

To Kill A Mockingbird
Mockingbird Symbolism/Allusion
Week 7: October 29, 2013



F404: TA-1

Tuesday 11:50-1:15

Instructor: Donna Carducci Macurdy

dfmacurdy@verizon.net

Week 7: The Trial

Agenda

1. Announcements: Class Liaison
2. Icebreaker: Chapter 20
You Tube Video: (Audio) Atticus' Closing Remarks
3. Instructor Notes: Chapter 21-25
Literary Techniques: Symbolism/Allusion
Focus: Tom Robinson as Mockingbird
4. Small Group Discussion Chapters 21-25
5. Viewing: Film To Kill A Mockingbird (The Trial)
6. Wrap-Up

Atticus' Closing Arguments: Chapter 20



- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k8TgqenWW0I>

READER RESPONSE ?'S

Atticus' Closing Arguments

1. What social code is Atticus referring to in his closing remarks?
2. What societal assumptions does Atticus challenge in his arguments?
3. Atticus condemns the denying of the one source of equality through the presence of prejudice; what is that source of equality?
4. Who is the focus of Atticus' final plea?

Notes: Chapters 21-25

- **Chaper 21 & 22**

- Juxtaposition of Scene i.e.,

- Dolphus Raymond pretends whiskey; creates impression he is what he is not; outcast in society by choice
- Bob Ewell – town drunk; creates impression that Tom Robinson raped Mayella; outcast in society by lifestyle; cries rape for attention

- Juxtaposition of Characters i.e.,

- Jem/Dill (Children's Impression of Robinson Verdict)
- Miss Maudie/Miss Stephanie (Townspeople's contrasting Impressions of Robinson Verdict)

- **Chapter 23**

Atticus Reviews verdict with Scout and Jem prompting Jem to conclude about the town and citizens of Maycomb County:

- “I think I'm beginning to understand why Boo stayed shut up in the house all this time...it's because he wants to.

Notes: Chapters 21-25

Chapter 24

Juxtaposition of Characters:

- Paints an ironic picture of the citizens of Maycomb w/Aunt Alexandra's Missionary Tea

Response of Mrs. Merriweather to the plight of Mrunas

"Oh child those poor Mruna," Mrs. Merriweather said.

Mrs. Merriweather's large brown eyes always filled with tears when she considered the oppressed.

"Living in that jungle, with nobody but J. Grimes Everett, she said. "Not a white person'll go near 'em but that saintly J. Grimes Everett."

Response of Aunt Alexandra to the missionary ladies condemnation of Atticus

[Mrs. Merriweather's] voice soared over the clink of coffee cups..."Gertrude, she said, "I tell you there are some good but misguided people in this town. Folks who think they're doing right, I mean. Now far be it from me to say who, but some of 'em in this town thought they were doing the right thing a while back, but all they did was stir 'em up. That's all they did."

Response of Aunt Alexandra to news of Tom's death

"What's the matter?" Aunt Alexandra asked.

"Tom's dead." Atticus responded.

"They shot him...He was running. It was during their exercise period. They said he just broke into a blind raving charge at the fence and started climbing over. Right in front of them..."

"Didn't they try to stop him? Didn't they give him any warning?" Aunt Alexandra's voice shook.

Notes: Chapters 21-25

Chapter 25 :

Juxtaposition of Scene:

Tom Robinson's Wife to News of Tom's Death

"Scout, said Dill, "she just fell down in the dirt. Just fell down in the dirt, like a giant with a big foot just came along and stepped on her.

Dill said Calpurnis and Atticus lifted Helen to her feet and half carried, half walked her to the cabin. They stayed inside a long time, and Atticus came out alone."

People of Maycomb to News of Tom's Death

Maycomb was interested by the news of Tom's death for perhaps two days; two days was enough for the information to spread through the county. To Maycomb, Tom's death was typical of a n...to cut and run. Typical of a n...mentality to have no plan, no thought for the future, just run blind first chance he saw."

Note: One rational voice: Mr. Underwood's editorial likening Tom's death "to the senseless slaughter of songbirds." Mr. Underwood simply figured that it was a sin to kill cripples, be they standing, sitting, or escaping.



Symbolism: The Mockingbird



Mockingbird Symbol occurs 4 times in the novel

1st reference occurs when Atticus reminds the children “ you can kill all the blue jays you want but it is a sin to kill a mockingbird.”

2nd reference takes place when Tom Robinson is shot in an attempt to escape; Mr. Underwood compares his death to “the senseless slaughter of songbirds.”

3rd reference takes place as Jem and Scout pass the Radley place on their way to the Halloween pageant; “high above us a solitary mocker poured out his repertoire in blissful unawareness.”

4th reference takes place in chapter 21 with Scout’s observation about the courtroom prior to the verdict

“ The feeling grew until the atmosphere in the courtroom was exactly the same as a cold February morning, when the mockingbirds were still....A deserted waiting empty street and the courtroom was packed with people.”

5th and final/ reference occurs when Heck Tate attempts to suppress the fact of who is responsible for saving the lives of Jem and Scout; Scout says “hurting Boo would be like shootin’ a Mockingbird.”

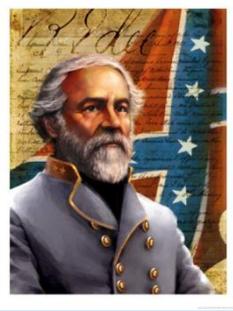
Symbolic Value of the Mockingbird

“**Mockingbird**” comes to represent the idea of innocence; to kill a mockingbird is to destroy innocence.

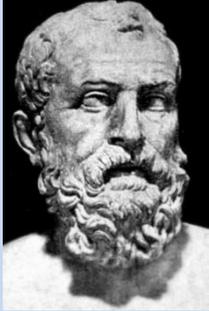
Note: A number of characters can be described as Mockingbirds i.e., innocents who have been injured or destroyed through contact with evil.

Characters who fit the description of a mockingbird are:

- Jem
- Tom Robinson
- Dill
- Boo Radley
- Mr. Dolphus Raymond



Symbolism Using Allusion: Character's Names



Atticus or “Attikos” (English/Greek)

- Used by an Athenian poet and legal reformer Solon
- Solon responsible for democratic law in Athens (559 BC)

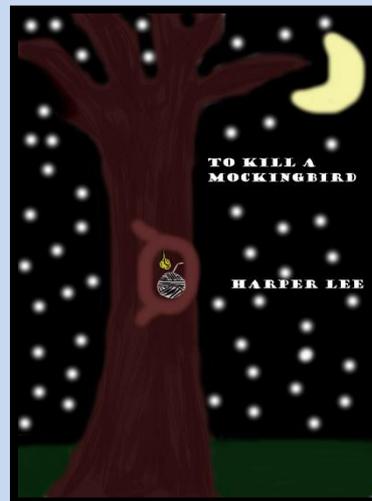
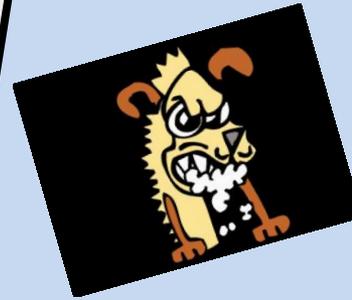
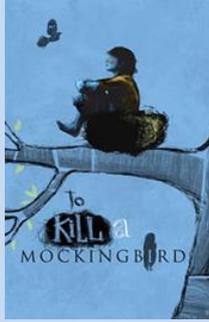
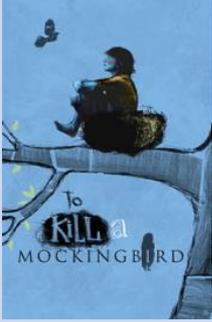
Robert E. Lee Ewell

- Robert E. Lee: Civil War general on the Confederate side.
- Confederates represented southern slave states i.e., Ewell's name is reflective of the racism that Bob Ewell embraces

Jean Louise “Scout” Finch (“one who is dispatched from the main body to gather information..to observe/judge”)

- Jeremy Atticus “Jem” Finch (“a beloved or highly prized person”)
- “Arthur” Boo Radley (Historical allusion to King Arthur)
- Mayella ‘Violet’ Ewell – (Connection to Nature)
- Mrs. Henry Lafayette Dubose (aligned w/ French General Lafayette)
- Miss Maudie – (Celtic) strength in battle, strong in war

Animals/Objects/Incidents as Symbols



Atticus as Hero or Villain?

Resource : Session #8

American Film Institute 100 Years

“One Hundred Heroes and Villains [in Film]”

#1 Atticus Finch

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bqmnI4qtiGM>