

# **To Kill A Mockingbird: Nelle Harper Lee**

## **Stylistic Elements in the Novel**

### **Week 3: April 7, 2015**



R

**R 417**

**Tuesday 11:50-1:15**

**Instructor: Donna Carducci Macurdy**

**[dfmacurdy@verizon.net](mailto:dfmacurdy@verizon.net)**

# Week 3

## Agenda

1. Announcements: Class Liaison  
YouTube: "The Untold Story of Emmett Louis Till."<sup>2</sup>
2. Icebreaker: Reader Response  
Scout's Opening Remarks: Chapter 1
3. Instructor Notes/Vocabulary: Chapter 1-5  
Literary Techniques: **Stylistic Devices**
  - \* Juxtaposition
  - \* Gothic Elements in TKM and Romanticism  
Example: Poe and Hawthorne
3. Small Group Discussion Chapters 1-5
4. Viewing: Film To Kill A Mockingbird

# Reader Response

In the opening lines of **To Kill A Mockingbird** the novel's narrator, Scout, tells the reader:

“When he was nearly thirteen, my brother Jem got his arm badly broken at the elbow. When it healed, and Jem's fears of never being able to play football were assuaged, he was seldom self-conscious about his injury. His left arm was somewhat shorter than his right; when he stood or walked, the back of his hand was at right angles to his body, his thumb parallel to his thigh. He couldn't have cared less...”

# Scout's Opening Remarks: Reader Response Questions

1. What is Scout saying in a literal sense; what does Scout mean in a figurative sense?
2. Why does Scout choose to divulge this information about Jem in the opening lines?
3. What if anything does the description of Jem foreshadow?
4. What tone does Scout's comments set for the opening pages of the novel?

# Notes on Chapter 1

## Chapter 1 serves as an:

1. **Introduction of all major characters in the novel except Tom Robinson**
2. **Establishes setting for the novel i.e.,** Maycomb County Alabama(1933-1935)  
“Maycomb County was an old town, but it was a tired old town...In rainy weather the streets turned to red slop; grass grew on the sidewalks, the courthouse sagged in the square.”
- 3.**Establishes the mood for the novel i.e.,** Radley house and family add a mysterious element to the setting  
“The Radley Place jutted into a sharp curve beyond our house; inside the house lived a malevolent phantom. People said he existed But Jem and I had never seen him.”
4. **Establishes the conflict which begins the rising action in the novel i.e.,** Reader is also told the story of Boo Radley and his involuntary ‘incarceration’  
“The misery of that house began many years before Jem and I were born...According to the neighborhood legend, when the younger Radley boy was in his teens he became acquainted with some of the Cunninghams from Old Sarum; they formed the nearest thing to a gang ever seen in Maycomb.”

# Vocabulary

## Chapters 1-5

### Entailment

**Entailment** (free tail): the **process in which a property cannot sold, devised by will, or otherwise done anything with by the owner.** The **property passes by law to the heir of the owner upon his death.** Entailment was **used to keep properties in the main line of succession;** the **heir of an entailed property could not sell the land, or give it to say an illegitimate child.**

““Entailment was only a part of Mr. Cunningham’s vexations. The acres not entailed were mortgaged to the hilt, and the little cash he made went to interest.” (Chapter 2)

### W.P.A

W.P.A or Works Progress Administrated was the **largest program in America that employed thousands of people to carry out public works projects.** W.P.A was **created to try and create jobs for the unemployed in the American depression.**

“If he held his mouth right, Mr. Cunningham could get a WPA job, but his land would go to ruin if he left it, and he was willing to go hungry to keep his land and vote as he pleased. Mr. Cunningham, said Atticus, came from a set breed of men.” (2)

# Vocabulary

## Chapters 1-5 cont'd

### Dewey Decimal System

The **Dewey Decimal System**: way of library classification that is used internationally. It was invented in 1876 by Melvil Dewey. It is used to organize books in libraries so that they are easy to find and put back. It also makes it easier because every library uses it, so you only need to learn one classification system to be able to find books everywhere.

“ The Dewey Decimal System consisted, in part, of Miss Caroline waving cards at us on which were printed `the', `cat', 'rat', 'man', and 'you'. No comment seemed to be expected of us, and the class received these impressionistic revelations in silence. “ (Chapter 2)

# Literary Technique: Juxtaposition

Juxtaposition is a literary device wherein the author places:

- a character, a setting, a motif or a theme parallel to another for the purpose of contrast between the two entities

The purpose of juxtaposing two directly/indirectly related entities close together in literature is:

- to highlight the contrast between the two entities and compare them

Juxtaposition is usually used for etching out:

- a character in detail,
- creating suspense or
- lending a rhetorical effect

# To Look For in Chapters 1-5

## Juxtaposition of:

- Characters esp.

- Jem

- “Jem wanted Dill to know once and for all that he wasn't scared of anything: ‘It’s just that I can’t think of a way to make him come out without getting’ us.’ “

- Dill

- “But Dill got him the third day when he told Jem that folks in Meridian certainly weren’t as afraid as the folks in Maycomb; that he’d never seen such scary folks as the ones in Maycomb.”

- Incidents esp.

- Nathan Radley’s ‘incarceration of Boo’
- Atticus dealings with Scout and Jem

# To Look For in: Chapter 1

## Juxtaposition of Setting w/ Gothic Elements



**Gothic Elements:** A style of fiction first popularized in eighteenth-century England, and incorporated into American Literature featuring:

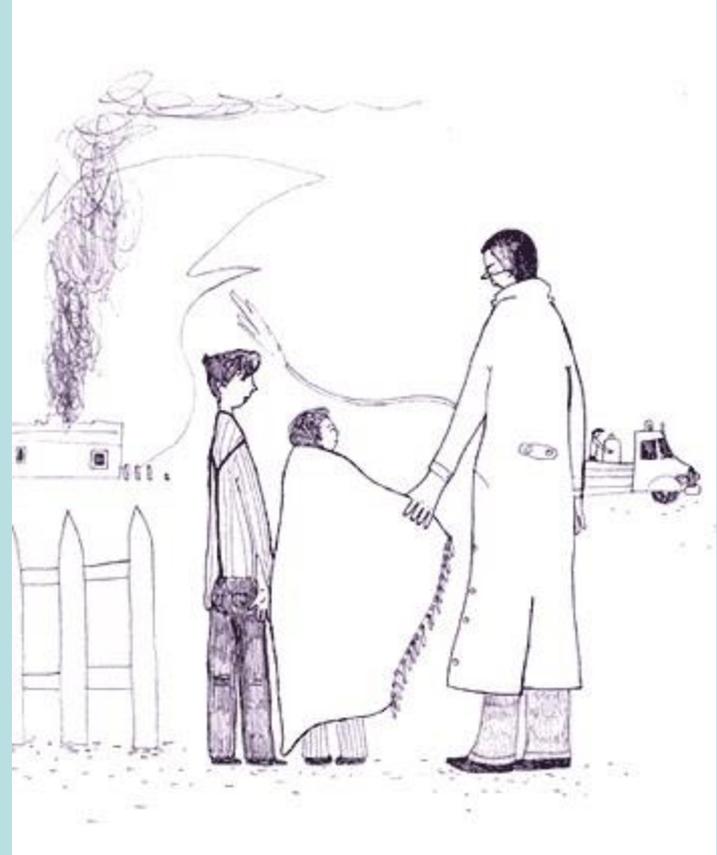
- Supernatural occurrences,
- Gloomy and haunted settings,
- Insanity
- Deadly influence of the past
- Deterioration of a culture
- Eccentricity
- Lure of terror
- Secrets
- Forebodings of evil
- Ghosts, vampires, witches and ghost houses
- Imprisonment including barriers, walls and veils



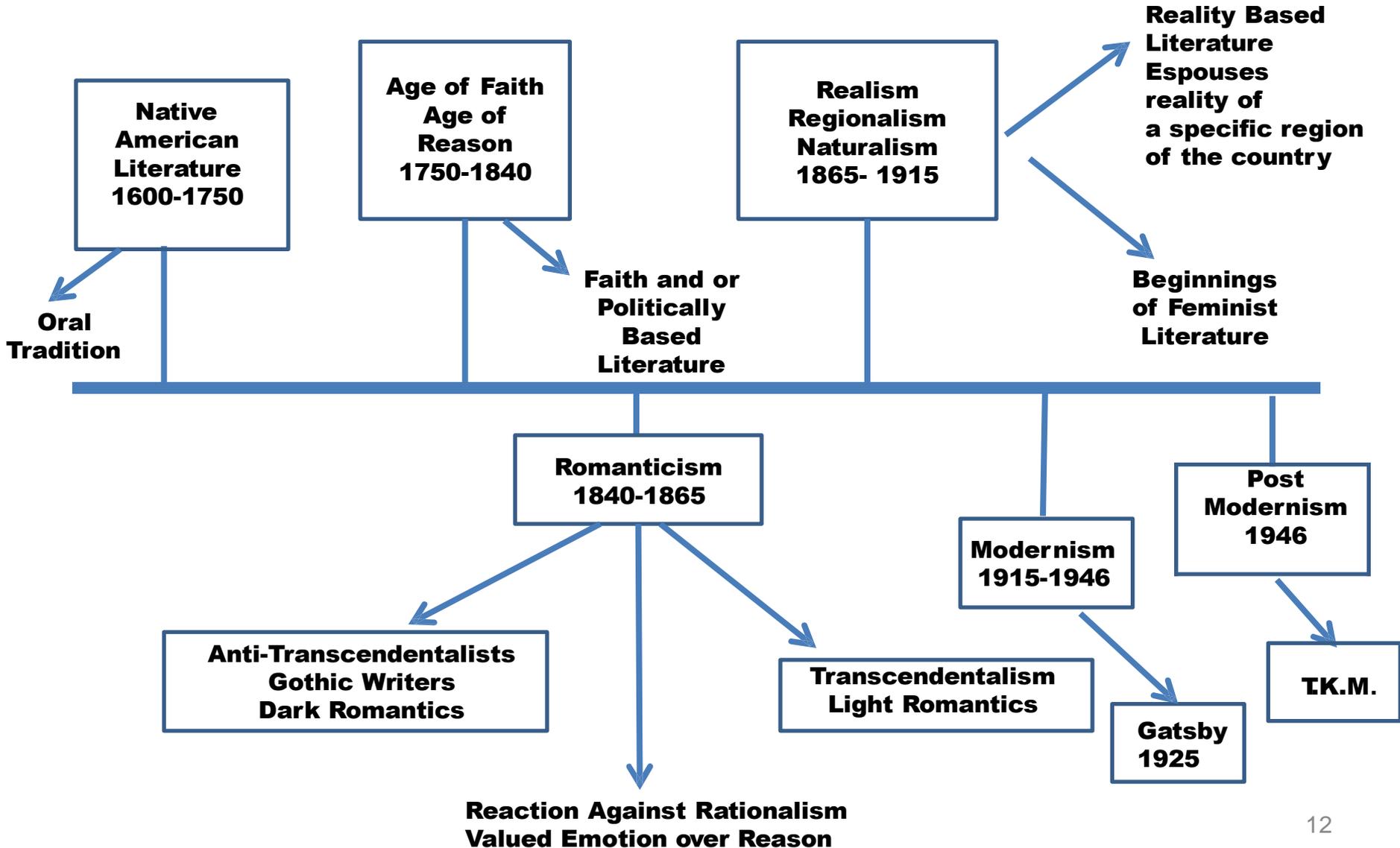
\* Lee juxtaposes small town values of Maycomb w/gothic motifs to emphasize the difference between forces of good and evil in the novel making the horror more horrific.

# Gothic Elements in TKM

- **Unnatural snowfall**
- **Fire that destroys Miss Maudie's house**
- **Children's superstitions about Boo Radley; Boo Radley's house**
- **Mad dog that Atticus shoots**
- **Night of the Halloween party; Bob Ewell attacks the children**

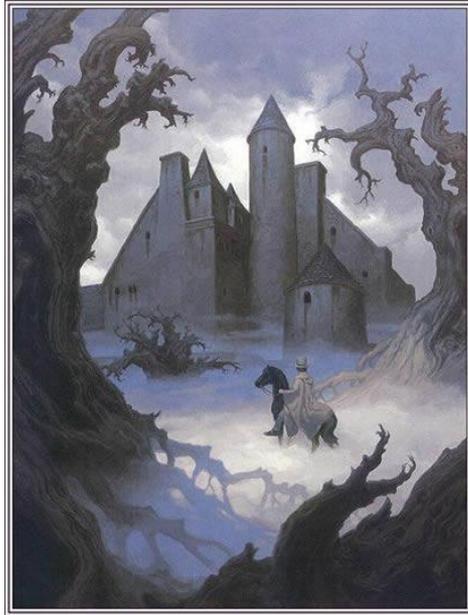


# American Literary Period Timeline Overview

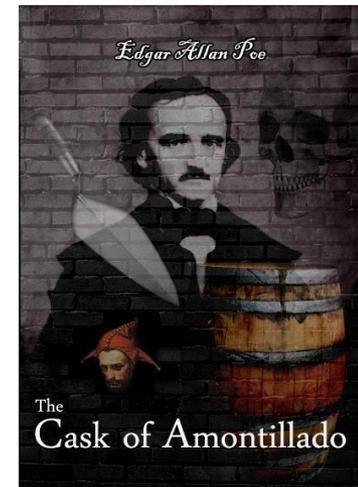
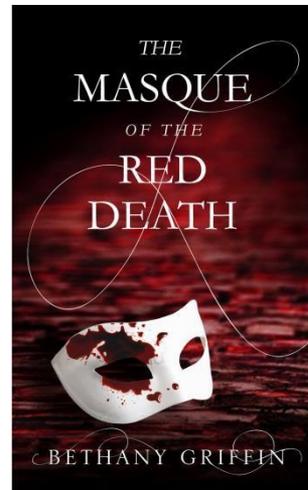


# Juxtaposition of Setting with Gothic Elements

## Edgar Allen Poe's Use of the Gothic Element of Imprisonment



The Fall of the House of Usher  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C\\_3JdKoQ914](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C_3JdKoQ914)

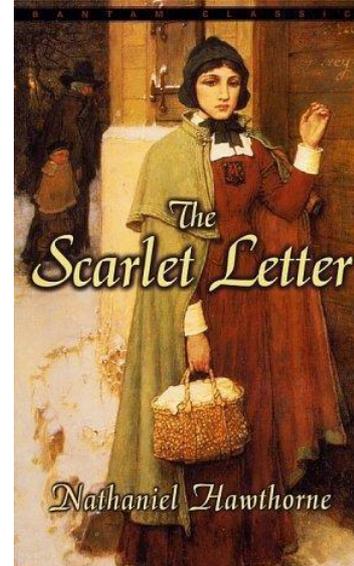
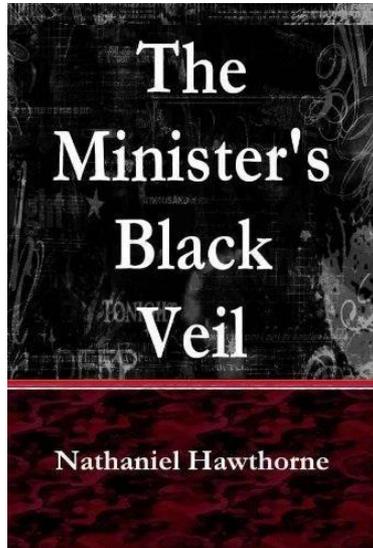


Poe used the gothic element of physical imprisonment to build suspense and shock the reader; at the end of each of Poe's short stories violence erupts. Like Poe's introduction of Boo's involuntary incarceration and or physical imprisonment in chapter one also serves to build suspense for the reader.

# American Literature: Romanticism

## Juxtaposition of Setting with Gothic Elements

### Hawthorne's Use of the Gothic Element of Imprisonment



Hawthorne used the gothic element of imprisonment to demonstrate that imprisonment need not be physical but can also be psychological; the minister is imprisoned by his own secrets and Hester Prynne by the prejudices and bias of the people in her community. Like these characters Boo, in chapter 1, is also psychologically imprisoned; one by a secret and the other by bias and prejudice.