

To kill a mockingbird media essay

Literature



Immediately, in the opening scene of the film adaptation "To Kill A Mockingbird", the "Black & White" separation, of that generation is displayed by the colour of the film itself, black and white. The issues and ideas of the film are brought on by the techniques used in the opening scene.

It begins with a jewellery box, centre pictured, with, what seems to be, a picture of a town, presumably Maycomb. Looking closely at the picture, the town is situated in amongst open land and fields. In the centre of the picture lays a big white patch, the town. Outside this predominantly white area is, as I said before, fields and open land. This area outside the town is dark, as if black, which suggests that the majority white population of Maycomb is attempting to exclude "Blacks" away from their town.

Piano music then gently blends in with the opening scene, presenting a child like image and hearing perspective. The camera then zooms in on the box, and two hands, a child's, move over the box, grasping the lid in an exaggerated fashion, with both hands, as if trying not to damage the box, possibly trying to point out its value to that child.

At this stage the music stops and the child hums softly at a lower volume, thus focusing the viewers attention to what they are looking at and not what they are hearing. The contents of the box are then revealed, as the camera continues to zoom in, forcing the viewer to concentrate on the contents. A watch, a key, crayons, marbles, a doll and a pen are the main objects focused on at this stage. The camera, still zooming in, now focuses on 3 main objects, the watch, the key and the doll. Looking at the objects, they

seem to be "tired" as it were, having no materialistic value, indicating that they are of sentimental value.

An almost silent ticking, then merges into the scene. This is a clever way to attract the attention of the viewer to the watch that is in the box. Looking at the watch, you can see, that it does not work, emphasising the sentimental value of the contents of this box. Then, by changing the camera angle, the viewers are drawn away from their concentration towards the watch and are now forced to look upon the next frame.

Several crayons lie blatantly on a table as if desperate to be noticed, standing out in the crowd, as was Tom Robinson. The child's hand then reaches down, from above, and chooses the dark crayon. An interesting selection, due to the fact, that the story itself is based on prejudging and discrimination. By "choosing" a colour that the child likes it is omitting other colours and excluding them from he's or her drawing. I feel that this is an extremely successful way of bringing these issues to the surface, as it shows that even an innocent child is having to exclude its dislikes, which on a larger scale, is what racism actually is.

From this, the picture blends into the child, drawing a straight line down, what seems to be paper. This is yet another effective way to display the black and white contrast. The line that the child has drawn is straight, which is a possible indication of tension between the two races. The line could also act as a division between the two, or as a representation of the "whites" surrounding them from all angles. The line in comparison to the white

background is extremely small in width, which displays the fact that blacks are a minority amongst the white people in the town of Maycomb.

Yet again the camera focuses on the contents of the box, now situated on a table. The watch is displayed, a key object in the opening scene it seems. By doing this, the emphasis of the watch and its value to the child stands out from the rest of the possessions.

As the camera view continues to pan right, other objects become of similar symbolic importance to the watch. A pen, also previously situated in the box, is shown again, but an object of high symbolic value to this opening scene, to me, was the safety pin, which lie close to the watch. The name of the object itself is a symbolisation of safety. Considering it was close to the watch, I thought it suggested the importance of the watch to the child and its attempt to keep it safe. I thought of it as a physical representation of safety and considered it a very well thought way to bring the child's thoughts and feelings towards the object, in a way that can be seen.

A child's hand, holding the crayon picked previously, is drawing a bird. A very childlike and irregular bird is the representation of the Mockingbird, whilst incorporating the childlike perspective, which the opening frames have built up.

A switch of venue to a table, on which lies a black and white marble. The marble contains a very interesting, "blend" of the two colours. The black is swirled into the white, as if trying to blend in with the white. The use of the colours and the way they are displayed suggests that the blacks are trying to blend in socially and become equal. Instead of being black & white, trying to
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unite, to form a grey, one colour, a unity between the two. The marble then begins to roll across the table, displaying the turbulence between the two, and the attempt of the blacks to try and force their way into the white society. As it rolls across the table, it goes behind a pair of glasses, magnifying the marble, another brilliant way of displaying the books issues. The magnification of the marble implicates the enlargement of the situation. Tom Robinson, who plays a major part in this story, could well be the reason for this "magnification". The court case with the black Tom Robinson has brought the blacks to the whites attention, bringing it to the surface, making him and the black residence of Maycomb known to the rest of the town.

The marble then stops, as it's collision with the black marble is preventing it from moving. Not necessarily moving forward, as to move forward is to progress. The black marble, being the physical representation of the black people of Maycomb, prevents the previous marble from moving, stopping the turbulence yet still continuing the argument, trying to become "One".

The watch then reappears and the end of time is known as the watch no longer ticks, meaning that the watch has permanently stopped, as has time in Maycomb.

Repetition of the Mockingbird also occurs, the child still drawing, taking time over it. The crayon then drops on the watch. Surprise has, as if, struck the child, as if something has gone wrong. Then it cuts to the child scribbling over the Mockingbird. "It is a sin to kill a Mockingbird" as quoted in the story. This is doing so. Killing the mockingbird, a child's way of doing so.

The paper on which it is drawn is then torn. A black background, burst onto the scene, battling for its rightful place in equality. A fairness in the conflict as both have equal space showing a fair battle between the two, another way to display the racism of that generation.

The camera then pans down the paper that has an uneven shape, like a tree, into which it morphs into, to finish off the opening scene.