

# Symbolism in to kill a mockingbird

[Literature](#), [American Literature](#)



Symbolism in To Kill a Mockingbird " Happiness can be found in the darkest of times, if only one remembers to turn on the light. " -J. K Rowling To Kill a Mockingbird Is a story of change, maintaining patience, and learning how to see people past their roles in society. The clarity and connections of the plot tying into subplots through symbolism has made this novel a literary classic. Taking place in the fictional town of Maycomb, Alabama, readers get the idea of the true racism and ignorance throughout southern society during the 1930's. Symbolism can be portrayed in nearly every important episode throughout the book. The story starts out with the narrator, Scout, introducing herself and talking about her family (Lee, Page 1-4). Scout is a young six- year old tomboy who lives with her older brother, Jem, and her father, Atticus. Scout is an adventurous character, following her friend Dill and older brother into playful trouble. Maycomb is a place where your role in society is vital. It's how the people of the town treat you, it's how you get jobs, and it's how you learn to live your life. Overall, Maycomb moves at a steady pace and most of the time, isn't interrupted by misplace in their routine of the social pyramid. However, in this story, it's a time of great change for this area centering the alleged rape of the white Mayella Ewell, daughter of the wicked Bob Ewell, by the innocent black Tom Robinson. Change is one of the biggest themes in this novel. In order to symbolize this, Lee displays minor events foreshadowing great journeys to come. As a blazing, humid hot town Maycomb is, one winter the children get a big surprise. The Town gets their first snowstorm in quite some time. (Lee, Page 69) Seeing snow for the first time, the children are extremely excited and at first think the world is ending. They rush out of the house and think of what

they wanted to do first with all of the snow, since they've never dealt with it before (Lee, Page 69). They all decide on constructing a snowman, an opportunity that they've never gotten before. Since there is not enough snow to make a well-built snowman, Jem builds a foundation of dirt to support the stability. Then, all work together to cover up the dirt with snow. (Stabler, Scott. To Kill a Mockingbird Article) "' Jem, I ain't ever heard of a nigger snowman,' I said.'He won't be black long', he grunted. " (Lee, Page 70) The Children do not realize that this event was explicitly symbolic on doing the job of displaying the superficiality of skin color and the how underneath, everyone is a human, such as Tom Robinson. (Not only is this symbol interpreted as that, but also not everyone who looks respectable on the outside is good at heart on the inside, such as Bob Ewell.) (O'Neill, Terry. Readings on to Kill a Mockingbird.) Finally, the deepest symbolism conveyed is through the symbol of the mockingbird. The title plainly makes us wonder what it truly means to kill a mockingbird. One day, while discussing weaponry and hunting to Jem, Atticus mentions that he'd rather Jem shoot tin cans in the backyard. After that he adds. " I know you'll go after birds. Shoot all the bluejays you want, if you can hit ' em, but remember it's a sin to kill a mockingbird. " (Lee, 90) Scout asks her neighbor, Mrs. Maudie about it, and she agrees. Explaining Atticus' words, Mrs. Maudie states " Mockingbirds... don't do one thing but sing their hearts out for us. That's why it's a sin to kill a mockingbird. " (Lee, 90.) The summary of it all is that a mockingbird is a symbol of everything that is harmless. They only make music for others to enjoy and to kill anything with that good heart is a sin. Both Boo Radley and Tom Robinson are harmless individuals, who never

intend to hurt anyone and don't seek revenge but only focus on the kindness of their heart. Tom is pleaded guilty for the alleged rape, although completely innocent (solely for the color of his skin) and afterwards, shot while escaping prison. After that, the evil Bob Ewell is killed by the stereotyped psychopath, Boo Radley, (Lee, 374) when Boo saves Scout and Jem from getting stabbed. Bob Ewell was punished for his sin of Tom's death through symbolism and karma. In the novel, the people of Maycomb only know Boo Radley and Tom Robinson by what others say about them. " Both of these characters do not really have their own ' song' in a sense, they are characterized by other people's viewpoints. " (Felty, Darren. " An overview of To Kill a Mockingbird.) After Tom Robinson is shot, his death is compared to " the senseless slaughter of songbirds, " (Lee, 241) and at the end of the book Scout thinks that hurting the truly sweetheated Boo Radley is nothing but a good, innocent man. Last but not least, Jem and Scout's last name is Finch (another type of small bird) indicating that they are particularly vulnerable in the racist world of Maycomb, which often treats the fragile innocence of childhood harshly. (Dave, R . A. " To Kill A Mockingbird: Harper Lee's Tragic Vision.") In conclusion, It shows that Harper Lee uses symbolism to not only show the story's major themes but to foreshadow the future of the story. Good and Evil is something that will always be in our world, and all we can do is be the better person like the mockingbirds.