

Hypocrisy, loss of innocence, and symbolism

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You know what's more important than simply reading a book? Analyzing it.

In Harper Lee's novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, there are themes of hypocrisy, loss of innocence, and symbolism. These are represented by several things throughout the novel. Firstly, there are many themes of hypocrisy. For example, when Scout is at school, her teacher, Miss Gates, says, "Over here we don't believe in persecuting anybody" (329). This is clearly not true, since there clearly was persecution in America when she said that.

In addition, there was a moment where "Jem was suddenly furious. He leaped off the bed.

Don't you ever say one word about it to me again, you hear?" (331). This was after Scout asked about the hate for Hitler, while they share almost the same ideology. This shows the clear hypocrisy of both Miss Gates and Jem. Also, there are themes of loss of innocence. For example, Scout asks Jem, "How can you hate Hitler so bad an' then turn around and be ugly about folks right at home?" (331).

This shows that Scout is starting to wake up and realize that even people she's very close to are prejudiced. The book also says, "The Radley place had ceased to terrify [Scout]" (324). She has lost her childish view of the shady-looking house, and realized that Boo Radley is human too. Overall, most of the loss of innocence was seen in Scout. Finally, there are themes of allegory and symbolism. For example, Miss Maudie says, "Mockingbirds don't do one thing but make music for us to enjoy .

. . sing their hearts out for us. That's why it's a sin to kill a mockingbird" (107). The mockingbird in this story represents innocence and purity, and the loss of innocence is "killing a mockingbird." Scout also describes Boo Radley with, "Boo was about six-and-a-half feet tall and dined on raw squirrels and any cats he could catch" (16).

This obviously isn't true, but Boo Radley represents the unknown and mysterious things that children don't understand, and therefore are afraid of. Overall, Harper Lee portrays the themes of hypocrisy, loss of innocence, and symbolism in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. She represents them using characters, animals, and the hometown itself.