Harper Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird as a Turning Point in Understanding Racism

Kapelac, Mirta

Sveučilište J.J. Strossmayera u Osijeku
Filozofski fakultet u Osijeku
Sveučilišni prijediplomski dvopredmetni studij Engleski jezik i književnost i Hrvatski jezik i književnost

Mirta Kapelac

Roman *Ubiti pticu rugalicu* autorice Harper Lee kao prekretnica u shvaćanju rasizma

Završni rad

Mentor: izv. prof. dr. sc. Jadranka Zlomislić

Osijek, 2024.

Sveučilište J.J. Strossmayera u Osijeku
Filozofski fakultet u Osijeku
Odsjek za engleski jezik i književnost

Sveučilišni prijediplomski dvopredmetni studij Engleski jezik i književnost i Hrvatski jezik i književnost

Mirta Kapelac

Roman *Ubiti pticu rugalicu* autorice Harper Lee kao prekretnica u shvaćanju rasizma

Završni rad

Znanstveno područje: humanističke znanosti
Znanstveno polje: filologija
Znanstvena grana: anglistika

Mentor: izv. prof. dr. sc. Jadranka Zlomislić

Osijek, 2024.

J. J. Strossmayer University of Osijek
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of Osijek
Double Major BA Study Programme in English Language and Literature and Croatian Language and Literature

Mirta Kapelac

Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* as a Turning Point in Understanding Racism

Bachelor's Thesis

Mentor: Dr. Jadranka Zlomislić, Associate Professor

Osijek, 2024.

J. J. Strossmayer University of Osijek
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of Osijek
Study Programme: Double Major BA Study Programme in English Language and Literature and Croatian Language and Literature

Mirta Kapelac

Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* as a Turning Point in Understanding Racism

Bachelor's Thesis

Scientific area: humanities
Scientific field: philology
Scientific branch: English studies

Supervisor: Dr. Jadranka Zlomislić, Associate Professor

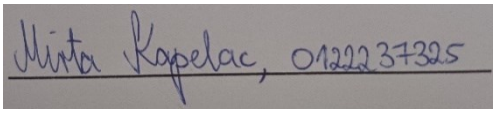
Osijek, 2024.

IZJAVA

Izjavljujem s punom materijalnom i moralnom odgovornošću da sam ovaj rad samostalno napisala te da u njemu nema kopiranih ili prepisanih dijelova teksta tuđih radova, a da nisu označeni kao citati s navođenjem izvora odakle su preneseni.

Svojim vlastoručnim potpisom potvrđujem da sam suglasna da Filozofski fakultet u Osijeku trajno pohrani i javno objavi ovaj moj rad u internetskoj bazi završnih i diplomskih radova knjižnice Filozofskog fakulteta u Osijeku, knjižnice Sveučilišta Josipa Jurja Strossmayera u Osijeku i Nacionalne i sveučilišne knjižnice u Zagrebu.

U Osijeku 07.09.2024.



Ime i prezime studenta, JMBAG

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to observe racism in Harper Lee's novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* through the perspectives of Jem and Scout Finch, their father Atticus and Tom Robinson, an African American man accused of a crime he did not commit. The impact of racism is evident in the characters' emotional and moral growth as well as their new perception of the world. By analyzing specific events that each of the mentioned characters experienced, we will follow the changes the characters undergo. The paper focuses on Jem and Scout's character development from young and naive to mature as they encounter various people, some of whom are more understanding, such as Dolphus Raymond, and some of whom are not, such as a member of Calpurnia's church, Lula, their elderly neighbor Mrs. Dubose and Scout's classmate Cecil Jacobs. Furthermore, the paper highlights Atticus's struggles as he faces community disapproval for taking Tom Robinson's case while simultaneously trying to explain racism to his children and teach them the importance of empathy and compassion. And lastly, it becomes evident that because of his race, Tom Robinson suffered prejudice and injustice from the community. Despite being published over sixty years ago, *To Kill a Mockingbird* remains relevant even today, not just in America but worldwide because the subject of racism, inequality and discrimination is still widespread globally.

Keywords: *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Harper Lee, prejudice, discrimination, racism, empathy, compassion

Contents

Introduction

Harper Lee's novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* tells the story of racial and social prejudice, narrated by an eight-year-old girl named Jean Louise "Scout" Finch. First published in 1960, the novel received immediate success, as during that time the Civil Rights Movement was gaining popularity in the United States. African Americans were fighting for their rights, and, even though the plot is set in the 1930s, the novel was relevant since it brought into light important social questions, such as prejudice, hatred, discrimination and inequality. The focus of the novel is the trial of Tom Robinson, an African American man falsely accused of raping the 19-year-old Mayella Ewell. Tom is described as a hardworking man, liked by the members of his community, who has a wife and three children. Scout's father, Atticus, agrees to be his lawyer and works hard to prove Tom's innocence. Tom is, however, found guilty and eventually killed when he tried to escape from prison.

It is believed that Lee's inspiration for Tom's trial came from the Scottsboro Boys trial. "The Scottsboro Boys were nine Black teenagers falsely accused of raping two white women aboard a train near Scottsboro, Alabama, in 1931" (History.com). The inspiration for the character of Atticus Finch came from Lee's own father who was a lawyer, just like Atticus, and who during her youth defended two African Americans accused of killing a white storekeeper. Being born in the South and having been influenced by those events from a very young age, writing about such topics seemed reasonable as it was something she had the opportunity to witness firsthand.

The focus of the paper is an exploration of racism from the perspectives of the novel's protagonists. The racism they experienced has impacted their emotional and moral growth and perception of the world and because of this experience, they started challenging society norms, condemning injustice and prejudice that individuals faced during that time and standing up for what was right. The paper highlights Jem and Scout's character development from young and naive to mature young individuals with a better understanding of the world, Atticus' personal struggles as he tries to explain racism to his children while simultaneously trying to prepare for the trial and Tom Robinson's suffering because of the effect of the trial and the false accusations against him, his family and community. The aim of this study is to present racism as a consequence of people's prejudice and ignorance, and to raise awareness to the degree to which the novel

opened the minds and eyes of people who were fighting for justice during the Civil Rights Movement.

The novel and its topics remain relevant even today, as racism is still a very prominent problem in the United States. With the Black Lives Matter movement taking off in recent years, the fight to end police brutality and prejudice based on race continues.

1. Life for an African American in the 1930s

Before getting into a deeper analysis of the characters mentioned above, for a better understanding of the novel it is important to get a better understanding of the life of an African American in the 1930s. This will be done firstly by explaining the impact of the Great Depression, as the novel is set during this period, and secondly by presenting how the society of the American South treated African Americans during the 1930s.

The Great Depression started in 1929 and lasted until 1939. It is hard to pinpoint what caused it since historians argue that many factors played a role, but one of the key factors was the Wall Street Crash of 1929. It "was one of the most devastating stock market crashes in American history" (Salsman 1). The aftermath was so severe that many people lost their jobs, wages were cut, big businesses went out of business, banking collapsed, and people could not afford the basic necessities for a normal life: "The decline in stock prices caused bankruptcies and severe macroeconomic difficulties including business closures, firing of workers and other economic repression measures" (Salsman 4). Circumstances for the crash are various but "[the crash] is usually seen as having the greatest impact on the events that followed" (Salsman 4), meaning that the Wall Street Crash of 1929 is what is considered to have started the Great Depression.

During the Great Depression, the American South was the poorest region in the United States, with African Americans having no economic or political power whatsoever: "It ha[d] tremendously affected the African American population in terms of employment, income, taxation, and education" (Van 3). In 1933 Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected president and his goal was to "recover the economic from the Great Depression" (Van 10), which he did by proposing "an economic policy to the American people that would certainly terminate the Great Depression for once and for good" (Van 10). This economic policy is known as the New Deal. For African Americans who lived in the North, this policy improved their condition but it "hurt the blacks

living in the South" (Van 11). Those living in the North, despite facing segregation, were able to vote and had better jobs, education and income opportunities, whereas those living in the South did not have any rights at all.

The Jim Crow laws did not help the situation either because they were meant to marginalize African Americans. Despite the 13th Amendment, which abolished slavery in the United States after the Civil War, they remained oppressed. It was difficult for them to win court cases since many former Confederate soldiers worked as judges or police in the legal system. As a result, "black offenders typically received longer sentences than their white equals, and because of the grueling work, often did not live out their entire sentence" (History.com). Jim Crow laws soon spread across the country, disenabling nearly all opportunities for African Americans. Public parks, restaurants, theatres, waiting rooms, restrooms, water fountains, elevators, etc. were segregated. African Americans were also forbidden to live in white neighborhoods. Soon segregation was enforced in every important public place, such as pools, phone booths, asylums, even hospitals and jails.

During the period of 1910–1970 the Great Migration started taking place, during which African Americans started moving north. It was a great opportunity for a better life since factories would pay them bigger wages. The South is, as is known, a very conservative part of the United States and is not prone to changing or accepting new ways, which made whites in the 30s "more inclined to resort to racial violence when 'progress' by blacks lessened the traditional social and economic superiority enjoyed by whites" (Tolnay and Beck 109). The "fear of violence at the hands of southern whites" (Tolnay and Beck 104) as well as "high levels of racial violence" (Tolnay and Beck 103) made African Americans migrate. Lynchings were not uncommon, and this was one of many reasons that "motivated blacks to leave certain areas" (Tolnay and Beck 103). Unsurprisingly, most lynchings took place in former Confederate states and according to data, Mississippi, Florida, Arkansas, and Louisiana had the highest rates of lynchings.

What caused them were mostly accusations of sexual harassment. A white woman would accuse a black man of inappropriate sexual contact and he would be arrested immediately. What would happen next is that police officers would leave the arrested in a cell unguarded thus allowing a lynching mob to kill the victim. Sometimes whole families would attend lynchings, bringing their young children as well. Southern African Americans were in constant danger and therefore "were more inclined to flee areas where the threat of white lynch mobs was greatest" (Tolnay and

Beck 106). As they fled, the lynchings declined. What also helped was the rise of the Civil Rights Movement.

Six million African Americans fled from Southern to Northern, Midwestern, and Western states to escape violence, lynchings, and Jim Crow laws. The migration "dramatically altered the geographic profile of the black population of the United States" (Tolnay and Beck 103). In the North, they had an opportunity for a better education, as there were some instances of "migration of blacks from areas where blacks were denied educational opportunity" (Tolnay and Beck 109), decent jobs, a better social life and, maybe most importantly, access to the ballot. Unfortunately, they lived in overcrowded neighborhoods with poor housing and still faced racism and prejudice. On the brighter side, there are some cases where many African Americans created their own neighborhoods, one of them being Harlem in New York City. Their experience resulted in a movement called the Harlem Renaissance, which celebrated their culture, namely literature, music, and art.

It can be concluded that life for an African American in the South during the 1930s was not ideal. Racism was (and still is) a big problem. With that in mind, the next section of this paper analyzes the impact of racism on the novel's protagonists, more precisely their emotional and moral growth and the way they started challenging social norms by standing up for what was right.

2. Racism through the Eyes of the Children: Jem and Scout

The novel follows the development of Jem and Scout Finch from childhood. When the reader is first introduced to Jem and Scout, Jem is ten and Scout is six years old. At the beginning of the novel, both characters are rather naive and behave in a child-like way: curious, adventurous, pass their time playing games that Jem comes up with, do not have any understanding of the way the world works and do not have any regard for other people's lives. An example of the latter would be their attempt to lure Boo Radley out of his house despite Atticus's warnings to leave him alone. Boo Radley is something of an enigma and subject of speculation, not just among the children but among other townspeople as well, due to his troubling youth and the gossip surrounding his life.

According to Scout, he was involved in some juvenile delinquency when he was younger which resulted in his father's decision to keep him locked up in their house. This leads the children to speculate and make up stories about him, portraying him as terrifying and dangerous. But as the plot unfolds, the children realize that he is not what the town presents him to be and that Atticus's warnings to leave him alone were just out of respect to his privacy and to avoid causing him any more harm or disturbance, because of the speculations of his father's abuse and mistreatment after the incident. Boo plays one of the most important roles at the end of the novel, in which he saves the children from Bob Ewell's attack, and Scout realizes that he is a kind and caring person and not a monster.

In addition to their new perspective on Boo Radley, the children's understanding of the world starts changing too when Tom Robinson's trial starts. They start encountering racism in a more prominent way and witness injustice of America's legal system during the 1930s. By the end of the novel, because of the experience with Tom Robinson's case and various encounters with people prone to racism, the children grow emotionally and morally and learn that one should always have empathy and compassion towards others, something that their father has been trying to instill in them from their earliest age, because one can never know what somebody else is going through unless one experiences it firsthand. They become wiser because they can finally understand Atticus's lessons on empathy and compassion. By exploring and comparing the children's encounters with some of the novel's characters, and their experiences with racism, we will see how it affected them morally and emotionally and how they came to understand it.

2.1. Sunday Mass with Calpurnia

Calpurnia is an African American maid for the Finches, whom they love dearly, who has been in their family for a long time and whom Atticus considers "a faithful member of [the] family" (Lee 72). One Sunday, when Atticus is not in town and no one is able to be with the children for the Sunday sermon, she decides to take them to her church, First Purchase. The church got its name because "it was paid for from the first earnings of freed slaves" (Lee 63), but despite African Americans using it on Sundays for worship, the whites use it for gambling during the week, showing that they do not care at all for the church's original purpose.

Before the sermon, Calpurnia makes sure to clean and bathe the children, and dress them accordingly. When Jem remarks he feels like they are going to "Mardi Gras" (Lee 62) and asks: "What's all this for?" (Lee 62), Calpurnia replies: "I don't want anybody sayin' I don't look after my children" (Lee 62). By saying this, she understands that there might be some prejudice from other African Americans, but as the children's primary mother figure and the one responsible for their upbringing along with Atticus, she wishes to show them in a good light and prove to others that she cares for them.

When they get to church, they are greeted with respect: "the men stepped back and took off their hats; the women crossed their arms at their waists, weekday gestures of respectful attention" (Lee 63). Despite initial acknowledgement from other African Americans, greeting Calpurnia and the children, they are stopped when a voice behind them calls: "What you up to, Miss Cal?" (Lee 63). This is Lula, a tall African American woman who tells Calpurnia she has no business bringing white children to an African American church. This incident leads to a dispute with Calpurnia and depicts the prejudice Lula feels towards the children just because they are white and shows that racism is not rooted just in white communities but can be found in an African American community as well.

However, Lula seems to be the only one who has a problem with Jem and Scout being there, because the others are more than happy to have them as their guests: "Mister Jem, we're mighty glad to have you all here. Don't pay no 'tention to Lula, she's contentious because Reverend Sykes threatened to church her. She's a troublemaker from way back, got fancy ideas an' haughty ways—we're mighty glad to have you all" (Lee 63). The hospitality from other members of Calpurnia's church shows great respect towards the children, but having experienced

Lula's outburst, they come to understand that prejudice and injustice is a deeply rooted problem and slowly, but surely, "the reader watches Scout learn about her world over the course of the novel" (Haggerty 55) and despite both Scout and Jem being young, they start "understanding that often [systematic cruelty] cannot be defeated, only confronted, but that regardless, one need not—and must not—ever surrender to it" (Haggerty 55).

Furthermore, Calpurnia shows signs of her struggle in dealing with the so-called double consciousness, which is a concept in which there is "an internal conflict in the African American individual between what was 'African' and what was 'American'" (Bruce 301), meaning that an individual in a sense lives two lives, navigating between the dominant society and the society from which one comes. When Calpurnia is with the Finches, her grammar is "as good as anybody's in Maycomb" (Lee 13), but when she is furious, her grammar "became erratic" (Lee 13) and this can be seen during her dispute with Lula. She changes the way she talks and even Scout makes a note of this: "Again I thought her voice strange: she was talking like the rest of them" (Lee 63). Bruce additionally states that "the dual personalities were not just different from each other but were inevitably in opposition" (Bruce 304). Scout does not recognize this 'new' Calpurnia, for she has only ever known a stern, but fair Calpurnia so she is shocked to see this side of her: "That Calpurnia led a modest double life never dawned on me. The idea that she had a separate existence outside our household was a novel one, to say nothing of her having command of two languages" (Lee 67).

Calpurnia is a loved character, who tries to assimilate as much as possible within the white culture, but nevertheless stays true to herself because, as Bruce notes, "it was for the African American 'to merge his double self into a better and truer self,' losing 'neither of the older selves'" (Bruce 306). To connect this with the statement by Haggerty that systematic cruelty should be confronted, one can argue that Calpurnia is one of many examples and role models to the children when it comes to standing up for what is right. She never lost her sense of pride while simultaneously defending her children in front of Lula.

The church visit with Calpurnia expands the children's perspective on racism and makes them realize that it does not have to be experienced only by an African American but can be experienced by children like themselves as well. Since they feel like outsiders in an all-black environment, they also get a better understanding of segregation and injustice in the society of the

1930s South. Watching Calpurnia stand up to Lula, they start grasping the importance of challenging social norms simply by standing up for what they believe to be right.

2.2. Encounter with Dolphus Raymond

Dolphus Raymond is a white man who, for the most part of the novel, is believed to be a town drunk:

> "Jem," said Dill, "he's drinkin' out of a sack."
>
> Mr. Dolphus Raymond seemed to be so doing: two yellow drugstore straws ran from his mouth to the depths of a brown paper bag.
>
> "Ain't ever seen anybody do that," murmured Dill.
>
> "How does he keep what's in it in it?"
>
> Jem giggled. "He's got a Co-Cola bottle full of whiskey in there. That's so's not to upset the ladies" (Lee 85).

Jem further explains it is rumored that Mr. Raymond was supposed to get married years ago, but his bride committed suicide when she found out about his African American mistress and ever since that incident, Mr. Raymond has been drinking. Furthermore, "he's got a colored woman and all sorts of mixed chillum" (Lee 85) and he prefers African American company to white company.

But when Dill gets upset about the unfair treatment of Tom Robinson during the trial, reacting with "outraged dismay to the nightmarish injustice of the verdict that condemns Tom Robinson to die" (Haggerty 68) and Scout takes him out of the court room, they encounter Dolphus Raymond, who offers Dill a sip from his sack with straws in it and realizes that it is only Coca Cola and not whiskey. Mr. Raymond "reveals to Dill and Scout that he only pretends to be a drunk" (Haggerty 68).

The children are taken aback by this discovery and Scout tries to politely ask Mr. Raymond why he pretends to be drunk all the time, to which he replies: "I try to give 'em a reason" (Lee 107). Mr. Raymond "can evade the control of society in one area of his life, but to do so he must conform to the altered expectations of the society" (Best 544) and so, because he understands that townspeople do not support his way of living and cannot understand why he chooses it, by pretending to be drunk he allows "society . . . limited control over his behavior" (Best 544), thus allowing him to live his life the way he chooses.

During their conversation, Mr. Raymond brings into light the corruption of the legal system in Maycomb and tries to prepare the children for further injustice and unfair treatment of those from the 'lower' class, not just during the trial, but throughout their adult life as well:

> Things haven't caught up with that one's instinct yet. Let him get a little older and he won't get sick and cry. Maybe things'll strike him as being—not quite right, say, but he won't cry, not when he gets a few years on him . . . Cry about the simple hell people give other people—without even thinking. Cry about the hell white people give colored folks, without even stopping to think that they're people, too. (Lee 107)

Another lesson the children learn is not to believe everything you hear. Scout and Dill think Mr. Raymond is a drunk and an "evil man" (Lee 107), just like the rest of the town thought him to be. But, through their conversation with him, they come to realize that his moral values are far better than those of most other townspeople and his beliefs that everyone should be equal come from a greater understanding of African Americans, as he has spent nearly all his life living with them.

By having the children converse with Mr. Raymond, "Lee makes it plain that in the world depicted in the book a vast gulf stands between the concept of justice based on reason and injustice based on prejudice" (Haggerty 56). Much like Tom Robinson, and even Boo Radley, Mr. Raymond is in a sense an outcast, as he chooses to live his life the way he lives it and even contributes to the town's gossip about himself. However, the important difference between them and Mr. Raymond is that he chose to live this life, whereas Tom Robinson and Boo Radley did not have much choice. Mr. Raymond is also an outcast because he chooses to believe in what is right, and not the same as everybody else.

With this in mind, one can argue that all those who believe in what is right, like Atticus and his children, Miss Maudie Atkinson, Calpurnia, Mr. Raymond and Dill, are outcasts, because they do not belong in a city full of racists and they "all challenge the status quo and the rules that divide classes, and consequently they all face the criticism of their peers and friends" (Best 548). By having the children encounter Dolphus Raymond, Lee once again paints a picture of the importance of believing and standing up for what is right. This encounter also expands their understanding of societal norms and expectations in the sense that they realize Mr. Raymond challenges what other townspeople believe is acceptable and what is not by doing what he wants and believes is the right thing to do.

2.3. Cecil Jacobs and Mrs. Dubose

That Jem and Scout are loyal to Atticus throughout the novel is best shown in their encounters with Cecil Jacobs and Mrs. Dubose. Cecil Jacobs is Scout's classmate who "informs her, insultingly, that her father 'defended n---ers'" (Haggerty 68). Scout, confused, asks Atticus if it is true, to which he replies that it is. Scout is worried, because Cecil Jacobs makes it sound like that is a bad thing, but Atticus says: "I'm simply defending a Negro" (Lee 41). Known for her temper, Atticus begs her to "just hold [her] head high and keep those fists down" (Lee 41) and "No matter what anybody says to you, don't you let 'em get your goat" (Lee 41).

With that in mind, she asks Cecil Jacobs to take back what he said, but he refuses, saying that "[her] daddy was a disgrace" (Lee 41). Scout is ready to fight but remembers the promise she made to Atticus and backs down from the fight, which results in Cecil Jacobs calling her a coward, but she simply states: "Atticus so rarely asked Jem and me to do something for him, I could take being called a coward for him" (Lee 41). This encounter not only shows once again that we should rise above aggravations, but also proves that Scout's love and loyalty for her father is enough to stop her from doing something reckless.

Mrs. Dubose is an old, mean lady who makes a rude remark about Atticus: "Not only a Finch waiting on tables but one in the courthouse lawing for niggers! What has this world come to when a Finch goes against his raising? I'll tell you . . . Your father's no better than the niggers and trash he works for" (Lee 55), which angers Jem and, as revenge, he destroys Mrs. Dubose's camellia bushes despite Atticus telling him to "be a gentleman" (Lee 54) and ignore her rude comments. Mrs. Dubose is "a literal artifact of the antebellum South, born just before or during the Civil War" (Richards 161) and as such a conservative and stereotypical old lady, "is appalled that an upper-class white man like Atticus would be willing to defend a black man on a rape charge even if that black man is innocent" (Best 548). She, unfortunately, does not know any better and in her head, the things she said to the children are valid.

When Atticus later asks Jem why he did what he did, Jem answers truthfully, to which Atticus says: "Son, I have no doubt that you've been annoyed by your contemporaries about me lawing for niggers, as you say, but to do something like this to a sick old lady is inexcusable. I strongly advise you to go down and have a talk with Mrs. Dubose" (Lee 57) and as punishment for his behavior, Jem is forced to read to her every day for a month.

As was the case with Scout and Cecil Jacobs, Jem's decision to destroy Mrs. Dubose's flowers because of her comments towards their father is another example of loyalty the children have towards their father. Despite knowing that he would get in trouble, Jem did what he thought was the right thing to do. And despite not wanting to read to her and hating her, there is a lesson behind his punishment as well which he learns. Mrs. Dubose was addicted to morphine but she decided to stop using it so she could die in peace, and Jem's afternoon visits are in a sense a distraction from the pain she feels. But only after her death do the children learn about all this, when Atticus tells them that "she was the bravest person [he] ever knew" (Lee 61), which shows that bravery is not having "a gun in [your] hand" (Lee 61), but when one keeps going no matter the consequences.

Once again particular events shape the children's perspective on what is right and what is wrong. Scout learns that sometimes the best thing one can do is back down from a fight and be a bigger person despite the other person's mockery and rude comments, and Jem learns that things are not always what they seem. After her death, Mrs. Dubose "becomes for Jem not a demon, but a human, regardless of how she had treated him" (Haggerty 77) and once again the children learn the most important lesson: one cannot know what someone is going through unless they experience it themselves. Furthermore, by encountering harsh comments about their father being a 'n---er lover', they realize the world is an unjust and cruel place, but by raising above those people and their hurtful comments, they grow morally and emotionally and become more mature and with a better understanding of the world.

3. Racism through the Eyes of the Lawyer: Atticus Finch

Atticus Finch is one of the most important characters in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. He serves as a moral compass to others, with his integrity, kindness, understanding and fairness. He closely resembles Lee's own father, Amasa Coleman Lee, who was an "an Alabama state legislator as well as a respected civil attorney" (Haggerty 13), just like Atticus, and whom Lee called A.C., just like the children call their father by his name.

His qualities make him a man worthy of respect, and those qualities he tries to instill in his children. The most important ones are empathy and compassion. Near the end of the novel, his children can finally understand all that he has been trying to teach them, but Atticus learns some lessons himself: the world is a cruel place, innocence can be destroyed when faced with injustice and sometimes doing the right thing is not enough.

Atticus's patience and understanding is what makes him such a great parent because he puts himself in his children's place and tries to sympathize with them. However, he has his own personal struggles when he is appointed to be Tom Robinson's lawyer. He must teach his children what racism and injustice can do to an individual. Despite the townspeople's gossips, he needs to show them that he is doing the right thing, that all men are equal before the law, and that one should always do the right thing, even if it means losing, because "simply because we were licked a hundred years before we started is no reason for us not to try to win" (Lee 41).

By exploring some of the most important lessons he has taught his children, his struggles with the community and his encounter with an angry Bob Ewell after the trial, we will examine how racism has impacted Atticus, what he has learned and how he has challenged society's norms in his fight against racism.

3.1. Empathy and Compassion

Some of the most important lessons the children learn from Atticus are those of empathy and compassion. Both children are a little embarrassed that their father is much older than the other parents and he does not do what their peers' fathers do, like hunting, fishing or playing baseball. However, Atticus's wisdom, intelligence and the ability to empathize with other townspeople is what makes him stand out from other parents in a positive way.

The first lesson Atticus teaches Scout is that "you never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view . . . until you climb into his skin and walk around in it" (Lee 16) and "this definition of empathy is quite likely the lasting impression most readers take away from *To Kill a Mockingbird* and the character of Atticus Finch" ("Being Atticus Finch" 1686), meaning that Atticus Finch managed to explain in simplest words to his six-year-old daughter (and the reader as well) the importance of empathy, which serves as a central point in her moral growth in better understanding people.

The event leading up to this lesson started after the teacher tried giving Walter Cunningham a quarter for lunch and did not understand why he would not take it. Scout tried explaining to her teacher that Walter Cunningham, Scout's poor classmate, "never took anything [he] can't pay back—no church baskets and no scrip stamps. [Cunninghams] never took anything off of anybody, they get along on what they have. They don't have much, but they get along on it" (Lee 11). But by standing up for him, Scout gets in trouble and her teacher whips her with a ruler, after which Scout rubs Walter's nose in the dirt as revenge.

Atticus later tells Scout that she has learned a lot in school that day. Had Scout put herself in her teacher's shoes, she would have understood that the teacher made an honest mistake because she was simply not aware that the Cunninghams were so poor. It is the same with everything else in life. Being able to identify with other people and empathize with them can be beneficial as one gains a deeper understanding of an individual's thoughts and feelings. Perhaps, when she first heard them, those words were confusing to Scout. But as the novel progresses, both siblings become more aware of other people's feelings. Jem is deeply saddened when Tom Robinson is declared guilty. He tells Scout that he never wants to "hear about that courthouse again, ever, ever . . . Don't you ever say one word to me about [the trial] again" (Lee 131), implying that he managed to grasp the impact of other people's ignorance and injustice towards an African American man long before Scout did, and empathize with him. Atticus then tells her that she should not be hurt by Jem's outburst because he did not really mean it, but that he is simply "having a rough time these days" (Lee 131). Here Atticus is empathizing with both of his children: he understands why Jem feels the way that he does, and he also understands that Scout is hurt because of Jem's words and tries to console her. Atticus merely leads by example and his children follow his lead.

Scout learns how to empathize with others, too. When she takes Boo Radley home after Bob Ewell tried attacking her brother and her and Boo saved them, she says: "Atticus was right.

One time he said you never really know a man until you stand in his shoes and walk around in them. Just standing on the Radley porch was enough" (Lee 148). The closing scene on the Radley porch "works metaphorically as a liminal, interstitial space opened up between full sympathetic identification with a particular other (i.e., entering the house, actually 'getting into a person's skin/shoes'), and outright complicity with the status quo (i.e., staying safely on your own porch)" (Watson 423), meaning that by leaving the safety of her own porch and getting onto Boo Radley's—or, in other words, putting herself in his shoes—she realizes that things look just the same from his porch as they do from hers and one of the most important Atticus' lessons finally sinks in.

Another lesson the siblings learn from him is that of compassion. Watching their father take on Tom Robinson's case and defend him despite the townspeople's disapproval also serves as a turning point in the novel and their development from naive to mature. Before the trial starts, Atticus knows he must prepare them for what is about to come:

> I hope and pray I can get Jem and Scout through it without bitterness, and most of all, without catching Maycomb's usual disease. Why reasonable people go stark raving mad when anything involving a Negro comes up, is something I don't pretend to understand... I just hope that Jem. (Lee 48)

He knows that the community does not understand why he decided to defend an African American man and even says that "there's been some high talk around town to the effect that [he] shouldn't do much about defending this man" (Lee 41), but he decides to do so anyway, because "if [he] didn't [he] couldn't hold up [his] head in town, [he] couldn't represent this county in the legislature, [he] couldn't even tell [Scout] or Jem not to do something again" (Lee 41), because he believes that everyone has the right to same treatment and that everyone is equal in front of the law.

Atticus' decision to defend Tom Robinson so vigorously, despite Robinson being such an "unpopular client" (Lovell Banks 240) during that time, shows Atticus' moral superiority when compared to that of his community because he does not comply with their racist opinions. In the novel, Harper Lee uses the expression "Maycomb's usual disease" to refer to the racism and prejudice of the community. Simply "by putting on an earnest defense in Tom Robinson's case, [Atticus] was breaking the rules of his racially segregated society" (Lovell Banks 240) and showing his children the importance of compassion towards others. By breaking those rules,

Atticus puts himself and his children in danger within the community, but he believes that his decision is justified and decides to persist nevertheless. These lessons go hand in hand with each other. By deciding to defend Tom Robinson, Atticus shows compassion towards him—he wants to help him and he indeed "[provides] his client with a credible defense" (Lovell Banks 243)—while simultaneously having empathy towards him because he understands what Tom Robinson is going through as he manages to put himself in his shoes because of his experience and wisdom.

Atticus strengthens his own beliefs in what is right and what is wrong and his own view of empathy and compassion when encountered with "Maycomb's usual disease" (Lee 48) just by doing what he believes to be the right thing. By making the children successfully grasp the importance of empathy and compassion at the end of the novel, Lee makes their evolution from young and naive to mature more credible.

3.2. The Community's Disapproval

As has already been said, the Maycomb community does not think Atticus should take Tom Robinson's case as seriously as he intends to do because he is "a white man . . . a respected member of his Maycomb, Alabama community" (Lovell Banks 240) and "in representing a black client, he risks social isolation" (Lovell Banks 240). However, the only thing Atticus cares about are his children and he tries his best to teach them that they need to keep their heads high: "Lawyers are often stereotyped in books, plays, and movies as unscrupulous, greedy, and manipulative. Atticus Finch, with his unshakeable integrity, stands as a refutation of this caricature and a vindication of his profession" (Haggerty 50).

When sheriff Heck Tate comes to Atticus's house to tell him that "[they are] movin' [Tom Robinson] to the county jail tomorrow . . . I don't look for any trouble, but I can't guarantee there won't be any" (Lee 77), realizing that there might be trouble after all, "Atticus decides to stand guard over his cell" ("Being Atticus Finch" 1696) showing everyone that he does not care about isolation and that he intends to defend Tom Robinson the right way. By doing so, Atticus fails to succumb to the townspeople's assumptions and once again does what he believes to be the right thing to do.

Jem, suspecting something might go wrong, decides to follow Atticus, and Scout and Dill go with him. They find Atticus sitting in front of the jail where Tom Robinson was kept, reading, unaware of his children's presence. After making sure that he was fine, they turn to leave but "four

dusty cars came in from the Meridian highway, moving slowly in a line. They went around the square, passed the bank building, and stopped in front of the jail" (Lee 80). When Atticus does not allow the men to come near the cell, things quickly escalate. Sensing he might be in real danger this time, Scout goes to him and when he sees her, "a flash of plain fear was going out of his eyes, but returned when Dill and Jem wriggled into the light" (Lee 80).

Facing the angry lynch mob alongside with his children, Atticus challenges everything his fellow citizens stand for. The mob believes that Tom Robinson should be killed without trial, but Atticus does not allow that to happen simply by standing between the men and Tom's cell. Despite Scout being the one who reduces the tension, Atticus is once again a moral compass to his children, who, in return, show their father what it really means to be loyal to someone.

All throughout the novel and during the trail "Atticus repeatedly emphasized three points: first, the case is a personal one . . . second, whatever derogatory comments they hear, his children should hold their heads high . . . and third, no matter what happens, the people in the community are still friends" ("Being Atticus Finch" 1689), but the ending of the novel stands in contradiction to the events that take place because the community does not think of the Finches as friends, but as "n---er lovers" and disgraces. However, Atticus remains the bigger person as he rises above the aggravations.

3.3. Bob Ewell's Threat and Attack

After Atticus loses the case, but embarrasses the Ewells when his "cross examination casts doubt on Robinson's guilt" (Lovell Banks 243), because "[Atticus] proved [Bob Ewell] a liar but John [Taylor, the judge] made him look like a fool" (Lee 133), Bob Ewell starts making threats: "This morning Mr. Bob Ewell stopped Atticus on the post office corner, spat in his face, and told him he'd get him if it took the rest of his life" (Lee 115).

At first, Atticus does not believe Bob Ewell would do anything and simply dismisses the children's attempts when they beg him to somehow protect himself, saying how they "don't have anything to fear from Bob Ewell, he got it all out of his system that morning" (Lee 116). But Atticus is wrong because Bob Ewell, "outraged at how Atticus had humiliated him in court proving to the town that he lied in order to frame Tom Robinson" (Haggerty 60), attacks Jem and Scout on a Halloween night when they walk back home from a school Halloween pageant.

The scene with Bob Ewell attacking the children shows that innocence can be shattered when one is faced with injustice. Bob Ewell is the complete opposite of Atticus and a pure evil man, and instead of going after Atticus as everyone suspected he would, Bob Ewell decides to go after Atticus' children because he knows that is who Atticus loves the most. The children have been dragged into the mess just because their father is a lawyer who was defending an African American and Atticus's ignorance almost cost him his children because he gives Bob Ewell the benefit of the doubt. It is the only time Atticus's preaching about walking around in somebody else's shoes proves to be wrong.

When sheriff Heck Tate comes and says that he has found Bob Ewell with a kitchen knife in-between his ribs near the Radley place, Atticus believes it was Jem who killed him, but it is, actually, Boo Radley who saves the children and kills Bob Ewell by stabbing him with a dull kitchen knife: "In saving the children, Boo takes his place within the community, and in return, earns the community's respect" (Haggerty 61). Sheriff Tate shows Boo this respect by deciding not to tell the community who really killed Bob Ewell, saying that "taking the one man who's done you and this town a great service an' draggin' him with his shy ways into the limelight—to me, that's a sin" (Lee 146). Despite it going against what he has been trying to teach his children, Atticus agrees with sheriff Tate because he realizes that nothing good could come out of accusing Boo of the murder.

Because of this event, Atticus realizes that evil people like Bob Ewell can and will do harmful things to others and that it is important that he keeps fighting for justice and continues teaching his children to do the same.

4. Racism through the Eyes of the Mockingbird: Tom Robinson

Tom Robinson is an African American man falsely accused of raping a 19-year-old girl. He is a kind, hard-working man, liked by the members of his community, "was twenty-five years of age; was married with three children, he had been in trouble with the law before: he once received thirty days for disorderly conduct" (Lee 101). Atticus deliberately mentions Tom's previous trouble with the law to show Tom's credibility to the jury, making him look like an honest and decent man and that he has nothing to hide.

The reader does not get much perspective on Tom Robinson. Despite him being first mentioned in chapter nine, it is not until chapters eighteen and nineteen that the reader gets a better look at him, when the trial starts and when he and the Ewells testify. By analyzing and comparing his story of the events with the Ewells' story, we will see how the law of the American South operated in the 1930s and, by analyzing the events that take place after the trial and his death, we will see what lesson there is to be learned.

4.1. The Trial

The Ewells are a poor, uneducated family: "people like the Ewells lived as guests of the county in prosperity as well as in the depths of a depression" (Lee 90) and they are not respected at all. Their only credibility is that they are white, but even among the whites, they are of a lower class and "neither of the Ewells is even remotely credible as a witness" (Haggerty 71). Bringing an African American man to court serves as an opportunity to make them look better in the eyes of the community, as Bob Ewell believes that getting rid of a rapist would save the town because the only thing he has is "his white skin" (Haggerty 59) and nothing more.

Sheriff Tate is the first one to testify and he tells the story from his perspective: Bob Ewell called him, telling him Tom Robinson had beaten up and raped his daughter, so the sheriff went to Tom's house, brought him to the Ewells and asked Mayella if that was the man who raped her, and after she replied it was, sheriff Tate arrested Tom. Atticus asks him multiple times if during the commotion someone called a doctor for Mayella, but the answer is that no one called a doctor. Atticus does this to point out that there is no medical evidence to prove that Mayella was raped, which is, in retrospect, the first evidence that points to Tom's innocence.

The second important thing which Atticus clarifies, and which points to Tom's innocence, is that only someone left-handed could have beaten Mayella. When sheriff Tate arrived, "she was beaten around the head. There was already bruises comin' on her arms . . . and she had a black eye comin'" (Lee 89). Soon it is established that it was her "right side" (Lee 89), but also that her neck had finger marks "all around" (Lee 90). Sheriff Tate's story is a legitimate one, with a clear overview of what had happened the evening of November 21st, when the alleged rape and beating took place, and it is significant that he believes that the beating could have been done only by someone with a strong, left hand. Afterwards, Atticus asks Bob Ewell to write his name. He does so, and everyone sees that he is "left-handed" (Lee 94). This is important because it is later revealed that "[Tom's] left arm was fully twelve inches shorter than his right, and hung dead at his side. It ended in a small shriveled hand, and from as far away as the balcony [Scout] could see that it was no use to him" (Lee 99), meaning that he could not have beaten Mayella with his left hand because it was useless. It becomes clear to everyone that it was Bob Ewell who had beaten up his own daughter.

As Robert Stephens notes, "after Atticus causes Bob Ewell to reveal that he is left-handed and evidence shows that Mayella was beaten by someone left-handed, Ewell rages that he was tricked by a lawyer who took advantage of a 'Christ-fearing man'" (Stephens 221). The reason why he becomes so angry after that is because he realizes that he looks like a lying fool in front of the jury and the entire town, and as has already been seen, this culminates later, when he attacks Atticus's children.

It is then Mayella's turn to testify. She is, along with Tom, the only one who knows the whole story, but due to her fear of her father, she twists the story in their favor:

> I was on the porch and—and [Tom] came along and, you see, there was this old chiffarobe in the yard Papa'd brought in to chop up for kindlin'—Papa told me to do it while he was off in the woods but I wadn't feelin' strong enough then, so he came by . . . I said come here, nigger, and bust up this chiffarobe for me, I gotta nickel for you. He coulda done it easy enough, he could. So he come in the yard an' I went in the house to get him the nickel and I turned around an 'fore I knew it he was on me. Just run up behind me, he did. He got me round the neck, cussin' me an' sayin' dirt—I fought'n'hollered, but he had me round the neck. He hit me agin an' agin… he chunked me on the floor an' choked me'n took advantage of me (Lee 96)

Very soon, however, we hear Tom's testimony. It is a complete opposite story of what the Ewells have told. Tom states that Mayella indeed asked him to chop up the chiffarobe, but that this event took place "last spring" (Lee 102) and that after that she had invited him to help her more times than just that once. Despite his fear, Tom Robinson is "the one who risks most in order to do what is right" (Haggerty 72). He understands that it is a white man's word against his, but he tells the story truthfully because his intention is to clear his name and "has more than Bob Ewell in every way that should matter" (Haggerty 59)—he has his morals. But unfortunately, he does not have a white skin color.

He finishes his story: she invited him to her house, closed the door so he could not escape, told him to get the box down from the closet and when he stepped on a chair, she "grabbed [him] round the legs" (Lee 103). Tom then "tries to break free without hurting her, but she continues to reach for him, embracing him and kissing him. Her father suddenly arrives and screams at his daughter, calling her a whore. Tom breaks free and flees for his life" (Haggerty 69). When asked why he fled the scene, he simply says he did so because he was afraid, because he is a black man: "he would not have dared strike a white woman under any circumstances and expect to live long, so he took the first opportunity to run—a sure sign of guilt" (Lee 104). With one line, Tom insinuates that Mayella's own father is the one who rapes her: "She says she never kissed a grown man before an' she might as well kiss a nigger. She says what her papa do to her don't count" (Lee 103).

That is the last piece of evidence that clearly shows Tom Robinson did not rape Mayella, but that Bob Ewell has "physically abused his own daughter" (Haggerty 61). Tom even says he never would have stepped his foot on the Ewell's property without an invitation. However, Tom sympathizes with Mayella, he even "felt right sorry for her" "(Lee 105) but saying that is a mistake because he is black and she is white—and just because of the color of her skin, she is superior to him. It is not Tom's place to feel sorry for a white woman, despite her misfortunes and a sad life.

Unfortunately, even though Atticus "presents a fundamental distinction between the two forces in conflict during the rape trial— the law and the code. Tom Robinson has broken no law, but his accuser Mayella Ewell has violated the code by making advances to a black man" (Stephens 215) and despite all the evidence pointing out that Tom is innocent, the jury declares him guilty and "the unreasonable, unwritten 'code' of Southern society prevails" (Haggerty 56).

Had it not been an all-white jury, perhaps the outcome would have been different, but "placing sentencing solely in the hands of all-white, all-male juries allowed those juries to draw on their own racial prejudices and race-specific gender ideologies to impose disparate sentences based on race" (Dorr 717). As is known, Maycomb is a racist town and the trial took place in the Jim Crow South—"the guilty verdict is not peculiar to Alabama in the 1930s or to the South" (Stephens 221), meaning that no matter how many pieces of evidence Atticus presented to the jury in Tom's favor, Tom would still have been declared guilty, simply because he is black and because "the law of nature was superior to laws made by men" (Stephens 222). As Lisa Lindquist Dorr furthermore argues, "Harper Lee's exploration of race, class and gender relations in a small southern town exposed how racial prejudice produced irrationality among whites, ultimately depriving African Americans of justice" (Dorr 713). Tom Robinson, even with Atticus's best efforts, was "a dead man the minute Mayella Ewell opened her mouth and screamed" (Lee 128).

4.2. Death

Discouraged by the turn of events, and despite Atticus thinking "it likely that Robinson's conviction would be overturned on appeal" (Dorr 712), Tom Robinson tries to escape from prison. However, he is shot by a guard and killed. Scout states that "to Maycomb, Tom's death was typical. Typical of a nigger to cut and run. Typical of a nigger's mentality to have no plan, no thought for the future, just run blind first chance he saw" (Lee 128). Tom tries to escape because he lost all hope as he does not believe the conviction will be overturned and he knows that his life is over. By experiencing the injustice of the sad ending of the case, the children are heartbroken, particularly Jem. Atticus tells them: "Those are twelve reasonable men in everyday life, Tom's jury, but you saw something come between them and reason" (Lee 117), insinuating that they were unreasonable when it came to Tom Robinson's case despite all the evidence. Unfortunately, "the verdict of the jury indicated which side's version better adhered to accepted social realities and expectations" (Dorr 723).

Jem cannot come to terms with the outcome of the trial so Atticus tells him: "you'll see white men cheat black men every day of your life, but let me tell you something and don't you forget it—whenever a white man does that to a black man, no matter who he is, how rich he is, or how fine a family he comes from, that white man is trash" (Lee 117). According to Scout, Atticus

has never spoken in such a way and by saying those things to the siblings, we see that the outcome of the trial has broken his heart just like Jem and Scout's.

4.3.The Aftermath

After the trial, Bob Ewell, aware that Atticus and judge Taylor made him look like a fool, becomes obsessed with revenge on everyone involved in the trial. But most of all, he starts following Tom Robinson's widow, Helen, on her daily trips to work.

Link Deas, a man for whom Tom Robinson used to work, wants to help Tom's family, and employs Tom's widow, Helen, even though he did not really need her. Bob Ewell starts terrorizing her so much that Helen, scared, starts taking the longer route to work, which Link Deas catches upon, and when he asks her why she is doing it, she tells him the truth. Link Deas then threatens Bob:

> If I hear one more peep outa my girl Helen about not bein' able to walk this road I'll have you in jail before sundown . . . second thing you can do is stay away from my cook or I'll have you up for assault . . . an' if assault ain't enough to keep you locked up awhile, I'll get you in on the Ladies' Law, so get outa my sight! If you don't think I mean it, just bother that girl again! (Lee 132).

As a result of Link Deas threats, Bob Ewell stops bothering her.

Tom Robinson's death is a tragic reminder that racism and discrimination are rooted in America's justice system. His death is a consequence of a deeply rooted hatred towards people of a different background prevalent during that time. Despite showing courage in the face of danger, Tom becomes a mockingbird—someone who represents innocence and whom it is a sin to kill. By killing a mockingbird, innocence is killed as well.

Conclusion

To Kill a Mockingbird remains one of the most important literary works ever written on the topic of growing up in a racist community and trying to come to terms with injustice, discrimination and prejudice in the Jim Crow South in the 1930s, during the Great Depression. The story focuses on two siblings whose lives change when their father is appointed to defend an African American man falsely accused of raping a white girl. In learning to deal with the townspeople's prejudice, Jem and Scout Finch learn that the world which awaits them is unfair and that it is important to always do the right thing and fight for what one believes in. They show great courage in the face of danger and great loyalty to their father, Atticus Finch. Atticus, who serves as a moral compass to his children and is a respected member of the Maycomb community, also learns a couple of things. He strengthens his beliefs in always doing the right thing, teaches his children the importance of empathy and compassion by leading by example, learns that innocence can be lost when faced with inequality and that the world is a harsh place.

Tom Robinson, an African American man falsely accused of a crime he did not commit, shows strength and dignity in the face of injustice. His story serves as a reminder that injustice, prejudice, and discrimination were and still are big problems in today's society. His tragic ending makes the reader realize that things should change, but also that not much has changed since the novel's publication as there are still many examples of racism and discrimination towards African Americans and other minorities around the world.

The impact of racism these characters experienced has made them grow both morally and emotionally throughout the novel. It is because of their unshared racist opinions with other townspeople that they challenge social norms. The novel's topics were relevant when it first came out in 1960, when the Civil Rights Movement had started raising awareness of racism faced by African Americans and paved the way for them to start fighting for their rights. The subject of the novel remains relevant today as the fight against racism continues.

Works Cited

Best, Rebecca H. "Panopticism and the Use of 'the Other' in 'To Kill a Mockingbird.'" *The Mississippi Quarterly*, vol. 62, no. 4, 2009, pp. 541–52. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/26477256. Accessed 23 June 2023.

"Being Atticus Finch: The Professional Role of Empathy in 'To Kill a Mockingbird.'" *Harvard Law Review*, vol. 117, no. 5, 2004, pp. 1682–702.

Bruce, Dickson D. "W. E. B. Du Bois and the Idea of Double Consciousness." *American Literature*, vol. 64, no. 2, 1992, pp. 299–309. *JSTOR*, doi.org/10.2307/2927837. Accessed 22 June 2023.

Dorr, Lisa Lindquist. "Black-on-White Rape and Retribution in Twentieth-Century Virginia: 'Men, Even Negroes, Must Have Some Protection.'" *The Journal of Southern History*, vol. 66, no. 4, 2000, pp. 711–48. JSTOR, doi.org/10.2307/2588009. Accessed 6 July 2023.

Haggerty, Andrew. *Harper Lee: To Kill a Mockingbird (Writers and Their Work).* Marshall Cavendish Corporation, 2010.

"Jim Crow Laws." History.com, 2018. www.history.com/topics/early-20th-century-us/jim-crow-laws. Accessed April 24, 2023.

Lee, Harper. *To Kill a Mockingbird*. J. B. Lippincott, 1960

Lovell Banks, Taunya. "To Kill a Mockingbird (1962): Lawyering in an Unjust Society." *University of Maryland School of Law*, 2006, pp. 239–52.

Richards, Gary. "Harper Lee and the Destabilization of Heterosexuality." *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Harper Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Updated Edition*. Infobase Publishing, 2007, pp. 149–188.

Salsman, Richard M. "Wall Street Crash of 1929." www.aviatorsdatabase.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Wall-Street-Crash-of-1929.pdf. Accessed April 20, 2023.

"Scottsboro Boys." History.com, 2018, www.history.com/topics/great-depression/scottsboro-boys. Accessed March 17, 2023.

Stephens, Robert O. "The Law and the Code in Harper Lee's 'To Kill a Mockingbird.'" *Southern Cultures*, vol. 1, no. 2, 1995, pp. 215–27. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/44378647. Accessed 9 July 2023.

Tolnay, Stewart E., and Beck, E. M. "Racial Violence and Black Migration in the American South, 1910 to 1930." *American Sociological Review*, vol. 57, no. 1, 1992, pp. 103–16. *JSTOR*, doi.org/10.2307/2096147. Accessed 10 May 2023.

Van, Germinal G. "THE ECONOMIC CONDITION OF AFRICAN AMERICANS DURING THE GREAT DEPRESSION (1929–1941)." www.academia.edu/42068138/THE_ECONOMIC_CONDITION_OF_AFRICAN_AMERICANS_DURING_THE_GREAT_DEPRESSION_1929_1941_. Accessed April 29, 2023.

Watson, Rachel. "The View from the Porch: Race and the Limits of Empathy in the Film 'To Kill a Mockingbird.'" *The Mississippi Quarterl*y, vol. 63, no. 3, 2010, pp. 419–43. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/26477297. Accessed 9 July 2023.