

To Kill a Mockingbird

1962 *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a film released in 1962, based on the novel of the same title by Harper Lee, which was published in 1960. The novel is about life in a small town in Alabama during the Great Depression, as seen through the eyes of a young girl. It won a Pulitzer Prize in 1961 and immediately became a classic of American literature. The film, directed by Robert Mulligan and produced by Alan J. Pakula, was equally successful and won three Oscars in 1963. Gregory Peck, who played Atticus Finch, the small-town lawyer who stands up against racial prejudice, won Best Actor in a Leading Role; Horton Foote received the award for Best Writing for a Screenplay Based on Material from Another Medium; and Alexander Golitzen, Henry Bumstead, and Oliver Emert won Best Art Direction-Set Decoration, Black-and-White. The film was nominated for five more awards, including a nomination for Mary Badham, who played Finch's young daughter Scout, as Best Actress in a Supporting Role. *To Kill a Mockingbird* is considered one of the best American films ever made. Viewers should be aware, however, that the offensive word "nigger" is used several times, as it is in the novel. This reflects the fact that this word was often used in the South during this period. When the young girl Scout uses it, not knowing its negative connotations, her father tells her not to use it again.





Universal Studios | Hulton Archive | Getty Images

PLOT SUMMARY

After the opening credits of *To Kill a Mockingbird* show a young girl opening a cigar box that is full of trinkets of various kinds, the story begins with a voice-over narration by the adult Jean Louise Finch, known as Scout. She looks back on Maycomb, Alabama, where she grew up in the 1930s during the Great Depression. As she speaks, the camera pans across the street that made up Scout's world in those long-gone days when she was six years old.

Walter Cunningham, a farmer from the country who has been hit hard by the Depression, drives up in a horse and cart and delivers a sack of hickory nuts to the Finch residence. He is paying a debt for legal services to Atticus Finch, Scout's defense lawyer father, in the only way he can, but he is embarrassed about it. Finch explains to Scout how poor Cunningham is.

Scout's ten-year-old brother, Jem, is up in a tree house, refusing to come down until his father agrees to play football for the Methodists. Atticus says he is too old to play. When Jem complains to Miss Maudie Atkinson, a neighbor across the

street, that his father is too old to do anything, she defends him.

Jem then sees a young boy sitting in Miss Stephanie Crawford's collard patch. This turns out to be Charles Baker "Dill" Harris, who is visiting his aunt for two weeks from Meridian, Mississippi. Dill is nearly seven, and seems a confident if unusual boy, boasting that he can read and telling tall tales about his life.

The Mysterious Boo

Jem sees Mr. Radley, one of their neighbors, pass by. He is a mean old man, and Jem explains to Dill that he has a scary, mentally deranged son called Boo who only ever leaves the house at night. The children have never actually seen Boo, but they imagine what he is like. The three children run and gaze at the Radley house. Boo eats raw squirrels and cats, says Jem. When Miss Stephanie arrives, she says that Boo once attacked his father with a pair of scissors, stabbing him in the leg.

When the clock chimes five, they run to meet Atticus, but Jem warns them about Mrs. Dubose, a bad-tempered elderly woman who is sitting on her porch in a wheelchair. Jem says they must not answer her back or she may shoot them with the pistol she keeps on her lap. As they pass her, they ignore her while she shouts angrily at them. When they return with Atticus, Atticus is very polite to her, praising her flowers.

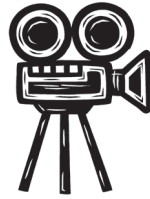
That night, after Scout practices reading aloud to her father, she asks Atticus about Boo, and he tells her to leave the Radleys alone. Later, in bed, Scout asks Jem whether he remembers their mother. Jem says she died when he was six and he still remembers her.

Judge Taylor stops by and asks Atticus if he will defend a black man, Tom Robinson, who is to be charged by a grand jury with an as yet unspecified crime. Although he is busy, Atticus agrees out of a sense of duty.

The children's adventures continue. On the street, Scout folds herself inside a rubber tire and Jem rolls her away. By chance, she ends up in the Radley yard, and Jem has to pull his stunned and frightened sister to safety. Jem runs up to the Radleys' front door and bangs on it. Then the children run as fast as they can to escape the perceived danger.

Dill then suggests they go downtown to the courthouse to see the room where Boo was once locked up. At the courthouse, they go to the

FILM TECHNIQUE



- By the early 1960s, color had become the norm for Hollywood films, but until 1966 there were still Oscars given for art direction in black-and-white films. Therefore, the fact that this film was shot in black and white was not unusual for 1962, although the director and producer have since gone on record saying that they cannot imagine it being made in anything else. (Mulligan and Pakula make this comment in the documentary film that accompanies the collector's edition of the DVD.)
- One reason black-and-white cinematography succeeds in this film is because it creates a period atmosphere. The story is set in the 1930s, and in those days all movies were in black and white, so this format in *To Kill a Mockingbird* authentically evokes a movie from that period. It looks more realistic. Newsreels and still photography from that period were also in black and white. That is how people who first watched this film in the early 1960s would have remembered seeing pictures of the Depression era, so the monochrome further adds to the realistic effect of the film. Black and white also makes the film look more austere, in keeping with the setting in the Depression-era South. Color creates a more opulent, rich look, which might have been out of keeping with the time and place.
- The balance of light and shade in the frame is frequently used to enhance the mood and the atmosphere of the film. In the scene that begins with Jem and Scout on the porch at night, for example (chapter 10 in the DVD)

the artful use of light and shadow is particularly effective in creating an atmosphere. The children's faces are at least half in shadow; the wall of the house reflects moonlight or streetlight, creating shadows of the porch column, the rocking chair, and the trees in the yard. There is also light coming from a window. The effect is of a very dark night lit up unevenly by pools of light. As the children run from the porch and sneak up on to the back porch of the Radley house, which both fascinates and frightens them, the subtle patterning of light and shadow creates a Gothic atmosphere. The Radley abode is a kind of ghost house, rearing up in the dark, leading the children into the fearful unknown. Again, each child's face, seen in successive medium-distance shots (so as not to lose the sense of their environment) is half in the dark and half in the light. This shows visually that they are half in the safe world of their neighborhood and half out of it, challenging their own boundaries, entering an unknown realm that they have built up to terrifying proportions in their imaginations. As they enter this world, the tension builds. When combined with other film elements, such as the sounds of the creaking gate and porch step, these patterns of light and shadow help to create an ominous atmosphere, perfectly preparing the viewer to see the huge and terrifying shadow of Boo. This spooky night world does indeed hold terrors, for both the children and the viewer.

second floor, and Scout and Jem hoist Dill up so he can see in the window. The grand jury is in session in the case of Tom Robinson, and Dill reports what he sees. When Atticus emerges from the courtroom, he is shocked to see the children and orders them go to home.

After they leave Atticus is confronted by Bob Ewell, the man who has accused Robinson of

raping his daughter. Ewell berates Atticus for taking the case. Atticus replies firmly that he intends to do the job he has taken on.

In the dark of the evening, the children decide to creep up on the Radley house. They scoot under a wire fence and reach the back porch. Jem peers in one of the windows to try to see Boo. A large shadow of a man appears, approaching Jem from

across the porch. A shadowy hand reaches out. The children are terrified, but the shadow retreats. The children run away, but as they go under the fence Jem gets his pants caught in the wire. In order to get free, he leaves his pants behind and runs home in his underwear. When they get home, Jem decides to return for his pants to avoid being punished by his father. As Scout counts slowly, waiting anxiously for his return, a shotgun blast is heard. Jem returns safely, and Atticus tells an alarmed Miss Stephanie that Mr. Radley shot at a prowler in his collard patch.

Summer ends. Dill returns home, and Scout must attend school for the first time. A tomboy, she is embarrassed at having to wear a dress (an incident that does not occur in the novel). At school, the impulsive Scout gets into a fight with Walter Cunningham's son (also called Walter), but Jem breaks it up and invites Walter home for dinner. During the meal, Scout protests when Walter pours too much syrup over his food. She is summoned to the kitchen, where the black housekeeper Calpurnia rebukes her for bad manners. Later, Atticus talks to Scout on the porch. Scout does not want to return to school, but her father gently advises her about how to get along with others.

One day, a rabid dog appears in the street. Sheriff Heck Tate arrives with Atticus, and the sheriff hands his rifle to Atticus. Atticus takes his glasses off and drops them on the street. He takes aim and shoots the dog dead. The watching children are astonished because they thought Atticus could not do useful things like that. The sheriff tells Jem that Atticus is the best shot in the county.

That evening, Atticus takes the children with him as he visits the Robinson family to talk to Tom's wife. While he is inside, the drunken Ewell appears. He lurches toward the car and stares at the children inside. When Atticus comes out of the house, Ewell insults him. As they drive off, Jem is shaken by the encounter, but Atticus tells him not to be afraid because Ewell is harmless, despite his aggression.

Later that evening, Jem is left alone while Atticus takes Calpurnia home. He is frightened by the noises of the night, but as he wanders around he discovers an old medal that has been placed in a knot-hole in a tree on the edge of the Radley yard.

Scout gets in another fight at school, and she explains to her father that the boy she fought had

said Atticus "defends niggers." Atticus tells her not to use that word, and he explains it is his duty to defend the man. He forbids Scout to fight, no matter what the provocation.

The children find more items in the tree: two figures carved from soap, a boy and a girl. They realize that the figures resemble themselves. Mr. Radley emerges and fills the hole with cement as the children watch.

In the evening, Jem shows Scout all the items he has found in the tree. They include a crayon, marbles, a whistle, a spelling medal (which used to be given to children at school), a watch, and a pocketknife. Jem also tells her about a mystery: the other night, when he went back to collect his pants, they were folded over the fence, as if ready for him to collect.

Summer returns, as does Dill. Tom Robinson's trial is to take place the next day, and Atticus decides to spend the night sitting outside the town jail so he can make sure Robinson is not harmed by a group of men from the town of Old Sarum who are out to cause trouble. During the evening, the children run to town and see their father sitting and reading outside the front door of the jail. They are about to go home when four cars arrive noisily. As the children watch from the bushes, the armed men get out of their cars and confront Atticus. They intend to lynch Robinson; Atticus tells them to go home. The children run over to see what is going on, and Atticus, fearing for their safety, orders Jem to go home and take Scout and Dill with him. Jem refuses to leave. Then Scout sees Walter Cunningham in the crowd of men, and talks to him in a friendly, conversational way, since she knows him. Embarrassed by the candor and innocence of the child, Cunningham and the other men lose their purpose and decide to go home.

The Trial

The trial begins the next day. The courtroom is packed. The children have been told to stay at home, but they do not want to miss the excitement. The black minister, Reverend Sykes, allows them to join the black people, who all have to sit in the balcony that surrounds three sides of the courtroom.

Sheriff Tate testifies to solicitor Mr. Gilmer that Ewell had reported that his daughter Mayella had been raped. When Tate got to the house he found that the woman had also been beaten, and Ewell told him Robinson was the

culprit. In cross-examination by Atticus, the sheriff admits that no doctor was called. Atticus also establishes that the woman's right eye had been blacked, and that she had finger marks all around her neck.

Then Ewell takes the stand. He testifies that when he came home he heard Mayella screaming, found Robinson attacking her, and chased him off. He is cross-examined by Atticus, who gets him to write his name on a piece of paper, establishing that he is left-handed.

Next, Mayella gives her testimony. She says she asked Robinson into her yard to break up a chifforobe (a dresser), saying she would give him a nickel. She went toward the house, but when she turned around, Robinson attacked her. Under cross-examination, she says her father is easy to get along with, but Atticus adds, "except when he's drinking." Mayella denies, though, that her father has ever beaten her. She is uncertain about whether she had ever asked Robinson into her yard before, and at first says she cannot remember whether he hit her in the face, but then she says that he did. She identifies Tom as her assailant. Atticus asks Tom to stand, and Atticus tosses a glass at him, which he catches with his right hand. Atticus then asks him to do the same with his left, but Tom replies that his left arm is useless; it was caught in a cotton gin when he was twelve. (The film departs from the novel at this point; in the novel, Tom's left arm is visibly useless and much shorter than the other. The tossing and catching of the glass does not occur in the novel.)

Confident he has made his point, Atticus asks Mayella if she is ready to say what really happened, but she just shouts out her accusations again. Then she runs from the witness stand.

Tom then takes the stand. He says that Mayella often asked him inside the fence to do chores. On the day in question, she invited him into the house to fix a door, but he saw nothing wrong with it. He was about to leave when she asked him to get on a chair and get a box down from on top of a chifforobe. When he was on the chair she grabbed him around the legs. He got down and she hugged and kissed him and asked him to kiss her back. He tried to run away and heard Ewell at the window say he was going to kill her. Then he ran away.

Under cross-examination by Gilmer, Tom admits he is strong enough to have caused Mayella's injuries but denies having done so. He says he

did chores for her because he felt sorry for her, a statement that does not go down well with Gilmer or the white spectators.

Later, Atticus sums up his case for the jury. He says there is no evidence that a crime took place and that the case should not have been brought to trial. He points out that because Tom's left hand is useless he could not have caused Mayella's injuries, which must have been caused by a left-handed person. Atticus argues that she lied about what happened because she knew she had broken a rigid code of their society that prohibits a white woman from making sexual advances to a black man. She now feels guilty, says Atticus, and must try to get rid of the evidence, the evidence being Tom Robinson. Atticus claims that both Ewells thought they could get away with their lies; they assumed the jury would not question the ingrained belief that whites tell the truth but Negroes lie and are immoral, not to be trusted around white women. Atticus concludes by saying his client is not guilty and the jury must acquit him.

Two hours later, the jury returns and gives a verdict of guilty. Atticus tells Tom he will appeal the verdict. As Atticus walks toward the exit, the black people in the balcony stand to honor him.

Later that evening, Atticus is informed by the sheriff that Tom Robinson is dead. Atticus explains to Miss Maudie Atkinson that Tom was being taken to Abbotsville so that he would be safe, but he got away and ran. A deputy ordered him to stop but he kept running. The deputy shot him, aiming only to wound, but he was off target and Tom was killed. (In the novel, Tom is shot seventeen times by a prison guard as he climbs a fence at the prison. Some time elapses between the verdict and the killing.)

Atticus goes to the Robinson family home to convey the bad news. Tom's wife Helen collapses. As Atticus leaves, he is confronted by Ewell, who spits in his face. Atticus takes one step toward Ewell, wipes his face with a handkerchief and walks past Ewell to his car. (In the novel, the spitting incident happens earlier and is not seen, only reported by Scout, who was told by Miss Stephanie it had happened on the street.)

The Children Are Attacked

In a voice-over, the adult voice of Scout says that by the fall, life in the town had settled back to normal. She was looking forward to the Halloween

pageant that October night and was going dressed as a ham.

Jem escorts Scout to the pageant, and when they return, Scout is still in her giant ham costume, having lost her dress. She and Jem pass through the woods on their walk home. The atmosphere is spooky, and Jem thinks he hears footsteps behind them. Then Jem is attacked by a shadowy figure who throws him to the ground. The figure then attacks Scout, but she is protected by her costume. Jem calls to her to run, but then he is knocked unconscious. The assailant turns his attention again to Scout, but a mysterious man, whose arms alone are shown, intervenes. There is a struggle, which Scout watches in horror. After that struggle ends, Scout watches as the second man carries the unconscious Jem home.

At the Finch house, after ascertaining that Scout is uninjured, Atticus summons the doctor and the sheriff. The doctor reports that Jem has a broken arm. When the sheriff arrives, he informs Atticus that Ewell has been found stabbed to death in the woods.

As Scout explains what happened, she says that the man who intervened to help her is standing behind the bedroom door. The sheriff moves the door to reveal a white-faced man with a scared but gentle expression on his face. The close-up is of Boo Radley. Scout smiles at him. After the men have left, Scout leads Boo to Jem's bed to say good night. Jem is still unconscious, but Boo, encouraged by Scout, touches Jem's head gently.

On the porch, Atticus says that Jem must have killed Ewell, but the sheriff tells him that was not so. They both look at Boo, who is sitting on the swing. The sheriff decides Boo is too delicate to survive the publicity that would surround him if a trial were to be held. He thinks that justice has already been done, since the innocent Tom is dead, and now Bob Ewell, who was responsible for the false accusation, is dead also. Therefore, the sheriff makes up a story that Ewell fell on his own knife. He explains his reasons to Atticus, who ponders the matter. Then Scout tells Atticus that she agrees with what the sheriff said, and Atticus silently agrees to go along with the deception. Atticus shakes Boo's hand.

In the closing scene, Scout walks Boo back to his house, holding his hand. He goes into his house, and Scout slowly returns home. Then the adult voice of Scout is heard again, in voice-over, recalling how she then understood Boo. She

recalls more memories of her childhood, and the film ends with a long shot of the Finch house as Scout recalls how Atticus sat with Jem all night until he awoke in the morning.

Because the film runs only for a little over two hours, some major incidents in the novel are omitted. These include the snowstorm and the burning down of Miss Maudie's house, the damage Jem does to Mrs. Dubose's garden and his punishment of reading to her, and her death. Also omitted are the visit the children take with Calpurnia to the black church; the school pageant that Scout attends; and the visit of Aunt Alexandra, Uncle Jimmy, and Francis (Scout and Jem's cousin) to the Finch home. Some of the order of the incidents has been altered: in the novel the children discover the knot-hole in the tree much earlier, for example. Also, in the compression demanded by the film, some important details are omitted. The film does not mention that Ewell has a grudge against everybody he thinks was against him in the trial, including Judge Taylor, whose house he tries to burgle; Helen, whom he stalks and harasses; and Atticus, whom he directly threatens. It is, therefore, less a surprise in the novel when Ewell attacks the children than it is in the film. Other small details that give richness to the novel are omitted in the film. These include how the black people deluge the Finch family with food to show their gratitude after his defense of Tom Robinson, and that one juror, a member of the Cunningham family, initially voted in the jury room to acquit Tom Robinson.

CHARACTERS

Miss Maudie Atkinson

Miss Maudie Atkinson (Rosemary Murphy) is one of the Finches' neighbors. Maudie is a widow of about forty. In the novel, Scout spends a lot of time with her, sitting on her front porch. Maudie is friendly to all the children, allowing them to run in her yard. When her house is burned down one winter, she does not mind and looks forward to building a smaller house. Like Atticus, she has an interest in social justice. In the film, she has a fairly small role; she is a friend of the family and admires Atticus. She tries to comfort Jem after the trial verdict.

Calpurnia

Calpurnia (Estelle Evans) is the black cook at the Finch household. In the film she is a young, attractive woman. She is trusted by Atticus, who regards her as a member of the family. To Scout, however, she is a resented authority figure. This is seen when Calpurnia rebukes Scout for her bad manners when young Walter Cunningham comes to dinner. Calpurnia sends her back into the living room with a slap on her rear. In the novel, Calpurnia is nearsighted and squints; she has been with the Finches since Jem was born, and has many battles with Scout, all of which she wins because Atticus always takes her side.

Aunt Stephanie Crawford

In the film, Aunt Stephanie Crawford (Alice Ghostley) is Dill's aunt, but in the novel she is simply one of the neighbors who knows all the local gossip.

Walter Cunningham, Jr.

Walter Cunningham, Jr. (Steve Condit) is Walter Cunningham's young son. In the novel, he has hookworms and goes around barefoot because the family is too poor to buy him shoes; he is nearly as old as Jem but has not yet finished first grade because every spring his father pulls him out of school to help with chores. He goes to school but has no lunch to bring with him. Scout picks a fight with Walter and rubs his nose in the dirt, but Jem invites him home for dinner, and he eats with relish.

Walter Cunningham, Sr.

Walter Cunningham, Sr. (Crahan Denton) is a poor farmer who pays his legal debts to Atticus Finch in loads of wood, nuts, turnip greens, or whatever else he has. He is also one of the leaders of the group of men from Old Sarum who go to the county jail intending to lynch Tom Robinson.

Mrs. Henry Lafayette Dubose

Mrs. Dubose (Ruth White) is a crotchety old lady who lives two doors down from the Finches. She sits on her porch in a wheelchair, attended by her black maid Jessie. Jem and Scout hate her because she always interrogates them and says they will make nothing of their lives. It is rumored that she keeps a pistol on her lap under her shawl. Mrs. Dubose appears in only one scene in the film, when she shouts at the children as they pass and is then soothed by Atticus's kind words. She plays a larger role in the novel. After

Jem cuts the tops off all the camellia bushes in her yard, Mrs. Dubose orders him to read aloud to her six days a week. She hardly seems to listen to the reading. After she dies, however, Atticus explains to Jem that she was addicted to morphine as a painkiller but had decided to assert her will and come off the drug before she died. Atticus calls her courageous for doing so.

Robert E. Lee "Bob" Ewell

Bob Ewell (James Anderson) is the head of one of the most wretched families in Maycomb. He lives on welfare but spends most of his money on whiskey while his many children go hungry. In the novel, Atticus tells Scout that for three generations, none of the Ewells has done an honest day's work, and the authorities no longer compel the children to go to school, since none of the Ewells wants an education. In novel and film, Ewell shows himself to be a liar, a perjurer, and a racist who beats his own daughter. He also insults Atticus, who makes the mistake of thinking that Ewell will do no real harm. But Ewell harbors grudges. In spite of the guilty verdict in the trial, he was shown to be a liar in court. His evil intent shows when he attacks and tries to kill Jem and Scout. In the film, Anderson does a fine job bringing out the malice and hatred that motivates the character.

Mayella Violet Ewell

Mayella Violet Ewell (Collin Wilcox Paxton) is Bob Ewell's nineteen-year-old daughter. She is an angry, uneducated young woman who has a sad, lonely life without friends. She accuses Tom Robinson of rape because she is ashamed of having herself made sexual overtures to him. Her injuries were in fact inflicted by her father, but she has either blotted that out of her mind or is deliberately lying about it. On the witness stand she is defensive and brittle but also aggressive and defiant, refusing to acknowledge that she is not telling the truth.

Atticus Finch

Atticus Finch is a defense lawyer in Maycomb; he is the father of Jem and Scout. In the film, he is played by Gregory Peck, a performance that won Peck an Oscar for Best Actor in a Leading Role.

Atticus is a widower; his wife died when Scout was two years old. In both novel and film, Atticus is often presented from the children's point of view. Although the children love their father, they think he cannot do much. All he does

is work in an office in town, and he does not hunt or fish or do anything that the other men in Maycomb do. He says he is too old to play football. The children are therefore astonished and impressed when their father is able to shoot the rabid dog dead with one shot. However, it is not Atticus's way to boast of this kind of achievement.

Atticus is unfailingly polite and courteous to everyone, even Mrs. Dubose and Bob Ewell. This is part of his natural decency. He also tends to speak quietly, with a natural authority and wisdom in his words. In the movie, however, he does reveal some fire in his concluding address to the jury. He does not exactly raise his voice, but there is a controlled passion there as he says, "In the name of God, do your duty." His core beliefs in justice and righteousness are clearly audible and visible in this scene.

Atticus has high ethical standards, and he is always fair-minded and in control of himself. This is suggested visually in the film by the fact that he is usually seen in a three-piece suit, the vest carefully buttoned. This shows his dignity. His self-control is also shown in the film when Ewell spits in his face. Atticus maintains his composure in spite of his disgust; he chooses not to descend to Ewell's level and simply walks past him to his car.

Although he is willing to impose his authority on the children when necessary, Atticus prefers to teach them simply by advising them about how to behave in a way that takes into account the needs and feelings of others.

Atticus is a static character, a character who does not develop or change during the course of book or film. He is the same at the end as he was at the beginning. The ones who develop, the dynamic characters, are his children.

Jean Louise Finch

See Scout Finch

Jeremy Finch

See Jem Finch

Jem Finch

Jem Finch (Philip Alford) is the son of Atticus Finch. He is nearly ten years old when the story begins. He is a voracious reader and a football fanatic. At the beginning of the film, Jem is just a kid who gets into mischief trying to get a sighting of Boo Radley. When Walter Cunningham, Jr., comes to dinner, Jem is jealous because Walter owns a gun but Jem's father will not let him have

one yet. (This occurs only in the film. In the novel, Atticus permits Jem and Scout to own air-rifles, but he refuses to teach them how to shoot.) As the film progresses, Jem starts to lose his innocence regarding the world around him. At first, he tries to show his courage by pretending not to be afraid of Boo Radley—an imaginary threat—but later, he discovers real menace when the drunken Ewell glares at him through the car window. Jem also takes a keen interest in the trial of Tom Robinson. He is naïve and thinks that because Tom is obviously innocent, he will be acquitted. He does not see how any jury could convict him. As a result of the verdict and the death of Tom, he learns about the existence of evil and prejudice in the world.

Scout Finch

Scout Finch (Mary Badham) is the narrator of the novel, looking back on events that took place in the 1930s, beginning when she was nearly six years old. Mary Badham was ten years old when she played the role in the film, and she was nominated for an Oscar for Best Actress in a Supporting Role. In the film, the voice-over of the adult Scout looking back is performed by Kim Stanley.

Scout is a precocious girl, already able to read. She is also high-spirited and resents Calpurnia's authority over her. She thinks that the best way to settle an argument at school is to fight. During the course of the film and novel Scout learns a great deal about life, much of it in the form of moral education initiated by her father, but also directly from her own experience. She emerges from the childish world of imagination, in which her unseen neighbor Boo is a spooky presence, to the realities of a more complicated real world. In particular, she learns to have understanding and compassion for Boo. When she finally meets him in person, she befriends him. The film shows her taking his arm and helping him home, and it is clear that she has taken a big step in growing up.

Mr. Gilmer

Mr. Gilmer (William Windom) is the prosecutor at the trial. In his cross-examination of Tom Robinson, he is sarcastic and insulting, repeatedly calling Tom "boy" and sneering at him.

Charles Baker Harris

See Dill Harris

Dill Harris

Charles Baker "Dill" Harris (John Magna) is nearly seven years old and small for his age when

he comes to Maycomb to stay with his aunt, Stephanie Crawford, for the summer months. (In the novel, his aunt is Rachel Haverford.) His family lives in Meridian, Mississippi. He tells Scout that he does not have a father, although later he says his father is president of a railroad company. Dill is a lively, intelligent boy with a good imagination. He says he has been up in a mail plane seventeen times and that he has seen an elephant, but Scout does not believe most of his stories. Dill gets along well with Jem and Scout, and they spend the summers playing together. In the novel, Dill even proposes marriage to Scout. Over the course of two years, Dill matures and, according to Scout's Aunt Alexandra, becomes a little cynical about life; he says he would like to become a clown and laugh at everyone, because that is the only sensible attitude to take to life.

Arthur Radley

See Boo Radley

Boo Radley

Arthur "Boo" Radley is the son (in the film) of Mr. Nathan Radley. He is played by Robert Duvall in his first film role. The novel explains Boo's background. He had a difficult upbringing by parents who kept to themselves and did not socialize with their neighbors. When he was a teenager, Boo got in with the wrong crowd; after some high-spirited pranks, many of the boys were sent to a state industrial school, but Mr. Radley refused to allow his son to go there. Instead, he confined Boo to the home, and Boo has not been seen for fifteen years. There are many rumors about Boo—that he is crazy and dangerous—and the children are scared of him and believe all kinds of wild stories about him. However, Boo turns out to be a kind and also courageous man. He leaves gifts for the children in the knot-hole of the tree, and he later saves their lives by rescuing them from Bob Ewell when Ewell attacks them. In one of the most memorable images of the film, Boo is finally seen in the bedroom of the Finch house after he has carried the injured Jem home. He has a pale appearance, like someone who never sees sunlight, and there is both fear and tenderness in his expression.

Mr. Nathan Radley

Mr. Nathan Radley (Richard Hale) is the father of Boo Radley. Jem calls him a mean old man. He is seen in close-up covering over the knot-hole in the tree, and he glares fiercely at the children as they

watch. In the novel, there are two Mr. Radleys. After the older Mr. Radley, Boo's father, dies, his son Nathan, Boo's older brother, comes to live at the house. But this distinction is not preserved in the film, since it would have introduced a needless complication.

Doctor Reynolds

Doctor Reynolds (Hugh Sanders) takes care of Jem when he is injured.

Helen Robinson

Helen Robinson (Kim Hamilton) is Tom Robinson's wife. She collapses when she hears the news of Tom's death.

Tom Robinson

Tom Robinson (Brock Peters) is a black man who is accused of raping a white woman, Mayella Ewell. He is innocent of the charge. Tom is a church-going married man who lives in what is considered the Negro portion of town, beyond the town dump. When giving evidence, he speaks respectfully and with humility. He is obviously a decent, honest man, and Atticus describes him as "a quiet, respectable, humble Negro." In the film, Brock Peters plays the character with a simple and moving dignity.

Reverend Sykes

Reverend Sykes is the minister of the First Purchase A.M.E. (African Methodist Episcopal) Church. He takes the children to the balcony of the courthouse to watch the trial. In the novel, when Calpurnia takes Scout and Jem to church one Sunday, Reverend Sykes is determined to collect enough money from the congregation to help Helen, Tom Robinson's wife, make ends meet.

Sheriff Heck Tate

Sheriff Heck Tate (Frank Overton) is the sheriff of Maycomb County. In the novel, he is a tall man who wears a belt studded with bullets, and his appearance terrifies Scout until she sees him in an ordinary business suit on the witness stand. In both novel and film, Tate is a decent, if not particularly outstanding, man who does his best to uphold the law. He is also strong-minded and is determined not to prosecute Boo Radley for killing Bob Ewell because he thinks that justice has already been done.

Judge Taylor

Judge Taylor (Paul Fix) presides over the trial of Tom Robinson. He plays a small role in the film but the novel gives a richer portrait of him. An amiable white-haired man, he runs the court in an informal way and sometimes appears to be asleep, but he is more alert than people give him credit for. He runs the trial fairly, and Reverend Sykes tells Jem that his charge to the jury was fair-minded, perhaps even favorable to the defense.

Other Characters

There are a number of characters in the novel who do not appear in the film. These include the first-grade schoolteacher Miss Caroline Fisher; the third-grade teacher Miss Gates, who hates Hitler's persecution of the Jews but speaks disparagingly of black people; Tom Robinson's employer Link Deas, a white man who speaks out in the courtroom in defense of Tom's character; Mr. Underwood, the owner, editor, and printer of the *Maycomb Tribune*, who writes an editorial bemoaning the senseless killing of Tom; Dolphus Raymond, a white man who lives with a black woman and has mixed-race children, and who drinks too much. In addition, there are other members of the Finch family who either visit or host the Finches for varying periods of time: Uncle Jack (Atticus's younger brother); and Aunt Alexandra (Atticus's sister), Uncle Jimmy, and their grandson, Francis. The wider cast of characters in the novel helps to create an in-depth portrait of the range of social and cultural attitudes in this small town.

THEMES

Childish Imagination and Adult Reality

The film begins with the children's world. Gradually, the specter of the adult world at its worst—the upcoming trial of Tom Robinson—is introduced. These two strands of the film alternate at first, as if they are parallel realities. They gradually begin to intersect, and the children learn of some of the evils in society.

Initially, Jem, Scout, and Dill spend their time playing in the long days of summer that appear to have no end. There is an early scene in which Scout is shown in bed, contentedly about to go to sleep, with her stuffed animal at her side, after an intimate talk with her father. This is the innocent, trusting world of childhood.

The only dark elements that enter this innocent world are the rumors the children hear about the dreaded Boo. Jem's imagination works overtime creating Boo as a scary, threatening figure. He says that Boo lives chained to a bed, he comes out only at night, his face is scarred, he eats cats, and he drools most of the time. Boo is like an ugly character in a fairy tale. Early in the film, Jem's way of showing his courage is to go up to the Radley porch and bang on the front door. This is his childish way of standing up to evil, but all the dangers in their childhood world are imaginary.

The children's first exposure to the turbulence of the adult world around them comes when they go to the courthouse to see the room in which Boo was once locked up. Instead, they find the courtroom in session as the grand jury hears the Robinson case. The big closed door dramatically shows the barrier between the children's innocence and the adult world and its business. Scout and Jem hoist Dill up to see into the room. Dill then describes what he sees in a childish way; he has no way of understanding the interactions of the adults he silently observes through the glass. For the first time the child's world and the adult world of the court case have intersected, but without the children's understanding.

For a while the two worlds, child and adult, continue on parallel paths, not meeting. They intersect again when Jem and Scout go with Atticus to Tom Robinson's home. This is where Jem, waiting in the car, encounters the menacing figure of Bob Ewell and hears the insult "nigger lover" spoken by Ewell to Atticus. This scene follows closely after the scene in which Jem was frightened by the huge shadow of Boo on the porch. However, Boo means Jem no harm; in contrast, Jem is now frightened by real evil in the form of Ewell, who does mean him harm. An imaginary evil has been replaced by a real evil. By being exposed to it, Jem has taken a step from childhood to maturity.

In the next scene, Jem is scared as he sits alone at night on the porch while Atticus takes Calpurnia home, but this is still the child's fear of the dark; what he will soon learn to fear, or at least to acknowledge and understand, is the darkness in people's hearts.

Scout's introduction to the Robinson case comes when a boy at her school says that Atticus "defends niggers," and she fights him.

The two worlds of adult and child now begin to intersect at more frequent intervals. The next

**READ.
WATCH.
WRITE.**



- Watch and listen carefully to the trial scene, in particular Atticus’s summing up to the jury. Then read Atticus’s summing up in the novel. What changes have been made in the film version? Were these changes made simply to make the speech shorter, while keeping the content the same, or has the meaning of Atticus’s speech been altered? Give an oral presentation in which you explain your findings, using PowerPoint to list your main points.
- Write an essay in which you discuss how the African American characters are portrayed in the film. Consider the portrayals of Tom Robinson, Reverend Sykes, Calpurnia, Robinson’s family, and the black spectators in the gallery during the courtroom scene. How are these portrayals typical for the time in which the film was made? Why do you think that some African Americans, in spite of the fact that book and film are clearly opposed to racial prejudice, are critical of the way the black characters are portrayed?
- Working with another student, listen carefully to the music in the film. How does the music contribute to the overall effect? For example, watch the scene in which the children creep up on the Radley house. How does the music help to create a mood, and what mood is that? How does the music reinforce the children’s view of the Radley house? How is this music different from that in the opening sequence? Give a class presentation in which you contrast the music in the opening sequence with that in the Radley house scene.
- Watch the last part of the film, in which Boo Radley appears, and then read the same section in the novel. Is the film faithful to the novel in terms of how Boo is presented? Robert Duvall’s performance as Boo received high praise. How does he create the character and make him convincing, given that it is a nonspeaking role? Write a short essay in which you discuss these points.

example is when the children witness the ugly crowd that congregates outside the jailhouse, ready to lynch Tom. It is Scout’s childish innocence that defuses the situation. She is too young to understand what is going on. Jem, who is older, has more grasp of it, and this shows in the trial scene. This is where the world of the child and that of the adult finally come together, as the children observe the trial from the gallery. The emphasis here is on Jem. There are at least six close-ups of Jem in the gallery, taking the entire spectacle in. He is devastated by the verdict, as the close-up reaction shot of him shows—he drops his head onto his arm. In another reaction shot a few minutes later, he is shown shaking his head. He is learning that injustice exists in the world, and it is a painful lesson. Another sequence shows Maudie Atkinson trying to comfort Jem on the porch of his home, but he is inconsolable. In the novel, Jem says to Atticus, “How could they do it, how

could they?” and he and his father later have a long conversation about the criminal justice system. All this is omitted from the film, which conveys Jem’s distressed emotions in just a few wordless reaction shots. His body language says it all.

Scout also learns about justice and the delicate decisions that must sometimes be made about it. At the end of the film, she hears Sheriff Tate telling Atticus that he will not bring charges against Boo, instead settling on the convenient untruth that Ewell fell on his knife. After the sheriff leaves, Atticus stands for a moment, seemingly unsure of what to do. He has neither agreed nor disagreed with the sheriff. Scout comes across the porch and says to him, “Mr. Tate was right.” Atticus then holds her, as if she has helped him to make up his mind. There is a subtle difference here from the novel, where Atticus tells Scout that Ewell fell on his knife and asks her if she



© Pictorial Press Ltd. | Alamy

can understand what he and Tate have decided. Scout says she does understand, and she thinks Mr. Tate was right. The film version makes Scout partly responsible for the decision her father makes, but either way, Scout shows a leap in maturity and understanding.

Racial Bigotry, Class Divisions, and Injustice

There is a rigid separation in Maycomb between the races. This is shown visually in the trial scene, when the black people all have to sit in the gallery while the whites congregate below them.

There are also divisions between the whites in this rather rigidly stratified small southern town. Atticus Finch is a member of the professional class. Along with his neighbor, Maudie Atkinson, he has enlightened opinions about justice and society. Below the Finches on the social scale are people like the farmer Walter Cunningham, who is so poor he has to pay his debts in goods rather than money. There are many people like him in

Maycomb County, a rural area where the farmers have been hard hit by the Great Depression.

Cunningham and his ilk are poorly educated and have racially prejudiced views. They do not think for themselves about such questions; they act as a group, as they do when they converge on the courthouse prepared to lynch Tom Robinson. Although in the first scene in the movie, in which Walter appears, he is polite and respectful to Atticus and Scout, when the town's men get together in a group, they are capable of ugly deeds. It is from these poor country folk that the twelve anonymous men who serve on the jury are drawn. They cannot see beyond their own prejudice, ingrained in them all their lives. It is notable that in the film the jurors are never distinguished individually. They are never presented in close-up shots or in the center of the frame.

Below both the small professional class and the working poor in Maycomb are the Ewells, who are the lowest on the social scale. They are ignorant, uneducated people—at the trial Atticus

pointedly asks Ewell whether he can write—and they are racial bigots. It seems they have to have someone to whom they can feel superior. Distressingly, the twelve local men on the jury still take the word of the disreputable Ewells against that of a black man. Bob Ewell may be despised, but racial solidarity still rules the day. Atticus is the shining example of a man who can hold up a mirror to the bigoted citizens of Maycomb and give them the opportunity to look at themselves and reflect. Unfortunately, the guilty verdict they hand down shows they are not capable of such rational thinking.

STYLE

Symbolic Title Sequence

The title sequence (also called the opening credits) acts as a kind of overture to the rest of the film, encapsulating its main themes from the child's point of view. The camera looks down from overhead as a young girl, who is singing and humming, opens an old cigar box. The camera moves closer, to reveal that the box contains a number of different items, including crayons, two figurines carved out of soap (one male and one female), a pocket watch, a pocket knife, a medal, marbles, a penny, a key, a pencil, and other items. These are the items the children have collected from the knot-hole in the tree; they are gifts from Boo, although, of course, the viewer does not yet know this. The camera tracks from left to right, showing some of the items in magnified close-up, this time including a black-and-white marble that rolls and collides with a black marble. The child is shown drawing with a crayon on paper. She draws what is intended to be a mockingbird, and then tears the paper in half, right through the figure of the bird. This foreshadows what will happen in the film. The mockingbird is a symbol of innocence. In the novel, Maudie Atkinson explains to Scout what Atticus meant when he told her it was a sin to kill a mockingbird: "Mockingbirds don't do one thing but make music for us to enjoy. They don't eat up people's gardens, don't nest in corncribs, they don't do one thing but sing their hearts out for us." In the film, these words are spoken by Atticus. There are two mockingbirds in the novel and film: Tom Robinson, an innocent man accused of a heinous crime, and Boo Radley, a shy, troubled man who means no one any harm.

Reinforcing the child's perspective in this opening sequence is the music. The very first thing the viewer hears, coming even before any of the images, is a simple tune on a piano, a series of notes played one at a time, exactly as a child would try to pick out notes on a piano and play a tune. This melody, later reinforced by a flute and other instruments such as bells and harps, recurs at key moments in the film to suggest the child's world.

Point of View

The novel is narrated from the point of view of Scout, and the film frequently presents the story from her point of view. A shot taken from a child's point of view means that the camera shows what the child is seeing. Often such a shot will be immediately followed by a reaction shot of the child that shows the viewer how the child is experiencing that particular moment. The effect of this point of view is that the viewer can experience the child's way of seeing the world.

The child's point of view can be seen in the low-angle shots of Atticus, for example. In a low-angle shot, the camera is tilted up, so Atticus is seen as the child would see him. (This also has the effect of reinforcing the considerable authority that Atticus carries, in his roles as both parent and defense lawyer.)

The shots of the Radley house are all seen from the children's point of view and capture the spookiness of the house as it appears to them. Particularly notable is the empty swing that sways back and forth in the wind; it suggests to them the ghostly presence of Boo. When the children approach the house from the rear and see Boo's terrifying shadow, the entire sequence is from their point of view. It is especially notable in the three successive reaction shots, one of each child, as they see the shadow.

Other notable point of view shots include the children's climb up the courthouse steps and their sight of the big closed doors of the courtroom, and Jem's view of the drunken figure of Ewell getting smaller and smaller as Jem watches from the back seat of the car as Atticus drives away. The scene with the lynch mob at the courthouse also contains many shots from a child's point of view.

The child's point of view helps viewers recapture that imaginative way of seeing and understanding that characterizes a child's world. It also reminds viewers that the events portrayed, especially the trial, are important not only in themselves

but for the effect they have on the children's growing awareness.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

The Great Depression

The novel and film are set in the South during the Great Depression, which began in October 1929 when the stock market crashed and lasted throughout the 1930s. The voice-over comment in the film that Maycomb County "had recently been told that it had nothing to fear but fear itself" is a reference to the famous words of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, spoken during his first inaugural address on March 4, 1933.

In the Great Depression, rural areas that depended on farming were especially hard hit. Bartering systems sprang up, as shown in the film when Walter Cunningham pays his debts with goods. A doctor or lawyer might trade services for a chicken, or a grocer might trade food for clothing. In Alabama, where the novel and film are set, the Great Depression caused enormous hardship. In Birmingham, employment declined from 100,000 to 15,000. Relief agencies were overwhelmed.

Alabama voted overwhelmingly for Roosevelt in 1932 and again in 1936 and 1940. The New Deal programs Roosevelt created helped to revive the state's fortunes. These programs, including the Civil Works Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps, provided employment.

Jim Crow Laws

The racial segregation that is so important in the film was the result of what were known as Jim Crow laws. These were laws first enacted in the post-Civil War South that required legal segregation through separate facilities for black and white people. This included separate drinking fountains and rest rooms and separate sections within theaters, restaurants, and public transportation. The laws are named after a nineteenth-century minstrel character called Jim Crow, the last name being a reference to a black bird. Thus, a law having to do with blacks was known as a Jim Crow law. Jim Crow laws were gradually repealed in the decades following World War II, culminating in the Civil Rights Act of 1964, but they were very much a part of life in Maycomb County, Alabama, in the 1930s.

The Scottsboro Boys

There was a real-life case in Scottsboro, Alabama, in the 1930s that resembles the situation in the film. In 1931, nine young black men, ages twelve to nineteen, were accused of raping two white women on a freight train the boys were riding illegally. Eight of the boys were quickly convicted by an all-white jury in a series of rushed and unfair trials. As in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, it was never established that the rapes did, in fact, occur. The convicted boys were sentenced to death, but their sentences were commuted by the Supreme Court. Instead, they served long prison sentences, ranging from six to nineteen years.

Emmett Till

The case of Emmett Till took place in 1955, long after the time period in the film but still a timely exemplar of the situation in the South at the time of the film. Till was a fourteen-year-old African American boy from Chicago who was visiting his relatives in the South. He allegedly tried to flirt with a white woman in a grocery store. Days later, Till was kidnapped and killed by two white men, one of whom was the woman's brother. The two men were tried and acquitted by an all-white jury. Later, unrepentant and knowing they could not be charged again for the same crime, the men admitted their guilt. The case became nationally known and gave an impetus to the growing civil rights movement in the South. Although in the Till trial, white men are acquitted and in the fictional Tom Robinson trial, a black man is convicted, there are similarities between the two. As R. Barton Palmer notes in *Harper Lee's "To Kill a Mockingbird": The Relationship between Text and Film*, in both trials, "the law fails for precisely the same reason: the conflict between its abstract principles and prevailing community standards and beliefs." Palmer adds that the juries resolve their dilemma "by acting in ways that would ensure their continued good standing within their respective communities."

Civil Rights Movement

To Kill a Mockingbird was published in 1960, when the civil rights movement was continuing to gain momentum. The movement had begun in 1955 in Montgomery, Alabama, when a black woman, Rosa Parks, refused to give up her seat on the bus for a white person. The success of the resulting Montgomery bus boycott led to a gradual desegregation of public facilities in the



Hulton Archive | Getty Images

South. In 1957, for example, President Dwight Eisenhower ordered the National Guard to Little Rock, Arkansas, to enforce a court order integrating Central High School. The novel and film were thus contributions to the growing national awareness of racial injustice in the South. Both works appealed to the national conscience, calling for a more enlightened social attitude on matters of race. In the film, however, the issues of justice and racial prejudice are more prominent than they are in the novel. As Palmer notes, the trial takes up 30 percent of the running time of the film but only 15 percent of the novel. In spite of this, the film softens the indictment of the justice systems at the state and local level that is noticeable in Lee's novel. For example, in the novel, the guards at the prison deliberately shoot to kill Tom Robinson, and they shoot him seventeen times, which strongly suggests excessive, racially motivated violence. In the film, the killing is an accident. The deputy shoots to wound, not to kill.

CRITICAL OVERVIEW

To Kill a Mockingbird generally received high praise from movie reviewers. In the *Hollywood Reporter*, James Garner (quoted in Palmer's *Harper Lee's "To Kill a Mockingbird": The Relationship between Text and Film*) writes, "One of the finest pictures of this or any other year . . . a genuine experience, so penetrating and pervasive it lingers long after the last image has faded." In the *New York Times*, Bosley Crowther describes it as "a rewarding film," particularly the early

sequences showing Jem and Scout's adventures. Crowther comments, "The director, Robert Mulligan, achieves a bewitching indication of the excitement and thrill of being a child." However, when the issue of the trial emerges, involving the adult world, Crowther feels that the children are relegated to mere observers. He comments that it is "on the level of adult awareness of right and wrong . . . that most of the action . . . occurs. And this detracts from the camera's observation of the point of view of the child." In Crowther's view, this leaves the viewer in the dark regarding how the children feel about the events they witnessed.

Over the years, *To Kill a Mockingbird* has established itself as a classic. The American Film Institute ranked it twenty-fifth in a list of the greatest American films. In a recent review on the Web site *ReelViews*, film critic James Berardinelli showed that the film has lost none of its power to enthrall modern viewers. Calling the film "an astonishing motion picture by any standards," Berardinelli particularly admires Mulligan's direction, which "avoids grandstanding and allows the emotional power of the story to work without overt manipulation."

CRITICISM

Bryan Aubrey

Aubrey holds a Ph.D. in English. In this essay on To Kill a Mockingbird, he discusses the differences between the novel and the film, and the character of Atticus as presented in the film.

Novelists sometimes express dissatisfaction when their works are translated into the very different realm of film. Whereas a novel relies on the written word, a film is a predominantly visual experience. In an adaptation of a novel to the screen, carefully constructed literary themes and symbolism may get altered or obscured, characters may be misrepresented (at least in the eyes of the complaining author), long stretches of dialogue may be cut to a few pithy exchanges, and plots may get simplified and subplots eliminated so the film can fit into the running times of the average Hollywood movie. The extent to which a movie successfully represents the book on which it is based is often the subject of heated discussion by moviegoers as they leave the theater. Some people judge films by how closely they stick to their source, although it might also be argued that

WHAT DO I SEE NEXT?



- *Twelve Angry Men* is a classic courtroom drama, based on a play by American playwright Richard Rose. The original film was made in 1957 and stars Henry Fonda. There was also a 1997 remake, starring Jack Lemmon. In the film, a young Hispanic man is charged with capital murder. The jury is made up of twelve white men. Eleven jurors believe the defendant is guilty, while one juror, defying group opinion, tries to persuade the others of the possibility of the man's innocence.
- *Intruder in the Dust* is based on a 1948 novel by William Faulkner, in which a black farmer (played by Juano Hernandez) in a small southern town is accused of murdering a white man. A lynching seems possible, but the man is eventually exonerated. The black-and-white film, directed by Clarence Brown, was made in 1949 and was nominated for two Golden Globe Awards in 1950.
- *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* (1967) treats the topic of interracial marriage. This was a controversial subject when the film was made, since in seventeen U.S. states, interracial marriage was still illegal. It was legalized in the year of the film's release, by the Supreme Court ruling in the *Loving v. Virginia* case. In the film, a young white woman gets engaged to a black man she met on a vacation, and she brings him home to meet her parents. The film stars Spencer Tracy, Sidney Poitier, and Katharine Hepburn, and was directed by Stanley Kramer.
- *A Lesson before Dying* (1999), starring Don Cheadle, Cicely Tyson, and Mekhi Phifer, is a made-for-television adaptation of a 1993 novel by Ernest J. Gaines. It was released on DVD in 2000. Set in Louisiana in the late 1940s, the film features a black man who is falsely convicted of the murder of a white shopkeeper and has been sentenced to death. A black schoolteacher is persuaded to befriend him.
- *Inherit the Wind* (1960), starring Spencer Tracy and Fredric March and directed by Stanley Kramer, is a courtroom drama based on the famous Scopes Monkey Trial in Tennessee in 1925. John Scopes, a teacher, is prosecuted for teaching the theory of evolution in a public school. This film is another fine example of the cultural biases of the South in the early 1900s, as well as a classic courtroom drama. Based on a 1955 play by Jerome Lawrence and Robert Edwin Lee, the film received four Academy Award nominations.
- *The Learning Tree* (1969) is an adaptation of an autobiographical novel by Gordon Parks. Parks wrote the screenplay and also composed the music for the film. Set in small-town Kansas in the 1920s, the film is the coming-of-age story of an African American teenager as he learns to cope with a series of traumatic events.

the only valid question, bearing in mind the difference between the two media, is whether the film succeeds as a work of art in its own right, regardless of its fidelity to its source.

Harper Lee, the author of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, did not join the ranks of novelists dissatisfied with what the movie studios had done to their work. After she watched the film, she declared herself very pleased with it, grateful that her

story had been recreated as “a beautiful and moving motion picture” (quoted in R. Barton Palmer’s *Harper Lee’s “To Kill a Mockingbird”: The Relationship between Text and Film*). She also commented that the film faithfully represented the novel.

In many respects, Lee was correct. The film preserves a great deal of the novel, including the main characters and their relationships, especially



IN HIS MOST NOBLE ASPECT, ATTICUS STANDS FOR ENLIGHTENMENT, THE LIGHT OF REASON AND TRUTH. THIS IS BROUGHT OUT MOST VIVIDLY IN THE SCENE IN THE FILM WHEN THE MOB DESCENDS ON THE JAIL, READY TO LYNCH TOM ROBINSON.”

Atticus and the children, and two major strands of the plot: the children’s imaginative world as it relates to Boo Radley, and the trial of Tom Robinson in which Atticus Finch plays such a large role. No major details are altered, although the cast of characters is much reduced. There is no room in the film for the episode in which Jem damages Mrs. Dubose’s flowers and is required to read to her as a punishment, nor does the film show the burning down of Maudie Atkinson’s house or the visit of Aunt Alexandra, Atticus’s sister. All these incidents are important for the novelist’s re-creation of the life of a small town in the South during the 1930s, with its social rituals and seasonal events. However, the filmmakers needed to hold the viewers’ attention with a building narrative rather than a series of self-contained episodes. With this in mind, they compressed the action, as Palmer points out, so that it takes place over a period of only one year, in contrast to three years in the novel. The filmmakers also reduced the number of incidents involving the children and increased the importance of the trial. In the novel, the first mention of the Robinson case does not come until chapter 9, and it does not assume much importance until chapter 15, just over halfway through the novel, when the lynch mob descends on the jail. In contrast, the film introduces the trial much earlier, after only about sixteen minutes, when Judge Taylor asks Atticus if he will take the case on (although he explains none of the details, as Atticus already knows about the case). A few minutes later comes the scene, written just for the film since it does not occur in the novel, when the children rush down to the courthouse and Dill reports on what he sees of the grand jury session. Immediately after this, Bob Ewell confronts Atticus, another incident that does not occur (at this time and place) in the novel. Overall, in the novel, the trial itself occupies about fifty

pages of a three-hundred-page book, but in the film it occupies proportionately about twice as much time. The effect is to give the viewer the impression that the main message of *To Kill a Mockingbird* is the call to overcome racial prejudice, while the children’s adventures and their gradual maturation is presented as a secondary theme. The filmmakers’ strategy correspondingly increases the importance of Atticus. This can be seen from the fact, as Palmer points out, that they introduce him in an important scene right at the beginning, with Walter Cunningham and Scout, in an incident that is much expanded from its occurrence in chapter 3 of the novel.

In terms of the dialogue in the film, in many scenes screenwriter Horton Foote was very faithful to the novel. He chopped and rearranged the dialogue where necessary for greater economy, and he showed a lot of ingenuity in doing so, but many of the most memorable lines in the film are exactly as Lee wrote them. Who can forget, for example, the dignity and determination of Sheriff Heck Tate—up to this point not a very forceful or decisive character—near the end of the film, when he says, referring to his decision not to drag Boo into the limelight for killing Ewell in self-defense, “I may not be much, Mr. Finch, but I’m still sheriff of Maycomb County and Bob Ewell fell on his knife.” The force of the line is all in the acting. Frank Overton neither understates it nor charges it with too much emotion, but there is no mistaking the quick straightening of the coat that suggests a man rising to fulfill his obligations as he sees them and being absolutely certain he is doing the right thing.

Most of Tate’s speech leading up to that point is taken almost verbatim from the novel, but there is one small but significant difference. In the novel Tate says, “There’s a black boy dead for no reason, and the man responsible for it’s dead.” Tom Robinson of course is a man, not a boy. In the novel he is twenty-five years old, married with three children. “Boy” was the term often used by whites to refer to blacks of any age (as Bob Ewell does in the movie), reinforcing their perceived inferior status. The film softens this edge, not wanting to identify the well-meaning sheriff with this demeaning language. So in the film, Tate’s line begins “There’s a black man dead for no reason.”

Even Atticus, in the novel, refers once to Tom as a “boy,” but he does not do so in the film. To have allowed that would have been

unthinkable; it would have been seen as a blemish on his immaculate fairness and sense of human dignity. In the film, Atticus is presented as an almost perfect character. Palmer points out that after Gregory Peck, who was very eager to accept the role, saw a rough cut of the film, he pressured the director and producer for a number of changes that would bring Atticus more to the fore, and the final result was, as Palmer notes, “essentially a hagiography [the story of a saint] of Atticus Finch, most of whose more obvious imperfections and limitations were . . . carefully and thoroughly eliminated.”

This is not to say that Atticus is not an admirable and virtuous character in the novel. He is portrayed with great affection by Scout as she looks back at her childhood. It is Atticus who carries one of the themes of the novel, which is education. He is, as Scout says, able to explain everything and everyone. Atticus is, in short, an educator, even though his profession is that of a lawyer. He provides a moral education for his children. He teaches Scout the meaning of compromise and that a person should try to walk in other people’s shoes in order to understand them and not judge them harshly. He explains that a man must honor his individual conscience. Atticus also serves as moral exemplar for the town in his courageous defense of Tom Robinson, although the townspeople offer him scant regard for so doing.

In his most noble aspect, Atticus stands for enlightenment, the light of reason and truth. This is brought out most vividly in the scene in the film when the mob descends on the jail, ready to lynch Tom Robinson. Atticus knows this may happen, and he deliberately puts himself in a vulnerable position. He has brought his own floor lamp with him, and a book. Not surprisingly, Atticus loves to read. He fully intends to spend the entire night sitting outside the jail to protect his client. It is an act of great courage.

In this scene, Atticus is first seen twice in long shot at the center of the frame, from the children’s point of view. He is sitting reading under the light of the lamp. Just before the mob arrives he is shown, still in long shot, but not quite so far away, looking up from his book at the sound of the approaching cars. A medium shot then shows him steeling himself for the confrontation, the lamp at the top right of the frame symbolizing the light of reason and truth about to come face to face with the spirit of lawlessness and violence.

Another dramatic long shot from the perspective of the children who are watching at a distance shows Atticus and the lamp, small but still at the center of the frame, as the armed men get out of their cars and approach him. The entire frame is very dark except for the lamp and the light it sheds on the immediate surroundings. Atticus stands his ground. Fortunately, Scout’s innocent intervention saves the day, but this does not take anything away from Atticus who, unarmed himself (in the novel he says that carrying a gun merely encourages others to shoot you), is prepared to face down a lawless mob. The scene is a wonderful evocation of how the light of truth, of reason, of justice, embodied in just one man of steadiness and clear purpose, can be stronger than a gang of violent individuals.

This scene is certainly Atticus’s finest hour, and the final shot is memorable. After the mob and the children leave, Atticus, still immaculate in his three-piece suit, returns to his solitary vigil. He knows he has won, and he reassures Tom Robinson that the mob will not bother him again. The camera then reverts to the same long shot of Atticus with which the scene began, with the lamp illuminating just a small area in the surrounding darkness. Then there is a fade-out, which gives the impression, since the outer parts of the frame are already dark, of fading out from the outer to the inner. Since Atticus is in the center of the frame, he and the light shed by the lamp are the last to fade. All is black except that lone figure and the light. The light is still visible even after Atticus himself has been faded out. That sliver of light in a vast dark is the light that stands against the darkness of intolerance, prejudice, and violence. Although it may not be enough to save Tom Robinson from an unjust fate, it serves as a telling visual symbol of the message of the film. As long as there are people like Atticus to embody it, the light of truth will not be vanquished.

Source: Bryan Aubrey, *Critical Essay on To Kill a Mockingbird*, in *Novels for Students*, Gale, Cengage Learning, 2010.

Richard Armstrong

In the following review, Armstrong clearly lays out some of the main issues surrounding the film and novel: gender, class, and civil rights.

When Harper Lee first submitted her manuscript of *To Kill a Mockingbird* to the publisher, she was told that it seemed more like a series of



IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT TRADITIONAL
GENDER CHARACTERISTICS ARE DEEPLY INVOLVED
WITH ONE ANOTHER IN SCOUT, SINCE THE FILM IS
MOST POIGNANTLY ABOUT DEFINING
MASCULINITY.”

short stories than a novel. Echoing Lee's Alabama girlhood, Robert Mulligan's 1962 film often feels like a series of moments and parts, incidents in search of a film. Only after watching it several times do the parts merge. Like the cigar box in the opening credits, it is a treasury of scenes, each evoking the specific atmospheres of childhood.

Notice how we see the objects in the box in close up: pocket watch, safety pin, marble, pennies, crayons, a mirror, a whistle, wooden dolls. Indeed, the credits sequence recalls the trick photographs of familiar objects shot from unfamiliar angles that once appeared in children's comics and annuals. Seeing these objects in this way, we focus on their status as singular, rather unusual, things divorced from their purposes in the wider world. There is something obsessive about this sequence, as if we are examining clues in an investigation of events past but still somehow alive. As we shall see, this pregnant quality is significant to the moment the film appeared.

The de-familiarization of everyday objects is consonant with the film's overall perspective. We see Scout's experience through her six-year-old eyes so things, events and people do not come with the easy context and definition that they do for adults. Part of the film's achievement is to make us look at the world again and to see it in a fresh light. It is an achievement that has concrete and far-reaching consequences for the characters and for us.

THE DIRECTOR

To Kill a Mockingbird was directed by Robert Mulligan. One of postwar America's most underrated directors, Mulligan made his name with his first film, the TV drama *Fear Strikes Out* (1957), an intimate and disturbing account of a baseball player's experience of mental illness.

Collaborating with producer Allan J. Pakula in the 1960s, Mulligan made a series of features for theatrical release. *Love with the Proper Stranger* (1963), *Baby the Rain Must Fall* (1965), and *Inside Daisy Clover* (1966) combined sensitive performances, a feeling for environment, and an exploration of character psychology that has come to seem increasingly seductive. *To Kill a Mockingbird* was the first of the Pakula-Mulligan collaborations. If critics have called these films ambiguous and fey, they remain the happy outcomes of unpretentious television camera work and editing combined with the enhanced production values available to feature filmmakers. It is worth comparing Mulligan's approach to performance and *mise-en-scène* in *To Kill a Mockingbird* with that of a Hollywood Tennessee Williams adaptation of the 1950s, such as *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951) or *Suddenly Last Summer* (1959). Russell Harlan's unfussy cinematography and lighting bring a matter-of-fact quality to Mulligan's film that seems thoroughly naturalistic. Another characteristic of the Pakula-Mulligan films is their feeling for music. *Love with the Proper Stranger* is set in the world of New York jazz clubs. *Inside Daisy Clover* explores the life of a musical starlet during the 1930s. Notice how in the credits sequence in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, a child's singing seems to invoke Elmer Bernstein's memorable score, with its sure sense of American folk idiom.

THE ACTOR

Scout's father is the lawyer Atticus Finch, played by Gregory Peck. Peck made his name playing a series of decent men standing up for just causes, becoming an icon of integrity and high-mindedness for American audiences in the middle decades of the twentieth century. With his dark looks and authoritative voice, in *Days of Glory* (1944) Peck was the Russian partisan fighting the Nazi invaders; in *Gentleman's Agreement* (1947), he was the undercover journalist rooting out anti-semitism. For David Thomson, Peck was a figurehead for a mass audience; 'a protagonist for middle American aspiration, pathfinder of the straight and narrow . . . He is Kennedy-like, preferring to act in crisis, and always cosmetically vindicated.'

To defend the rights of Tom Robinson, the African-American accused of raping a white woman, whose trial forms the high point of the film, Atticus must stand up to the whole town. Peck's contemplative *mien* and measured tones

entirely suit the role. Hollywood films like to show a thoughtful intelligent man become a man of action. He may admonish Scout for fighting at school, and merely sets his jaw when the father of the raped woman spits in his face, but Atticus is prepared to pick up a rifle to shoot a rabid dog straying into the town. Clumsily placing his reading glasses down in the dust, he briefly becomes an expert marksman. It is a scene that would have reminded some in the audience of Peck's backwoods hunter in *The Yearling* (1946).

Whilst the ornery Bob Ewell seems inarticulate, Atticus is articulate, coherent and assertive. During his cross-examination of Ewell's daughter Mayella, she hysterically accuses Atticus of fancy speechifying and high falutin' attitudes, railing as much against what Atticus represents as what he actually says. James Anderson and Collin Wilcox Paxton's performances depend on their ability to recall the backwoods temper of what Americans denigrate as 'white trash.' In his summing up, Atticus speaks of the 'cruel poverty and ignorance' which Mayella has had to endure all her life. The film is as much about class as it is about racial prejudice, a preoccupation resonating as much with the moment of its release as with the novel's Depression setting.

The climactic courtroom scene is organized so that Scout and Jem see their father from the gallery where the black spectators sit. There they can look down on the proceedings as if they took place on a stage. It is difficult to resist the impression that the characters are avidly enjoying a movie at the local cinema, agog at the hero's performance. If you think about it, a good many Hollywood films act as metaphors for the dynamics that are played out by the actors themselves. For example, in *Cape Fear* (1961), Gregory Peck played a lawyer in a small southern town whose family is threatened by a dangerous ex-convict whom he once defended. The 1991 remake cleverly subverted movie history by casting Peck as the ex-con's shady lawyer! Elaborating star trajectories is not the most interesting thing Hollywood movies do. But the use of space in the courtroom in *To Kill a Mockingbird* does tend to underline this movie's appeal as what critics and industry insiders call a star vehicle. As if this were not enough, Atticus' neighbour Maudie Atkinson (Rosemary Murphy) could be talking about Peck himself when she tells Jem: 'Some men in this world are born to do an unpleasant job for us. Your father's one of them.'

THE CIVIL RIGHTS STRUGGLE

In his summing up, Atticus re-affirms that in the United States a man, no matter what his race, creed or status, is entitled to equal protection under the law. But *To Kill a Mockingbird* appeared at a particularly crucial moment in American history. In 1962 America was in the throes of the struggle for African-American civil rights.

Although slavery was declared unconstitutional after the American Civil War of 1861-1865, it would take another century before African-Americans could assume the rights that white Americans take for granted. The civil rights movement grew in strength and impetus throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Whilst lunch counters, restrooms (toilets) and other public facilities across the southern states were still segregated, in 1964 the Civil Rights Act declared discrimination based on race to be unconstitutional. In 1965 the Voting Rights Act gave African-Americans full suffrage. *To Kill a Mockingbird* appeared the same year as the Supreme Court ruled that segregation was unconstitutional in all transportation facilities. Also in 1962, President Kennedy sent federal troops to the University of Mississippi to quell riots attendant upon its first black student registration. (Remember: education is a key issue in *To Kill a Mockingbird*.)

Harper Lee's novel was published in 1960 and won the Pulitzer Prize in 1961. Although based upon the infamous Scottsboro trial, in which nine African-American men were tried and convicted for raping a white woman in 1931, the book chimed with more recent events. With the newspapers full of the civil rights struggle and the television news pumping pictures into living rooms across America, it is easy to imagine what an impact the film would have had on the mass audience for which it was intended. With hindsight, it seems the ideal Oscar candidate. *To Kill a Mockingbird* was a high profile release based on a best-selling book dealing with controversial subject matter. It starred Hollywood's paean of civic virtue. It was nominated for Best Actor, Best Director, Best Picture, Best Adapted Screenplay, Best Supporting Actress, and Best Art Direction. Peck received Best Actor, screenwriter Horton Foote received the Best Adapted Screenplay statuette, and Alexander Golitzen, Henry Bumstead and Oliver Emert received the statuette for Best Art Direction.

JEAN LOUISE 'SCOUT' FINCH

To Kill a Mockingbird owes its moral centre to Scout and to Mary Badham who played her. Badham was nine when she was nominated for an Oscar. Pulling off the complex assignment of playing a little girl with all the spirit and energy of a tomboy yet all the imagination and sensitivity of the woman Scout will become, Badham brings a favourite Hollywood screenwriter's model to life. Her performance is natural, assured and never cloying.

Sweet and caring, Scout is also crafty and rambunctious! At the heart of many scenes is her refusal to act like little girls are supposed to. Many roles for mature Hollywood actresses depend upon this apparent contradiction. Think of Holly Hunter in *Broadcast News* (1987) or *Copycat* (1995), or Geena Davis in *Thelma and Louise* (1991) or *The Long Kiss Goodnight* (1996). Uncomfortable in the dress the Finches' maid Calpurnia makes Scout wear for her first day at school, Badham/Scout slouches and whines through the scene until deserting her breakfast and racing through the fly-screen door. Count up how many times you see Scout dashing along the streets of the town whilst adult extras sedately go about their business. At one point, she climbs inside an old truck tyre and Jem pushes it along the road, Scout rotating inside it. (The children constantly interact with their environment. How often do you see them swinging on gates or straddling railings? Do you remember taking your environment for granted as a child?)

When the lynch mob mass on the jail steps and threaten Atticus as he guards Tom before the trial, Scout races to be with him. As she charges through the mob we see the massed legs of the men as the camera barrels among them. As much of the film follows the children's adventures, we often see things at waist height. Their opinions and prejudices unavailable to the children, the men of the town seem mysterious and dangerous. Until the courtroom scene, Tom Robinson's story unfolds in scenes between adults, only becoming central to the film as she and Jem become curious about what's going on at the courthouse and Scout feels the prejudice of other children. We see Mr Cunningham (Crahan Denton) through her eyes as she speaks to him on the steps of the jail. It is a powerful scene, like others in the film that are dependent upon alignment of the audience's perspective with that of a child. Through a child's eyes, adults often seem inscrutable. Whilst Badham/Scout addresses

Mr Cunningham straight to camera, Denton/Cunningham looks away, his hat obscuring his face. The tension in the scene arises from our being unsure what he is thinking or what he will do next. At last he looks straight at Scout and responds to her concern for him and his family: 'Thank-you, young lady.' By addressing Scout as 'young lady', he acknowledges both her true gender and her more genteel social status. Mr Cunningham's words reinforce distinctions that the film is anxious to uphold.

GENDER AND CLASS

As the mature Jean Louise remembers her father saying: 'You never really knew a man until you stood in his shoes and walked around in them.' When we first meet Mr Cunningham, Scout learns that the Cunninghams are poor and poverty makes a proud man ashamed. When we next see Cunningham, he heads a lynch mob of farmers who, like him, were hit hardest by the Depression. Harper Lee's book was set during a period in American history when millions of men were out of work. Notice how in scenes with Cunningham, Atticus stands on steps, raising him slightly above the other man. The actor placement suggests a difference in social standing between characters. Notice that the Finches always have plenty to eat. At one point, Scout brings Cunningham's son back for dinner. Look how much of everything there is, as cinematographer Russell Harlan dwells on Atticus ladling sweet potato and spinach, the children tuck into plates of meat, and Cunningham Jr. drowns his meat in gravy!

Social standing is central to the problems the film works through. It is significant that traditional gender characteristics are deeply involved with one another in Scout, since the film is most poignantly about defining masculinity. *To Kill a Mockingbird* appeared at a time when millions of Americans were experiencing the most affluent and comfortable lives that any Americans had ever experienced. The economy was booming and unemployment was low. There was a young, dynamic and charismatic President Kennedy in the White House and much talk in academic circles of the 'Affluent Society'. America had come a long way in thirty years. For millions of Americans in the rich white suburbs of the 1960s this was how things should be and their values were the right values. The 1960s had seen the emergence of a college-educated white-collar class of lawyers, teachers and corporation executives whose trim

grey suits and Kennedy crew cuts earned them the epithet 'Corporation Man'. Atticus does not belong to this generation, so does not conform to this image. But the film shows him as an educated man who can also act tough when necessary, answering whatever misgivings around the virility of the Corporation Man may have persisted in this traditionally masculine society.

Enjoying the highest standard of education provision in its history, in America in the 1960s, language and literature were prized among the dominant middle class which comprised most of this film's audience. *To Kill a Mockingbird* compares Scout's environment, full of books and knowledge, with that of the Ewells and the Cunninghams, in which more pressing needs have taken precedence. According to Jem, Scout had been reading 'since she was born'. Whilst the film illustrates Atticus and Scout's relatively affluent family life, we must infer from the court proceedings that Ewell sexually abuses Mayella and beats her when he is drunk. If Mayella is a gibbering idiot, Scout is a well-adjusted little girl, vindicating the liberal democratic ideal of a sensible diet, lots of affection, and a rounded education. One suspects that nobody ever called Mayella 'young lady'.

Most of *To Kill a Mockingbird* is shot in brightly-lit stable compositions that suggest an objective 'normal' environment. But in certain scenes, the film mobilizes conventions that suggest more menacing characteristics. When Jem makes his way onto the porch of the old Radley place, an apparently dilapidated shack often accompanied by 'spooky' music, Boo's shadow passes over him in spine-chilling fashion. When Bob Ewell appears out of the gloom at the Robinsons, demented and clawing at the car window, lighting and performance generate a Gothic atmosphere. When the children are attacked in the woods by a groaning figure, his spindly hand appears like a claw before Scout's petrified stare. (Indeed, this scene recalls the opening scene of Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*). The style and execution of these scenes evokes horror movies such as *Frankenstein* (1931). In that film, a little girl is frightened by Frankenstein's Monster near a lake. What horror movies seek to do is to explore issues that are too controversial to be discussed in more mainstream genres such as melodrama, crime or soap operas. Horror movies use ghastly or monstrous images or effects as metaphors for real but 'difficult' problems such

as rape, incest or homosexuality. In *To Kill a Mockingbird* Ewell's excessive behaviour with his daughter is channelled into his Gothic representation. To the film's middle-class family audience, Ewell becomes a monster.

Because horrible gossip has surrounded the figure of Boo Radley, this gentle backward man has also become demonized. Boo's 'awful' reputation is carefully built up until the climactic moment when we actually see this quiet figure in Jem's room. The townsfolk don't understand so they have deployed metaphors that the film echoes with horror movie conventions. Like Cunningham, Bob Ewell is poor and feels less of a man for it. In an era when the Kennedy administration committed itself to conquering all social ills, Cunningham, Ewell and Boo Radley are seen as the victims of 'cruel poverty and ignorance.'

TO KILL A MYTH . . .

Big mainstream releases like *To Kill a Mockingbird* tend to embody easily understood and assimilated attitudes. After all, expensive to produce, they must appeal to a wide range of people if they are to turn a profit. Seeing the film from an early twenty-first century perspective, what do you think of a white lawyer defending an African-American victim of racial hatred whilst keeping an African-American maid? How would an audience in America in 1962 have read this? How do you think contemporary African-Americans would have responded to that scene in which black people in the gallery rise in tribute to Gregory Peck's white lawyer defending their rights? How should we deal with the prospect of a little girl befriending a grown man with learning difficulties? Such questions invite us to ask why the film was made as it was and whether we have changed. Finally, how would you reconcile Atticus' philosophy with what you would see as you stepped out of an afternoon showing of *To Kill a Mockingbird* in a Mississippi picture theatre in 1962?

Source: Richard Armstrong, "The World in a Fresh Light: *To Kill A Mockingbird*," in *Australian Screen Education*, No. 35, Winter 2004, pp. 84-87.

Dean Shackelford

In the following review, Shackelford focuses on the loss of the female narrative voice in the film To Kill a Mockingbird, as well as a shift in focus from Scout to Atticus Finch.



AND IT IS PERHAPS THIS ELEMENT OF
THE FEMALE VOICE IN HARPER LEE'S *TO KILL A
MOCKINGBIRD* WHICH MOST MAKES HORTON FOOTE'S
SCREEN ADAPTATION LARGELY A COMPROMISE OF
THE NOVEL'S FULL POWER."

Aunt Alexandra was fanatical on the subject of my attire. I could not possibly hope to be a lady if I wore breeches; when I said I could do nothing in a dress, she said I wasn't supposed to be doing anything that required pants. Aunt Alexandra's vision of my deportment involved playing with small stoves, tea sets, and wearing the Add-A-Pearl necklace she gave me when I was born; furthermore, I should be a ray of sunshine in my father's lonely life. I suggested that one could be a ray of sunshine in pants just as well, but Aunt said that one had to behave like a sunbeam, that I was born good but had grown progressively worse every year. She hurt my feelings and set my teeth permanently on edge, but when I asked Atticus about it, he said there were already enough sunbeams in the family and to go about my business, he didn't mind me much the way I was.

This passage reveals the importance of female voice and gender in Harper Lee's popular Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, first published in 1960. The novel portrays a young girl's love for her father and brother and the experience of childhood during the Great Depression in a racist, segregated society which uses superficial and materialistic values to judge outsiders, including the powerful character Boo Radley.

In 1962, a successful screen version of the novel (starring Gregory Peck) appeared. However, the screenplay, written by Horton Foote, an accomplished Southern writer, abandons, for the most part, the novel's first-person narration by Scout (in the motion picture, a first-person angle of vision functions primarily to provide transitions and shifts in time and place). As a result, the film is centered more on the children's father, Atticus Finch, and the adult world in which Scout and Jem feel alien. As several commentators have noted, the film seems centered on the racial issue much more than on other, equally successful dimensions of the novel. Clearly, part

of the novel's success has to do with the adult-as-child perspective. Lee, recalling her own childhood, projects the image of an adult reflecting on her past and attempting to recreate the experience through a female child's point of view.

That the film shifts perspectives from the book's primary concern with the female protagonist and her perceptions to the male father figure and the adult male world is noteworthy. While trying to remain faithful to the importance of childhood and children in the novel, Foote's objective narration is interrupted only occasionally with the first-person narration of a woman, who is presumably the older, now adult Scout. However, the novel is very much about the experience of growing up as a female in a South with very narrow definitions of gender roles and acceptable behavior. Because this dimension of the novel is largely missing from the film's narrative, the film version of *To Kill a Mockingbird* may be seen as a betrayal of the novel's full feminist implications—a compromise of the novel's full power.

Granted, when a film adaptation is made, the screenwriter need not be faithful to the original text. As Robert Giddings, Keith Selby, and Chris Wensley note in their important book *Screening the Novel*, a filmmaker's approaches to adapting a literary work may range from one of almost complete faithfulness to the story to one which uses the original as an outline for a totally different work on film. Foote's adaptation seems to fall somewhere in between these extremes, with the film decidedly faithful to certain aspects of the novel. His story clearly conveys the novel's general mood; it is obvious he wishes to remain close to the general subject matter of life in the South during the Great Depression and its atmosphere of racial prejudice and Jim Crow. Reflecting on the film, Harper Lee herself states, "For me, Maycomb is there, its people are there: in two short hours one lives a childhood and lives it with Atticus Finch, whose view of life was the heart of the novel."

Though admittedly Atticus Finch is at the heart of the film and novel, there are some clear and notable discrepancies between the two versions that alter the unique perspective of the novel considerably—despite what Lee herself has commented. Only about 15% of the novel is devoted to Tom Robinson's rape trial, whereas in the film, the running time is more than 30% of a two-hour film. Unlike the book, the film is primarily

centered on the rape trial and the racism of Maycomb which has made it possible—not surprising considering it was made during what was to become the turbulent period of the 1960s when racial issues were of interest to Hollywood and the country as a whole. Significant, though, are the reviewers and critics who believe this issue, rather than the female child’s perspectives on an adult male world, is the novel’s main concern and as a result admire the film for its faithfulness to the original.

Many teachers of the novel and film also emphasize this issue to the neglect of other equally important issues. In 1963 and again in the year of the film’s twenty-fifth anniversary, the Education Department of Warner Books issued Joseph Mersand’s study guide on the novel, one section of which is an essay subtitled “A Sociological Study in Black and White.” Turning the novel into sociology, many readers miss other aspects of Lee’s vision. In an early critical article, Edgar Schuster notes that the racial dimensions of the novel have been over-emphasized, especially by high school students who read it, and he offers possible strategies for teaching students the novel’s other central issues, which he lists as “Jem’s physiological and psychological growth” (mentioning Scout’s growth in this regard only briefly as if it is a side issue), the caste system of Maycomb, the title motif, education, and superstition. What is so striking about Schuster’s interpretation is his failure to acknowledge that the issue of Scout’s gender is crucial to an understanding not only of the novel but also of Scout’s identification with her father. As feminists often note, male readers sometimes take female perspectives and turn them into commentaries from a male point of view. Because the novel and film center so much on Atticus, he, rather than Scout, becomes the focus.

With regard to the film, I do not mean to suggest that Foote has not attempted to make some references to Scout’s problems with gender identity. When he does, however, the audience is very likely unable to make the connections as adequately as careful readers of the novel might. Of particular interest are two scenes from the film which also appear in the novel. During one of their summers with Dill, Jem insults Scout as the three of them approach the Radley home and Scout whines, fearful of what may happen. As in the novel, he tells her she is getting to be more like a girl every day, the implication being that boys

are courageous and non-fearful and girls are weak and afraid (a point which is refuted when Jem’s fears of Boo Radley and the dark are demonstrated). Nevertheless, what is most important in the scene is Scout’s reaction. Knowing that being called a girl is an insult and that being female is valued less than being male in her small Southern town, she suddenly becomes brave in order to remain acceptable to her brother.

In another scene, as Scout passes by Mrs. Dubose’s house and says “hey,” she is reprimanded for poor manners unbecoming of a Southern lady. This scene occurs in both film and novel. However, in the novel Lee clarifies that the presumed insult to Mrs. Dubose originates with Mrs. Dubose’s assumptions as a Southern lady, a role which Scout, in the novel especially, is reluctant to assume. The film’s lack of a consistent female voice makes this scene as well as others seem unnecessary and extraneous. This is only one example of the way in which the superior narrative strategy of the novel points out the weakness of the objective, male-centered narration of the film.

One scene from the film concerning girlhood does not appear in the novel. Careful not to suggest that the Finches are churchgoers (for what reason?), as they are in the novel, Foote creates a scene which attempts to demonstrate Scout’s ambivalence about being female. As Scout becomes old enough to enter school, she despises the thought of wearing a dress. When she appears from her room to eat breakfast before attending school for the first time, Jem ridicules her while Atticus, Miss Maudie, and Calpurnia admire her. Scout comments: “I still don’t see why I have to wear a darn old dress.” A weakness of the film in this regard is that until this scene, there has been little indication that Scout strongly dislikes wearing dresses, let alone has fears of growing up as a female. The novel makes it clear that Scout prefers her overalls to wearing dresses, which is perhaps why Foote found it necessary to create this particular scene. However, the previous two crucial scenes, while faithful to the novel’s general concerns with gender, create loose ends in the film which do not contribute to the success of the narration and which compromise the novel’s feminist center.

The intermittent efforts to focus on the female narrator’s perspective prove unsuccessful in revealing the work’s feminist dimensions. As the film opens, the audience sees the hands of a

small girl, presumably Scout, coloring. After the credits, a woman's voice, described by Amy Lawrence as a "disembodied voice exiled from the image," is heard reflecting on her perceptions of Maycomb. By introducing the audience to the social and spatial context, this first-person narrator provides a frame for the whole. The audience at this point, without having read the novel first, may not, however, recognize who the speaker is. As Scout appears playing in the yard, the viewer is left to assume that the voice-over opening the film is the female character speaking as a grown woman. The camera zooms down to reveal Scout and soon thereafter shifts to the standard objective narration of most films.

When the disembodied narrator is heard again, she reflects on Scout's views of Atticus after he insists she will have to return to school; yet, despite what her teacher says, father and daughter will continue reading each night the way they always have. Here the voice-over is designed to emphasize the heroic stature of Atticus and perhaps even to suggest that one reason for Scout's identification with him is his freedom of thought and action: "There just didn't seem to be anyone or thing Atticus couldn't explain. Though it wasn't a talent that would arouse the admiration of any of our friends. Jem and I had to admit he was very good at that but that was all he was good at, we thought" (Foote, p. 35). This intrusion becomes little more than a transition into the next scene, in which Atticus shoots the mad dog.

In the next intrusion the female voice interrupts the objective narration when, at school, Scout fights Cecil Jacobs for calling Atticus a "nigger lover." She states: "Atticus had promised me he would wear me out if he ever heard of me fightin' any more. I was far too old and too big for such childish things, and the sooner I learned to hold in, the better off everybody would be. I soon forgot. . . Cecil Jacobs made me forget" (Foote, p. 42). Here again, the first-person narration provides coherence, allowing the scene of Scout's fight with Cecil Jacobs to be shortened and placing emphasis on the relationship between Atticus and Scout. The subtext of their conversation could perhaps be viewed as a reflection of traditional views that women should not be too aggressive or physical, but this scene, coupled with earlier scenes reflecting social values, is not couched in terms of Scout's transgressive behavior as a woman-to-be. The female voice in the film is not used to demonstrate the book's concern

with female identity; rather, it reinforces the male-centered society which Atticus represents and which the film is gradually moving toward in focusing on the trial of Tom Robinson.

Another instance during which the female narrator intrudes on the objective, male-centered gaze of the camera occurs when Jem and Scout discuss the presents Boo Radley leaves for them in the knot-hole. At this point in the film, the attempt to convey the book's female narrative center falls completely apart. Not until after the very long trial scene does the camera emphasize the children's perceptions or the female narrator's angle of vision again. Instead, the audience is in the adult male world of the courtroom, with mature male authority as the center of attention. Immediately after the trial, the film seems most concerned with Jem's reactions to the trial, Jem's recognition of the injustice of the verdict in the Tom Robinson case, and Jem's desire to accompany his father when he tells Helen Robinson that Tom has been killed. Scout is unable to observe directly the last event, and, as a result, the narration is inconsistent—by and large from the rape trial to the end of the film.

The film does, however make use of voice-over narration twice more. In the first instance, the female narrator again provides the transition in time and place to move from the previous scene, the revelation of Tom Robinson's death to his wife, into the confrontation between Atticus and Bob Ewell. As the camera focuses on an autumn scene with Scout dressed in a white dress, Jean Louise prepares the audience for the climax, which soon follows: "By October things had settled down again. I still looked for Boo every time I went by the Radley place. This night my mind was filled with Halloween. There was to be a pageant representing our county's agricultural products. I was to be a ham. Jem said he would escort me to the school auditorium. Thus began our longest journey together" (Foote, p. 72). Following this passage is the climactic scene, when Bob Ewell attacks Scout and Jem and Boo Radley successfully rescues them.

Shortly thereafter, the camera focuses on Scout's recognition of Boo as the protector and savior of Jem and her, and for the remainder of the film, the narration, arguably for the first time, is centered entirely on Scout's perception of the adult male world. She hears Heck Tate and Atticus debate over what to do about exposing the truth that Boo has killed Ewell while

defending the children. The movement of the camera and her facial expression clearly indicate that Scout sees the meaning behind the adult's desires to protect Boo from the provincial Maycomb community which has marginalized him—and this scene signifies Scout's initiation into the world of adulthood.

As the film draws to a close, Scout, still in her overalls which will not be tolerated much longer in this society, walks Boo home. For the last time the audience hears the female voice:

Neighbors bring food with death, and flowers with sickness, and little things in between. Boo was our neighbor. He gave us two soap dolls, a broken watch, and chain a knife, and our lives. One time Atticus said you never really knew a man until you stood in his shoes and walked around in them. Just standin' on the Radley porch was enough... The summer that had begun so long ago ended, another summer had taken its place, and a fall, and Boo Radley had come out. . . I was to think of these days many times;—of Jem, and Dill and Boo Radley, and Tom Robinson . . . and Atticus. He would be in Jem's room all night. And he would be there when, Jem waked up in the morning. (Foote, pp. 79–80)

The film ends, when, through a window, Scout is seen climbing into Atticus's lap while he sits near Jem. The camera gradually moves leftward away from the two characters in the window to a long shot of the house. By the end, then, the film has shifted perspective back to the female voice, fully identified the narrator as the older Scout (Jean Louise), and focused on the center of Scout's existence, her father (a patriarchal focus). The inconsistent emphasis on Scout and her perceptions makes the film seem disjointed.

Noting the patriarchal center of the film, Amy Lawrence suggests the possibility for a feminist reading. She argues that the disembodied narrator—as well as the author, Harper Lee, and the characters of Scout and Mayella Ewell—provides a “disjointed subjectivity” on film which is characteristic of “the experience of women in patriarchy” (p.184). Such “dis-jointed subjectivity” is, however, missing from the novel, which centers on Scout's perceptions of being female in a male-dominated South. The novel's female-centered narration provides an opportunity for Lee to comment on her own childlike perceptions as well as her recognition of the problems of growing up female in the South. The feminine voice, while present in the film, receives far too little emphasis.

In the novel the narrative voice allows readers to comprehend what the film does not explain. Though some critics have attacked Lee's narration as weak and suggested that the use of first person creates problems with perspective because the major participant, first-person narrator must appear almost in all scenes, the novel's consistent use of first person makes it much clearer than the film that the reader is seeing all the events through a female child's eyes. Once the children enter the courtroom in the film, the center of attention is the adult world of Atticus Finch and the rape trial—not, as the book is able to suggest, the children's perceptions of the events which unravel before them.

Although it is clear in the film that Scout is a tomboy and that she will probably grow out of this stage in her life (witness the very feminine and Southern drawl of the female narrator, who, though not seen, conveys the image of a conventional Southern lady), the film, which does not openly challenge the perspective of white heterosexuals (male or female) nearly to the degree the novel does, does not make Scout's ambivalence about being a female in an adult male world clear enough. Because the novel's narrative vision is consistently first person throughout and as a result focused on the older Scout's perceptions of her growing-up years, the female voice is unquestionably heard and the narration is focused on the world of Maycomb which she must inevitably enter as she matures.

Furthermore, a number of significant questions about gender are raised in the novel: Is Scout (and, by implication, all females) an outsider looking on an adult male world which she knows she will be unable to enter as she grows into womanhood? Is her identification with Atticus due not only to her love and devotion for a father but also to his maleness, a power and freedom she suspects she will not be allowed to possess within the confines of provincial Southern society? Or is her identification with Atticus due to his androgynous nature (playing the role of mother and father to her and demonstrating stereotypically feminine traits: being conciliatory, passive, tolerant, and partially rejecting the traditional masculine admiration for violence, guns, and honor)? All three of these questions may lead to possible, even complementary readings which would explain Scout's extreme identification with her father.

As in the passage quoted at the beginning of this essay, the novel focuses on Scout's tomboyishness as it relates to her developing sense of a female self. Also evident throughout the novel is Scout's devotion to her father's opinions. Atticus seems content with her the way she is; only when others force him to do so does he concern himself with traditional stereotypes of the Southern female. Especially significant with regard to Scout's growing sense of womanhood is the novel's very important character, Aunt Alexandra, Atticus's sister, who is left out of the film entirely. Early in the novel, readers are made aware of Scout's antipathy for her aunt, who wishes to mold her into a Southern lady. Other female authority figures with whom Scout has difficulty agreeing are her first-grade teacher, Miss Fisher, and Calpurnia, the family cook, babysitter, and surrogate mother figure. When the females in authority interfere with Scout's perceptions concerning her father and their relationship, she immediately rebels, a rebellion which Atticus does not usually discourage—signifying her strong identification with male authority and her recognition that the female authority figures threaten the unique relationship which she has with her father and which empowers her as an individual.

Exactly why Scout identifies with Atticus so much may have as much to do with his own individuality and inner strength as the fact that he is a single parent and father. Since the mother of Scout and Jem is dead, Atticus has assumed the full responsibility of playing mother and father whenever possible—though admittedly he employs Calpurnia and allows Alexandra to move in with them to give the children, particularly Scout, a female role model. However, Atticus is far from a stereotypical Southern male. Despite his position as a respected male authority figure in Maycomb, he seems oblivious to traditional expectations concerning masculinity (for himself) and femininity (for Scout). The children in fact see him as rather unmanly: "When Jem and I asked him why he was so old, he said he got started late, which we felt reflected on his abilities and his masculinity." Jem is also upset because Atticus will not play tackle football. Mrs. Dubose criticizes Atticus for not remarrying, which is very possibly a subtle comment on his lack of virility. Later the children learn of his abilities at marksmanship, at bravery in watching the lynch mob ready to attack Tom Robinson, and at the defense of the same man.

Perhaps this is Lee's way of suggesting that individuals must be allowed to develop their own sense of self without regard to rigid definitions of gender and social roles.

Scout's identification with Atticus may also be rooted in her recognition of the superficiality and limitations of being a Southern female. Mrs. Dubose once tells her: "You should be in a dress and camisole, young lady! You'll grow up waiting on tables if somebody doesn't change your ways . . ." This is one of many instances in the novel through which the first-person narrator reveals Lee's criticism of Southern women and their narrowmindedness concerning gender roles. Even Atticus ridicules the women's attitudes. In one instance he informs Alexandra that he favors "Southern womanhood as much as anybody, but not for preserving polite fiction at the expense of human life'." When Scout is "indignant" that women cannot serve on juries, Atticus jokingly says, "I guess it's to protect our frail ladies from sordid cases like Tom's. Besides . . . I doubt if we'd ever get a complete case tried—the ladies'd be interrupting to ask questions'." This seemingly sexist passage may in fact be the opposite; having established clearly that Atticus does not take many Southern codes seriously, Lee recognizes the irony in Atticus's statement that women, including his own independent-minded daughter, are "frail."

Admittedly, few women characters in the novel are very pleasant, with the exceptions of Miss Maudie Atkinson, the Finches' neighbor, and Calpurnia. Through the first-person female voice, Southern women are ridiculed as gossips, provincials, weaklings, extremists, even racists—calling to mind the criticism of Southern manners in the fiction of Flannery O'Connor. Of Scout's superficial Aunt Alexandra, Lee writes: ". . . Aunt Alexandra was one of the last of her kind: she has river-boat, boarding-school manners; let any moral come along and she would uphold it; she was born in the objective case; she was an incurable gossip." Scout's feelings for Alexandra, who is concerned with family heritage, position, and conformity to traditional gender roles, do alter somewhat as she begins to see Alexandra as a woman who means well and loves her and her father, and as she begins to accept certain aspects of being a Southern female. As Jem and Dill exclude her from their games, Scout gradually learns more about the alien world of being a female through sitting on

the porch with Miss Maudie and observing Calpurnia work in the kitchen, which makes her begin “to think there was more skill involved in being a girl” than she has previously thought. Nevertheless, the book makes it clear that the adult Scout, who narrates the novel and who has presumably now assumed the feminine name Jean Louise for good, is still ambivalent at best concerning the traditional Southern lady.

Of special importance with regard to Scout’s growing perceptions of herself as a female is the meeting of the missionary society women, a scene which, like Aunt Alexandra’s character, is completely omitted from the film. Alexandra sees herself as a grand host. Through observing the missionary women, Scout, in Austenian fashion, is able to satirize the superficialities and prejudices of Southern women with whom she is unwilling to identify in order to become that alien being called woman. Dressed in “my pink Sunday dress, shoes, and a petticoat,” Scout attends a meeting shortly after Tom Robinson’s death, knowing that her aunt makes her participate as “part of . . . her campaign to teach me to be a lady.” Commenting on the women, Scout says, “Rather nervous, I took a seat beside Miss Maudie and wondered why ladies put on their hats to go across the street. Ladies in bunches always filled me with vague apprehension and a firm desire to be elsewhere . . .”

As the meeting begins, the ladies ridicule Scout for frequently wearing pants and inform her that she cannot become a member of the elite, genteel group of Southern ladyhood unless she mends her ways. Miss Stephanie Crawford, the town gossip, mocks Scout by asking her if she wants to grow up to be a lawyer, a comment to which Scout, coached by Aunt Alexandra, says, “None, just a lady”—with the obvious social satire evident. Scout clearly does not want to become a lady. Suspicious, Miss Stephanie replies, “Well, you won’t get very far until you start wearing dresses more often.” Immediately thereafter, Lee exposes even further the provincialism and superficiality of the group’s appearance of gentility, piety, and morality. Mrs. Grace Meriwether’s comments on “those poor Mruna” who live “in that jungle” and need Christian salvation reflect a smug, colonialist attitude toward other races. When the women begin conversing about blacks in America, their bigotry—and Scout’s disgust with it—becomes obvious.

Rather than the community of gentility and racism represented in the women of Maycomb, Scout clearly prefers the world of her father, as this passage reveals: “. . . I wondered at the world of women . . . There was no doubt about it, I must soon enter this world, where on its surface fragrant ladies rocked slowly, fanned gently, and drank cool water.” The female role is far too frivolous and unimportant for Scout to identify with. Furthermore, she says, “But I was more at home in my father’s world. People like Mr. Heck Tate did not trap you with innocent questions to make fun of you . . . Ladies seemed to live in faint horror of men, seemed unwilling to approve wholeheartedly of them. But I liked them . . . [N]o matter how undetectable they were, . . . they weren’t ‘hypocrites.’” This obviously idealized and childlike portrayal of men nevertheless gets at the core of Scout’s conflict. In a world in which men seem to have the advantages and seem to be more fair-minded and less intolerant than women with their petty concerns and superficial dress codes, why should she conform to the notion of Southern ladyhood? Ironically, Scout, unlike the reader, is unable to recognize the effects of female powerlessness which may be largely responsible for the attitudes of Southern ladies. If they cannot control the everyday business and legal affairs of their society, they can at least impose their code of manners and morality.

To Scout, Atticus and his world represent freedom and power. Atticus is the key representative of the male power which Scout wishes to obtain even though she is growing up as a Southern female. More important, Lee demonstrates that Scout is gradually becoming a feminist in the South, for, with the use of first-person narration, she indicates that Scout/Jean Louise still maintains the ambivalence about being a Southern lady she possessed as a child. She seeks to become empowered with the freedoms the men in her society seem to possess without question and without resorting to trivial and superficial concerns such as wearing a dress and appearing genteel.

Harper Lee’s fundamental criticism of gender roles for women (and to a lesser extent for men) may be evident especially in her novel’s identification with outsider figures such as Tom Robinson, Mayella Ewell, and Boo Radley. Curiously enough, the outsider figures with whom the novelist identifies most are also males. Tom Robinson, the male African American who has been

disempowered and annihilated by a fundamentally racist, white male society, and Boo Radley, the reclusive and eccentric neighbor about whom legends of his danger to the fragile Southern society circulate regularly, are the two “mockingbirds” of the title. Ironically, they are unable to mock society’s roles for them and as a result take the consequences of living on the margins—Tom, through his death; Boo, through his return to the protection of a desolate isolated existence.

Throughout the novel, however, the female voice has emphasized Scout’s growing distance from her provincial Southern society and her identification with her father, a symbol of the empowered. Like her father, Atticus, Scout, too, is unable to be a “mockingbird” of society and as a result, in coming to know Boo Radley as a real human being at novel’s end, she recognizes the empowerment of being the other as she consents to remain an outsider unable to accept society’s unwillingness to seek and know before it judges. And it is perhaps this element of the female voice in Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird* which most makes Horton Foote’s screen adaptation largely a compromise of the novel’s full power.

Source: Dean Shackelford, “The Female Voice in *To Kill a Mockingbird*: Narrative Strategies in Film and Novel,” in *Mississippi Quarterly*, Vol. 50, No. 1, Winter 1996, pp. 101–14.

SOURCES

Berardinelli, James, Review of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, in *ReelViews*, http://www.reelviews.net/php_review_template.php?identifier=864 (accessed May 27, 2009).

Corrigan, Timothy, *A Short Guide to Writing about Film*, 7th ed., Longman, 2009.

Crowther, Bosley, “‘To Kill a Mockingbird’: One Adult Omission in a Fine Film, Two Superb Discoveries Add to Delight,” in *New York Times*, February 15, 1963.

“The Great Depression, the New Deal, and Alabama’s Political Leadership,” Alabama Department of Archives and History, in *Alabama Moments in American History*, <http://www.alabamamoments.state.al.us/sec48det.html> (accessed May 29, 2009).

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

Mulligan, Robert, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, DVD, Collector’s Edition, Universal Studios, 1998.

Nelmes, Jill, *An Introduction to Film Studies*, Routledge, 1999.

Palmer, R. Barton, *Harper Lee’s “To Kill a Mockingbird”: The Relationship between Text and Film*, Methuen, 2008, pp. 96, 134, 222, 243–44.

Pramaggiore, Maria T., *Film: A Critical Introduction*, 2nd ed., Allyn & Bacon, 2007.

Till-Mobley, Mamie, and Christopher Benson, *Death of Innocence; The Story of the Hate Crime That Changed America*, One World/Ballantine, 2004.