

Example of A Factor Contributing To A Character's Psychological Profile

Character: Boo Radley from Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*

Factor: Family

Evidence: In the opening chapters of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Boo Radley is described through gossip and rumors. Many people speculate about his nature and deem him scary and creepy. However, we later learn that Boo's character was dramatically affected by his family. Ever since he was a teenager, he has been distrusted by his family. When he was younger he, along with other friends, locked an elderly official in a court bathroom. While his other friends were sent away to school, Boo's father decided it was best to lock Boo in the basement and prevent him from interacting with others. It is evident that his brother Nathan, Boo's guardian when the novel takes place, also distrusts Boo. This is apparent when Nathan fills the knot hole in the oak tree that Boo would leave presents for the Finch children. Thus, the isolation created for Boo by his family affects why Boo behaved certain ways and why he was considered "creepy" by others.

Quotation: " 'Do you think they're true, all those things they say about B- Mr. Radley?'... "No child," she said, "that is a sad house. I remember Arthur Radley when he was a boy. He always spoke nicely to me, no matter what folks said he did. Spoke as nicely as he knew how' " (Lee 45-46).

This quotation demonstrates that Boo's family life impacted his actions. According to the Men's Health Network article by Kyle D. Pruett, a positive relationship between a child and his/her father can have lasting results. Pruett argues that a positive relationship between child and father often leads to lower incidents of disruptive behavior, great social interaction, and overall happier moods for the child. In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, it is evident that Mr. Radley and Boo did not have a positive relationship. Thus, Boo's socially awkward actions may be partially attributed to his poor relationship with his father (<http://www.menshealthnetwork.org/library/ddcd.pdf>).



Symbol: A Mockingbird

A Mockingbird symbolizes Boo's family life and relationships with others. Throughout the novel, the mockingbird symbolizes innocence. The Dictionary of Symbols also suggests that birds symbolize humans who try to leave the confines of earth. In many ways, Boo, as a result of the treatment of his family, tries to live apart from others, and in doing so, can be said to live a purer, more heavenly life than others. Boo seems transcendent of the hatred, prejudice, and injustice that plagues other characters in the novel and his own family.