 8's reasons. These characters represent the moral justice in a community that discriminates, and therefore represents the small amount of good in a tainted world that if taken into the courtroom, could include this good or have them missing. Hence, the jury room cannot always be fair and assure a just trial that ensures the people receive what they deserve.

To Kill A Mockingbird by Harper Lee reveals how justice, for the people of Maycomb County, is not about fairness but about serving what this community sees as its specific needs, regardless of the rights of Tom Robinson. Whereas in *Twelve Angry Men*, while justice is being denied in the beginning Reginald Rose, expresses that through deliberation and Juror 8 persistence, the defendant receives justice. Lee exposes the justice system and its dependence on the community in delivering a fair verdict; something that is impossible in Maycomb County because of deep-set discrimination, stereotypes and mistrust. Racial prejudice dominates the actions of the community and Tom Robinson's guilt is a foregone conclusion in the minds of the community

despite the fact that they know that the Ewell family and especially Mayella's father, has questionable integrity. Rose shows the discrimination in a lesser extent as it's a different time/setting and therefore, the jury was able to overcome prejudice to reach the not guilty verdict. Whereas the discrimination goes deeper and is greater in Twelve angry men. Essentially, a flawed jury influenced through the time and social setting, affects the final decision. The different settings show the level of racism and discrimination of the text's times and their honoured code. Also, to be consider is the crimes are different in the texts too. A court of law cant be fair and come to justice if it's social norms are flawed and this is taken into the jury.

In conclusion, the leading factors that are shown and depicted in the texts of To kill a mockingbird and Twelve Angry Men, about the fact there is no guarantee that justice will be served in the court of law, even though it has sworn to, are racial and social prejudice, the lack of good values and the social restrictions of the time. If all were somehow able to be eliminated, there could be a much lesser extent that there would be no guarantee of justice.