

To kill a mockingbird critique

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



Today, most everyone in the United States is without racial discrimination, however this was not always the case. Ellen Harper Lee's unique, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, reminds the reader of a time in the 1930's when prejudice existed. This traditional narrates from the point of view of a six year-old woman, Jean "Scout" Louise Finch, who lives in Maycomb, Alabama. She is a rugged and reckless lady, who is the child of a prominent lawyer, Atticus, and her departed mother.

This story follows the life of Scout and her brother, Jem, as they witness and fight the bias and hatred in their neighborhood, causing a maturing experience for both Scout and her brother.

In the unique, Harper Lee influences these characters based upon her own experiences maturing, which include her attorney father's involvement in the interracial rape case, the Scottsboro Trial. It is an outcome of that experience that identified her plot for writing the book. Likewise, Harper Lee successfully uses her mastery of literary elements in the novel.

The greatest literary aspects found in the book are the provided themes, which remind the reader of their mankind. These styles consist of morality, youth and coming of age, and justice.

The most prompting theme in *To Kill a Mockingbird* is morality. Atticus and his efforts to maintain high ethical standards support this theme's evidence. His profound efforts speak to his character, and his character speaks profoundly despite the efforts of public duress and humiliation. In addition to public duress, Atticus faced domestic concern: "If you shouldn't be defendin' him, then why are you doin' it?" "For a number of reasons," said Atticus. "

The main one is, if I didn't I couldn't hold my head up in this town, I couldn't represent this county in the legislature, I couldn't even tell you or Jem not to do something again." [...] " Atticus, are we going to win it?"

" No, honey."

" Then why-"

" Simply because we were licked a hundred years before we started is no reason for us to not try to win," Atticus said. (9. 16-25) His conversation with Scout supports the theme of morality as one of the strongest literary elements used in the novel because it reminds the reader of their altruistic nature to fight for humanity. In addition to the theme of morality, youth and coming of age is another powerful message that Harper Lee addresses in To Kill a Mockingbird. This is because the story takes place during Scout and Jem's transition between the stages of childhood and adulthood. Coming of age was a process that Scout and Jem experienced as a result of: something substantially gained, like knowledge, a substantial loss, like innocence, or a combination of both. Since she tells the story through the eyes of a child, Harper Lee made sure to address youth and coming of age themes through the experiences of Scout and Jem.

While the story focuses on Scouts' experiences, Harper Lee redirects focus on Jem's reaction to the jury's verdict for Tom Robinson's trial. During the trial, Jem observed with unflinching interest and convinced himself that with Atticus's presented evidence, the jury would be unable to convict Tom guilty. When the jury returns with their verdict, Jem experiences a coming of age event that robs him of his innocence and was physically harmed by the

words. “ Judge Taylor was polling the jury: “ Guilty... guilty... guilty... guilty...” I peeked at Jem: his hands were white from gripping the balcony rail, and his shoulders jerked as if each “ guilty” was a separate stab between them. (21. 50)” The reader was able to sympathize with Jem and remember their humanity and coming of age experiences, as all humans experience these.

This theme reminds the reader of youth’s importance, and enforces why theme is the strongest literary element used in the novel. While the theme of morality is a driving message of this novel, the most important theme of To Kill a Mockingbird is justice. The justice system in Maycomb was clearly prejudiced, as the jurors did not dispassionately determine the guilt or innocence of Tom Robinson based on evidence, rather they had given their verdict before entering the courtroom. This did not stop Atticus from his best attempt to bring Mayella Ewell to justice, as he fought a rigorous battle to destroy Mayella and Bob Ewell’s credibility.

Also, Atticus made a lasting impression on the jurors in his closing statement: “ But there is one way in this country in which all men are created equal – there is one institution that makes a pauper the equal of a Rockefeller, the stupid man the equal of an Einstein, and the ignorant man the equal of any college president. That institution, gentlemen, is a court. [...] And in all courts all men are created equal. [...] In the name of God, do your duty.” (20. 51-52) Fortunately, Atticus’s solid case caused the jurors to contemplate for an unexpected and extended amount of time. The jurors

knew that Mayella perjured herself, yet Tom would still be convicted regardless of solid evidence.

Unfortunately, justice was not free of bias, and this enforces why justice is such an important part of humanity. Ultimately, Harper Lee could not have expressed her message of justice more effectively than by using her mastery of theme. In conclusion, there are other viewpoints to consider regarding which literary element expresses the messages of morality, youth and coming of age, and justice the most effectively. However, Harper Lee's mastery of literary elements is clearly unbalanced in *To Kill a Mockingbird* because the presented themes are the most effective technique in addressing complicated topics. A concept such as morality or justice cannot be expressed using the setting or stylistic devices.

Harper Lee is able to support her messages through evidence of theme. The evidence in *To Kill a Mockingbird* supports Lee's mastery of theme because each piece of evidence is found within major events of the plot and in character defining moments where the aforementioned, underlying themes are found. In closure, I would recommend this work because the meaningful themes within *To Kill a Mockingbird* make the novel the type of work that makes the reader a better person.