MOCKINGBIRD SONGS: A MUSICAL JOURNEY THROUGH HARPER LEE'S *TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD*

By

Donna Y. Smith

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Thesis Director

Second Reader

Director of Graduate Studies

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Introduction

To Kill a Mockingbird (often referred to in this text as *TKAM*), written by Harper Lee and published in 1960, has proven to be a very influential piece of literature whose reach extends beyond the borders of the United States, where it was published. Its importance is summed up in an article written by author and historian Wayne Flynt, found on the online resource Encyclopedia of Alabama (encyclopediaofalabama.org):

> By almost any measurement, *To Kill A Mockingbird* is the most important novel ever authored by a native Alabamian. The Pulitzer Prize-winning novel spent 88 weeks on bestseller lists, and by the 35th anniversary of its publication in 1995 had sold 30 million copies. It continues to sell almost a million copies a year and is often ranked among the top 40 best-sellers listed in the newspaper *USA Today*. The themes and issues raised in the novel remain relevant, and thus *To Kill A Mockingbird* will likely hold its place in public discourse on tolerance, justice, and humanity.

The list of accolades for *TKAM* and Harper Lee is extensive; in 1961 the book received the Pulitzer Prize, and Lee has been honored often since the book's publication. In 2007, for example, Lee was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President George W. Bush. This novel has received worldwide critical acclaim since its publication, and the impact on its diverse, ever-expanding assortment of loyal fans is widespread. Certain characters, in particular Atticus Finch, are iconic in stature. Atticus, for example, is the "everyman," standing up to fight injustice against a wall of resistance. The novel is a mainstay on school reading lists and is consistently rated among the favorites of students

and adults who have read it and appreciated its treatment of themes such as growing up, small town life, and social inequality.

The well-rounded, fully developed characters of *TKAM* enhance this novel's appeal. One of Lee's skills is in bringing the characters in Maycomb to life in an authentic way. They have opinions and feelings, loyalty to their families and friends, wants and desires. These are the sentiments that draw readers of the novel in again and again. With these ideas in mind, I began to develop the focus for this project. The initial inspiration, however, was a class on *TKAM* I took as part of my MLA program.

In the spring of 2010 I took a class on *To Kill a Mockingbird* taught by Professor Nancy Anderson. As a final project, I recorded a compact disc of original songs inspired by and sung from the points of view of several characters from the novel. Also included were brief character sketches. The success of this creative endeavor gave me the opportunity to participate in the 50th anniversary celebration of the publication of *TKAM* in Monroeville, Alabama, along with Prof. Anderson; the audience was enthusiastic and supportive, and some people, including Prof. Anderson, suggested that I could somehow expand the project into a thesis. It was exciting to know that my thesis could have a creative aspect to it, and the seed was sown.

At first I struggled with how to focus my thesis. Should I include historical analysis, compare Lee's childhood experiences with Scout's, or examine the artistic impact the novel has had on other artists? All are valid areas of interest, but the genius of *TKAM* is its ability to tell a good story while keeping things simple. On the surface, Lee's coming-of-age tale seems to be the story of plain folk living in ordinary times and dealing with extraordinary circumstances. A closer look, however, reveals that the

people of Maycomb are far from simple, the times they live in are full of complicated issues, and the circumstances they find themselves in are unfortunately and relentlessly common. Racism and prejudice in varying degrees run deep in the south, and Maycomb is no exception. Bad things can happen to anyone regardless of age or gender. People are not always nice. Scout's world is accessible because it is so similar to real life; regardless of time and place, readers can identify with various aspects of her environment.

However, this fictional world does pose a dilemma regarding the limitations of its point of view. The vision of *TKAM* is solely that of Scout or the older Jean Louise. Maycomb is seen through her eyes and experience alone. While Scout's perspective is a compelling and engrossing view of 1930's Maycomb that does not in any way diminish the dynamic depictions of the other characters, the depictions are nonetheless skewed by Scout's limited understanding of these people. Scout paints a wonderfully complex picture of the people in her life; I wondered, though, how the other characters would tell their stories themselves. The songs are my attempt at channeling these characters, expressing through music their thoughts and feelings about the world and circumstances they live in.

In accompaniment to the music, I include written chapters that provide analysis of the song lyrics and the characters to whom they refer with the goal of clarifying and supporting my portraits of these characters through song.

The first song, "Summer," is inspired by the children. *To Kill a Mockingbird* is told from the point of view of Scout in particular; she experiences the events with Jem and Dill as fellow adventurers in some instances, co-conspirators in others. Summer is a

carefree time for Scout and Jem, filled with games, adventures, and fun. Dill comes each summer as well, and so his imminent arrival is as anticipated as freedom from the constraints of school. The only evil the children know is whatever perceived evil lives in the Radley house a few doors down. Their world is small, contained within the neighborhood and town they live in.

The song emphasizes the innocent vision of the world held by the children as the book begins. Though Scout and Jem are no strangers to pain and disappointment, having lost their mother when they were both very young, they have a loving father in Atticus and a maternal figure in their housekeeper, Calpurnia. They are nurtured, encouraged, supported, and free to be children in their sheltered existence. In educating his children, Atticus leads by example, reading constantly and encouraging the children to do the same. Both Scout and Jem are enthusiastic readers, sharing their father's love of the written word.

The second song, "Day by Day," is inspired by Calpurnia, the black woman employed by Atticus to cook and help take care of the children and the house. After Atticus's wife dies, Calpurnia becomes a mother figure for the children, cooking for them, cleaning and mending their clothes, and scolding them when necessary, all while providing the maternal love and support they lost when their mother died. She is an integral part of Finch family life, and the family depends on her presence in their household and their lives. Calpurnia, meanwhile, continues to live between the two worlds – that of the Finch family and that of her own family and community, which seems separate, foreign, and exotic to Scout.

Cal is a background character in the book, but her influence in the children's lives is far from minimal. She is taken at face value, with little thought given to her feelings about her experience. The song "Day by Day" gives Cal a voice, an opportunity to answer the questions only asked by a few. Through the lyrics she finally gets to have her say.

Next is the song "Boo," and in this song Arthur "Boo" Radley gets the same opportunity. Boo is the ultimate example of a tortured, misunderstood misfit. He epitomizes "otherness" in a time and place when conformity is desired. No one truly knows Boo or, it seems, cares to other than the children. The general consensus among the citizens of Maycomb is to keep distant from him; as a result, Boo is surrounded by rumor and innuendo. He is a shadowy figure, a ghost, believed to come out only at night, seeking shelter in the cover of darkness and solitude.

"Broken" gives Mayella Ewell a voice beyond the one heard in the novel. Though it is initially easy to dismiss Mayella and her actions as vicious and cruel, it is important to note the reality in which she lives. Mayella is formed by her environment, one of stifling poverty and the implied but not directly stated abuse she suffers at the hands of her father, Bob Ewell. Is she truly evil, or is she simply misunderstood, misled, and maligned?

"The Verdict" depicts the time between the closing arguments and the rendering of a verdict by the jury. Scout, Jem and Dill are convinced that Atticus has proven Tom's innocence and that the jury will do the right thing and set Tom free. In their eyes right is right and fair is fair – how could the jury choose otherwise? The adults, though,

understand that sometimes life is not fair, and they know that the probability of Tom's release and exoneration is slim.

"Brighter Day" is an anthem meant to laud how much progress has been made in our society since segregation, Jim Crow, and racial injustice were the norms, as depicted in the novel. Tom Robinson is sacrificed for the sake of upholding a racist status quo in Maycomb, Alabama; in reality, countless men and boys just like Tom suffered the same fates, whether by gun, by noose, or by bare fists. Tom is figuratively lynched the moment Mayella accuses him of rape. Tom is never revealed to be the monster Mayella makes him out to be, however. He is thoughtful and sympathetic towards her in spite of her accusations. He only seeks fairness and justice, but in 1930's Maycomb he will not receive either right.

This song celebrates how far we've come, although it also acknowledges how much further we have to go. Now is not the time for complacency. We cannot take for granted that, if need be, someone will fight for us. We have to stand on our own, honor the past, and continue to strive for liberty and justice for all.

TKAM stands as a great work of art on its own, but it is also a guide to how we should think about and treat others. The characters and events depicted in this novel are realistic and honest portrayals, and they force us as readers to think more deeply about what we believe. As the well-rounded characters that they are, the Finches, Tom Robinson, Boo Radley, the Ewells, and Dill all have qualities with which readers can identify or, at the very least, recognize as traits, good and bad, in people they know. In composing the songs, I am attempting a deeper understanding of these characters and their feelings, an additional vehicle through which they can express themselves. My

objective in *Mockingbird Songs* is to illustrate how art begets art, and how a great work of literature like *To Kill a Mockingbird* never ceases to be relevant, no matter the time or place in which it is read.

Chapter II

"Summer"

[Chorus]

Come summer and we will be together.

We'll laugh and play and chase our cares away.

[Stanza 1]

1-2-3-4, ready or not, here we go.

Close your eyes, do not peek, time to play hide and seek.

Tom Swift, Rover Boys, Tarzan, Gray Ghost,

We can stay, play all day – summer will last always.

[Chorus]

Come summer and we will be together.

We'll laugh and play and chase our cares away.

[Stanza 2]

How come? Oh no! Did not! Told you so!

Do what I tell you to…don't look now – there's Boo!

It's a great big world, don't be such a girl!

Good can't always win. Right is right in the end.

[Chorus]

Come summer and we will be together.

We'll laugh and play and chase our cares away.

Come summer and we will be together.

We'll laugh and play and chase our cares away.

It is fitting that "Summer" was the first song to be written and recorded for this *TKAM* project. It is inspired by the children, Scout in particular, and they are the characters whose innocence permeates the story. The lively and upbeat music mirrors the fun-filled, easy-going existence Scout, Jem, and Dill experience during their long, hot summers together.

Scout, Jem and Dill do not lead lives devoid of any problems but, unlike some of the poorer children in Maycomb, they do not have to worry about having a roof over their heads or whether or not they will eat on any given day. When school is out, they are free to roam their neighborhood, spending time reading books and carrying out grand adventures. In the essay "'Were You Ever a Turtle?': *To Kill a Mockingbird* – Casting the Self as Other," author Neil Heims points to this idyllic existence as the inspiration for not only the plot but also the structure of the novel itself.

> The first eight chapters of *To Kill a Mockingbird* are not only *modeled* on a boys' adventure mystery, they construct a narrative concerned with children's adventures and a childish mystery. "When I was almost six and Jem was nearly ten," she begins, "our summertime boundaries … were Mrs. Henry Lafayette Dubose's house two doors north of us, and the Radley Place three doors to the south." These boundaries were self-imposed and touched the edge of childish terror. (Heims 54)

The children live a happy existence within the confines of their neighborhood. Notably, the edges of this safe zone are bordered on one end by Mrs. Dubose, a foul-mouthed,

bad-tempered old woman, and on the other by the Radley house, which is home to Arthur "Boo" Radley, one of the town's most notorious misfits. Each of the children has learned early that life is not always easy. Scout and Jem have lost their mother, and Dill is systematically abandoned by his mother. Yet, with the adaptability that some people, especially the young, master proficiently, the children enjoy the time they spend with each other, even going so far as to confront their "monsters," directly in the case of Mrs. Dubose and indirectly in the case of Boo.

There are no real surprises in the Finch children's lives as the novel begins. Everything is as it has always been. Their father is a respected lawyer and citizen of Maycomb. Calpurnia cares for them as if they were her own children. The days of summer stretch endlessly forward into a vast collection of tomorrows. Scout and Jem are enjoying summer break. They are free to roam about, filling their time with whatever entertainment they can muster. But the Finches are about to experience the first of several changes that they will experience throughout the course of the novel. Scout, 5, and Jem, 9, are out in the yard one day when they discover Dill, 6, sitting in their neighbor's collard green patch. Scout notes:

> Sitting down, he wasn't much higher than the collards. We stared at him until he spoke.
>
> "Hey."
>
> "Hey yourself," said Jem pleasantly.
>
> "I'm Charles Baker Harris," he said. "I can read." (Lee 7)

So begins the children's friendship, which carries them throughout the three years featured in *TKAM.* Dill's arrival becomes the sign for Scout that summer has actually

arrived and that there is all the time in the world for stories to be told, written, and acted out, for reading as many books as possible, and for discussing and exploring the mysteries of the Radley house down the street. It is a magical time, when they are free to be children, with no fear, regrets, or responsibilities. All is generally right with the world, and it feels as if summer will last forever.

1-2-3-4, ready or not, here we go.

Close your eyes, do not peek, time to play hide and seek.

Tom Swift, Rover Boys, Tarzan, Gray Ghost,

We can stay, play all day – summer will last always.

The children are experiencing that golden time in childhood when it seems that the days are longer, the air is sweeter, and the possibility of fun is everlasting. When Scout, Jem, and Dill are not acting out plays they have written or playing make-believe, they read. In this activity their bond is solidified. For these children, being able to read is a badge of honor, something to brag about. It is the first thing Dill reveals about himself after his name, and he is proud of the fact that he can do what some other children his age cannot. He identifies himself as a reader because typically it makes him stand out. But Jem and Scout are not impressed; they, too, are good readers, reading being a part of their everyday lives and a way for them to bond with Atticus, their father. Scout contemplates, remembering being read to by Atticus:

> Now that I was compelled to think about it, reading was something that just came to me, as learning to fasten the seat of my union suit without looking around, or achieving two bows from a snarl of shoelaces. I could not remember when the

lines above Atticus' moving finger separated into words, but I had stared at them all the evenings in my memory, listening to the news of the day.... (Lee 20)

The emphasis on reading for all three of the children coupled with the limited access to entertainment in town resulted in books becoming a prized commodity amongst the children and their friends. Books were material to be mined for games; for instance, the children used stories out of the books to act out scenes. Books were prizes won when dares were completed – "I'll swap you *The Gray Ghost* if you just up and touch the house" (Lee 15). Books allowed the children to broaden their knowledge beyond the borders of Maycomb and imagine places different from what they knew. It nurtured their creativity and fueled their imaginations.

How come? Oh no! Did not! Told you so!

Do what I tell you to...don't look now – There's Boo!

It's a great big world, don't be such a girl!

In the three years during which the novel takes place, Scout and Jem are maturing not only in years but also in their relationship with one another. Scout is beginning to challenge all authority – Jem, her teacher Miss Caroline, Calpurnia. Scout and Jem, along with Dill when he is in town, constantly challenge each other and sometimes get on each other's nerves as siblings are wont to do. Scout describes the first day of school:

> Jem was careful to explain that during school hours I was not to bother him, I was not to approach him with requests to enact a chapter of *Tarzan and the Ant Men*, to embarrass him with references to his private life, or tag along behind him at recess and noon. (Lee 17-18)

Jem, four years older than Scout, is growing closer and closer to being a young man. He still plays with Scout at home, but out in public she is his little sister only, not a playmate. Viewing her in this light, as a little kid, causes him to take a more authoritative tone with her, even when they are just playing. He knows Scout will eventually do whatever he says, and he knows which buttons to push to get her to do what he wants. For example, when a tire the children are playing with rolls into the Radleys' yard, Jem tells Scout to get it, but she is afraid. Jem gets the tire himself, responding in an aggravated tone. "'See there?' Jem was scowling triumphantly. 'Nothin' to it. I swear, Scout, sometimes you act so much like a girl it's mortifyin'" (Lee 42).

Jem's comment obviously affects Scout, as seen later when she avoids certain activities the boys are involved in "on pain of being called a g-irl" (Lee 46). Girls, in Scout's young mind, do not represent anything to aspire to yet. Even though she is a girl, Scout will go down fighting before she lets anyone call her one. It is also the one thing that truly separates her from Jem and Dill, and she's not ready for that separation, not just yet.

A large portion of the children's time in the summer is spent thinking about the mysterious neighbor, Arthur "Boo" Radley. What is he really like, and what's lurking behind the curtains of the house that the children are afraid to walk by? Boo fills their imagination. The children have nothing concrete to compare their perceived notions of him to, and this not knowing only heightens his mystique and the innate fear they have of him. Any mention of Boo simultaneously excites, terrifies, and intrigues them, and they constantly look for ways to try and learn more about him. He is a "malevolent phantom" (Lee 9) who haunts their daylight games and purportedly roams the streets at night.

Though the children fear him at the start of the novel, they will learn who Boo really is by the end of their story.

Good can't always win. Right is right in the end.

This sentiment foreshadows the knowledge that the children will eventually gain. At the start, they believe what many children do, which is that what's fair is fair, the good guy is perfectly good and always wins, and the bad guy is pure evil and always loses. One of the reasons this novel resonates so profoundly is that watching the children go through the transition from the blissful ignorance of youth to the knowledge that life is not always fair is an experience that most people can identify with. The children evoke in readers a protective instinct and a desire to shield them from any pain and fear.

The bucolic simplicity of the children's world at the start of that first summer contrasts sharply with the corrupt social truth of life in Maycomb; Lee reveals it slowly, a highly effective technique in that it reveals these truths gradually, each time with more nastiness and hatefulness exposed. From the verbal abuse of Mrs. Dubose to the physical threat of violence at the Radleys' house the night Jem lost his pants to the mortal threat posed by Bob Ewell, Scout and Jem move further away from blissful childhood ignorance and closer to the harsh reality of grown-up knowledge. The readers are there as the children become more aware, rooting for them as they struggle through the challenges they face and weeping for them when they are hurt and afraid.

To Kill a Mockingbird begins and ends with Scout. She is the voice of the narrative, the moral compass by which everything is measured and spaced. The point of view is Scout's; all is seen through her eyes, and peripherally through the eyes of her brother Jem, and their friend Dill. The purity of the children set against the impurity of

the adult world around them provides the underlying tension throughout *TKAM*. By the end all three children, and perhaps the readers who follow them, will be changed by the events they witness in the book.

Chapter III

"Day by Day"

[Stanza 1]

This is my life – tirelessly caring for others,

Spending my time away from my own.

I live in two worlds, pulled in two different directions.

I pray for peace, I'm waiting for peace.

[Chorus]

I live day by day, there's no other way.

What more can I say? Just live day by day.

[Stanza 2]

Hoping and praying that one day my children will see me

For the woman that I am.

I'm more than food that I make, the clothes that I iron and wash.

I am a woman – this woman is me.

[Chorus]

Calpurnia can be described as a minor character in *TKAM*, but though her presence is minimal and her words few, her impact on the Finch family is anything but superfluous. She is the mother figure in the household, taking care of the children, cooking meals, and keeping the house neat and clean. Calpurnia is more than a cook, though; she disciplines the children, and she teaches them valuable skills and lessons, such as reading and writing; she does the same for her own children as well. At the start of the novel, Scout sees Calpurnia and the authority she holds as a barrier, something to endure and eventually overcome. For Scout, she is a dictatorial entity rather than a flesh and blood person with a life of her own.

> Calpurnia was something else again. She was all angles and bones; she was nearsighted; she squinted; her hand was wide as a bed slat and twice as hard. She was always ordering me out of the kitchen, asking me why I couldn't behave as well as Jem when she knew he was older, and calling me home when I wasn't ready to come. Our battles were epic and one-sided. Calpurnia always won....(Lee 6)

Scout resents Calpurnia's control and having to deal with her "tyrannical presence" (Lee 6) all the time. Scout tolerates Calpurnia because deep down she knows that Calpurnia is filling a need that her own mother left when she died.

Scout and Jem are children, and like many children, they do not see their elders as people. They only think about the adults in their lives in relation to the roles they fill. Atticus is father; Miss Maudie is neighbor; Calpurnia is cook. Calpurnia in particular is a part of the Finch family, but the children do not consider that she has her own family, her own children to take care of, and her own life.

This is my life – tirelessly caring for others.

Spending my time away from my own.

It does not occur to the children to think of Calpurnia's family because she is such an integral part of their, Scout's and Jem's, lives. She is always there for them, going home at night when it is time for them to go to bed, coming back in the morning before they wake. Calpurnia's duties as the cook/housekeeper for the Finch family are the same duties she would fill as the matriarch of her own family.

It is quite possible that Calpurnia's own children were not very different from Scout and Jem in their assessment of Calpurnia as an individual. We do not know because Scout does not know, and this is a story from her perspective. But it is feasible to say, then, that Calpurnia is living the same existence as many women do and have since the beginning of time – that of hardworking mother and nurturer for her children and mainstay of her extended family and community at large.

I live in two worlds, pulled in two different directions.

I pray for peace, I'm waiting for peace.

Only when Scout and Jem go to church with Calpurnia do they get a glimpse of the double life she has been, and is, leading. Atticus is out of town for two weeks, and Calpurnia does not want to send the children to their church alone, so she takes them to her church, the First Purchase African M.E. Church.

The tug of war between Calpurnia's two worlds occurs when she and the children first walk up to the church. One of the members, Lula, confronts Calpurnia saying, "I wants to know why you bringin' white chillun to nigger church" (Lee 135). Calpurnia defends the children like a mother tigress, though she does not personally feel threatened. When Scout looks up at her, there is "amusement in her eyes" (Lee 136). Calpurnia

straddles two existences, and at the church these worlds collide, but she knows that her feet are firmly planted in both places and that in her own community she has nothing to fear.

The outside world, however, that of the white citizens of Maycomb, is not so hospitable. There she knows her place and just how much, or more accurately how little, she is valued there by some of the community outside the Finch home. While there may come a time when she will be seen as an equal, an upstanding citizen of Maycomb, it may never occur in her lifetime, but there is always hope. Meanwhile, Calpurnia works in the Finch home and dutifully completes her daily duties, shouldering the sometimes insensitive attitudes of others.

> "Put my bag in the front bedroom, Calpurnia," was the first thing Aunt Alexandra said. "Jean Louise, stop scratching your head," was the second thing she said.
>
> Calpurnia picked up Aunty's heavy suitcase and opened the door. "I'll take it," Jem said, and took it. (Lee 144)

Calpurnia has been working in the Finch family home since Jem's birth, so she is not a stranger to Aunt Alexandra. Yet, there are no pleasantries exchanged. Aunt Alexandra knows her station, and Calpurnia knows her place. There are no warm greetings, no inquiries into how the family is doing, just orders given and orders taken. It should be noted that Aunt Alexandra feels the compulsion to order everyone around, not just Calpurnia. The second sentence out of her mouth is a direct order to Scout rather than a hug for her young niece whom she has not seen in a while. Still, it would never occur to Aunt Alexandra to befriend Calpurnia or even stoop to carry her own bags when

Calpurnia is around. Jem, however, steps in as the young gentleman he has become and offers to help Calpurnia, not waiting for an answer but taking immediate action and carrying the heavy bag instead.

I live day by day, there's no other way.

What more can I say? Just live day by day.

Calpurnia does not complain or whine about the time she must spend away from her own family in order to support them. Scout does not even consider this reality for Calpurnia until the church visit helps her to see Calpurnia in a new light. Scout realizes that not only are there things about Calpurnia that she does not know, but she is really interested in learning more about Calpurnia as a person. Scout realizes:

> That Calpurnia led a modest double life never dawned on me. The idea that she had a separate existence outside our household was a novel one, to say nothing of her having command of two languages. (Lee 142-43)

Not only has Calpurnia mastered living in two vastly different worlds within the Maycomb community, but she has mastered the different ways of communicating in them both. Each community, the white community and the black community, has its own way of talking, expressing itself within its confines. The children are familiar with the way Calpurnia speaks at their house, and they know the difference between that style of speech and the way other blacks in town talk. It has never occurred to them before the church visit that Calpurnia speaks any way other than the way with which they are familiar. It confuses both Scout and Jem because they have been taught the way the black folks speak is not correct, not proper, just plain wrong. Scout asks, "'Cal...why do you talk nigger-talk to the – to your folks when you know it's not right?'" (Lee 143).

Calpurnia does not get upset when the children question her and takes the opportunity to try and give them a clearer picture of her choices. She responds:

> "It's right hard to say.... Suppose you and Scout talked colored-folks' talk at home – it'd be out of place, wouldn't it? Now what if I talked white-folks' talk at church, and with my neighbors? They'd think I was puttin' on airs to beat Moses." (Lee 143)

Calpurnia is constantly adjusting herself to fit her surroundings, even at home with her own folks. In each place she is still aware that the other exists, and as such she is never fully in one place at all.

Hoping and praying that one day my children will see me

for the woman that I am.

I'm more than food that I make, the clothes that I iron and wash.

I am a woman – this woman is me.

The only time in *TKAM* that Calpurnia's family is present is at church. In the first encounter with Zeebo, Calpurnia's son, Scout does not mention this relationship, only that he is "the garbage collector" (Lee 136). Throughout the entire church ceremony Zeebo is mentioned as he leads the singing and at the church door when Scout observes Calpurnia talking with "Zeebo and his family" (Lee 140). Scout does not mention that Zeebo's family is Calpurnia's family until two pages later when she reveals that Zeebo is Calpurnia's eldest son. It is almost as if Scout is temporarily blind to this relationship, focusing instead on how Calpurnia belongs to her, forgetting that there are others that Calpurnia belongs to as well. Scout has never had to share much space and time with Calpurnia's family, so perhaps she has to get her bearings first about things in

Calpurnia's world. Scout's picture of Calpurnia and her place in this world is different from the insulated image she sees in her mind's eye regarding the Finch household. Scout is coming to understand through Calpurnia that there is so much more to people than what she thinks she knows.

I wanted Calpurnia to have a song in particular because she does not speak much in *TKAM*, though what she does say reveals a lot about the type of woman that she is and the influence she has on Scout and Jem. In *TKAM*, Calpurnia is seen as Scout sees her. Scout's character is remarkable in that at so young an age she can thoughtfully consider her own judgment in regard to other people, in particular those in her inner circle whom it is easy to take for granted. On the other hand, Scout is a product of Atticus and Calpurnia, and as such she is not a typical little girl. Calpurnia and Atticus have raised her right.

Chapter IV

"Boo"

[Stanza 1]

This is a lonely world, lonely and cold.

I walk through the darkness to soothe my soul.

I see what no one sees, hear the unheard.

Wait for the moment to hear a kind word.

[Chorus]

Watching and waiting, I'll be watching for you.

Watching and waiting, I'll be watching for you.

[Stanza 2]

Don't be afraid anymore, I'm always here,

There is no reason, reason to fear.

[Chorus]

Watching and waiting, I'll be watching for you.

Watching and waiting, I'll be watching for you.

[Bridge]

Keep the world, keep the fear.

Don't mind me – I'll just watch from here.

[Chorus]

Arthur "Boo" Radley appears briefly in the novel, but he is a constant presence for the other characters. He haunts the novel with his absence; he is rarely seen but always felt, sensed. Scout, Jem, and Dill know of Boo from the things the adults say about him, but they have never seen him for themselves. Boo has a mysterious quality that the children cannot resist, and they spend much of their time wondering what he is like, what goes on behind the closed doors and green-shuttered windows of the Radley house, and what things he could do if given the chance. Scout says, "Inside the house lived a malevolent phantom. People said he existed, but Jem and I had never seen him" (Lee 9). The townsfolk are simultaneously fascinated with and repulsed by the thought of Boo Radley; either he or his family responds to the unwanted attention and rampant rumors by placing him in exile, relegated to the Radley house. Yet, even out of the community's sight he is never out of mind. In truth, Boo never really had a chance. His notoriety did not even start with him; it began with his parents. Scout recounts:

> The misery of that house began many years before Jem and I were born. The Radleys, welcome anywhere in town, kept to themselves, a predilection unforgivable in Maycomb. They did not go to church, Maycomb's principal recreation, but worshiped at home; Mrs. Radley seldom if ever crossed the street for a mid-morning coffee break with her neighbors, and certainly never joined a missionary circle. (Lee 10)

Mr. Radley is not exactly the nicest man either, at least according to Calpurnia, who calls him "the meanest man ever God blew breath into" (Lee 13). This comment surprises the children "for Calpurnia rarely commented on the ways of white people" (Lee 13). The Radleys isolate themselves from their neighbors and the community of

Maycomb at large. Something, then, must be wrong with them – why else would they behave so contrarily? This sentiment permeates the attitudes of the townsfolk towards the Radleys, so it is only a matter of time before one of the Radley children does something to confirm the general opinion that the Radleys are just not altogether right.

The trouble stems from a youthful indiscretion that Boo participates in as a teenager with some boys from Old Sarum, events that result in Maycomb's beadle, Mr. Conner, being locked inside the courthouse outhouse. While the other boys involved are sent to industrial school, Boo is sent home and sequestered by his parents, a voluntary imprisonment he never escapes that turns him into Maycomb's own personal urban myth. He becomes the stuff of legend; tales are told of the strange things he has allegedly done, and no one bothers to try and get to know the truth at all.

This is a lonely world, lonely and cold.

I walk through the darkness to soothe my soul.

Boo does not have any friends. His shunning of the world, whether voluntary or involuntary, prevents anyone from getting close. But he does notice Scout, Jem, and Dill. Perhaps it is their proximity to his closed-in piece of the world – they are his neighbors. Perhaps it is because they spend so much time trying to see him, which he notices. Perhaps watching them at play makes him nostalgic for life before his banishment, the innocence of childhood. In either case, something about the children touches Boo, and his gaze is drawn to something other than what he sees within the four walls he is surrounded by on a daily basis.

Boo does not appear to have any nurturing relationships in his life. He is as misunderstood by his own family as he is by the community. All that is known of him are the rumors spread about him. Scout notes:

> People said he went out at night when the moon was down, and peeped in windows. When people's azaleas froze in a cold snap, it was because he had breathed on them. Any stealthy small crimes committed in Maycomb were his work. (Lee 9)

There was one thing the entire community, black and white, of Maycomb agreed upon and that was Boo Radley. "A Negro would not pass the Radley place at night, he would cut across to the sidewalk opposite and whistle as he walked" (Lee 9). Perhaps the whistling keeps his mind off of whatever horror he imagines is inside the Radley house.

There is much speculation as to why Boo only comes out at night. The truth, as far as Scout knows, is that no one knows for sure if he does come out; people only assume that he does. Those who say they have seen him are a bit suspect in their claims. Dill's cousin Miss Stephanie, for instance, is a bit of a gossip who likes exaggeration. This gossiping tendency rubs off on the kids, as seen when Jem notes to Dill:

> "He goes out, all right, when it's pitch dark. Miss Stephanie Crawford said she woke up in the middle of the night one time and saw him looking straight through the window at her...said his head was like a skull lookin' right at her. Ain't you ever waked up at night and heard him, Dill?" (Lee 13-14)

Boo becomes a scapegoat on whom the townsfolk can blame all their woes and misfortunes, point to when things do not go their way, and generally malign and ridicule. He has no one to vouch for him and no one to stand up for him; until the children come

along, there is no one for him to stand up for. The latter changes when Scout, Jem, and Dill come to Boo's attention; he becomes their unseen benefactor and champion.

I see what no one sees, hear the unheard.

Wait for the moment to hear a kind word.

As the novel progresses, it becomes apparent that Boo is watching over the children, looking out for them even though they are initially unaware. Three notable events illustrate Boo's protective nature in regard to the children. The first occurs after Scout, Jem, and Dill sneak over into the Radley yard one night trying to catch a glimpse of the elusive Boo. Though they try their best to stay quiet, a porch step squeaks as Jem steps on it, and Mr. Radley comes out with a shotgun. The children run, escaping under a wire fence, but Jem's pants legs get snagged, so he takes them off in order not to get caught. When he goes back later for the pants, Jem finds something unexpected, and he waits nearly a week before telling Scout what it was. Jem had left his pants tangled up in the fence in his haste to get away:

> "When I went back, they were folded across the fence...like they were expectin' me..."
>
> "And something else – " Jem's voice was flat. "Show you when we get home. They'd been sewed up. Not like a lady sewed 'em, like somethin' I'd try to do. All crooked." (Lee 66)

Right after Jem tells Scout this story, they find a gift from Boo in the tree. Again, like the pants, they do not know that Boo is the one doing these things, fixing Jem's pants and leaving gifts in the knothole of a neighborhood tree, but later it becomes clear that Boo is coming out of the house more than everyone speculates.

A second incident that illustrates Boo's protective nature occurs when Miss Maudie's house burns down one night. There's a huge commotion with the neighbors and firemen all attempting to put the fire and make sure it does not spread to neighboring houses. Atticus takes the children down by the Radley gate and instructs them to stay there. Later, when everything is under control and the family is back at home, Atticus notices a blanket around Scout's shoulders, and she cannot remember how it got there. Atticus realizes that Boo must be the mysterious benefactor. Atticus says, "Looks like all of Maycomb was out tonight, in one way or another" (Lee 81). Atticus' reaction is bemusement, but Scout's reaction is fear when she realizes Boo had been right behind her. Still, placing the blanket around Scout's shoulders is a nurturing gesture, something that does not fit the monstrous image the townsfolk, especially Scout, Jem, and Dill, have of Boo.

The most obvious account of Boo's protectiveness of Scout and Jem is seen when he saves them from the evil Bob Ewell. This event also ties into the next line of the song:

Watching and waiting, I'll be watching for you.

These words make up the chorus of the song and can be taken as words of comfort, but like Boo's intentions, their implication can be infused with more sinister undertones. Nobody really understands Boo; his reputation is already fraught with bad impressions and tales of notorious deeds. Even before the children learn the truth about Boo, they sense that he watches them. They do not understand his reasons, and so at first this situation seems a bit dangerous, a sense of pending violence from their monster lurking at every turn.

Yet as the novel progresses, it becomes increasingly clear that Boo's watchfulness over the children is not born of malicious intent but rather a desire to protect the children from whatever may be threatening, whether it is shielding Scout from the cold, or saving Scout and Jem from the vicious Bob Ewell.

Boo epitomizes "otherness" in a time and place when conformity is desired. No one truly knows Boo or, it seems, cares to. Everyone keeps distant from him, and his own family does not appear to be nurturing. He spends his time watching from inside his house as life goes on outside. He is a loner, friendless and secluded.

Perhaps because the children live nearby and he often sees them playing outside in the summer, Boo is drawn to Scout, Jem, and Dill. He is able to live freely through them. He watches over them, and he protects them in their most vulnerable hour. The song "Boo" gives Arthur a chance to express his desire to protect the children and make them feel safe. He wants them to know that he will always be there for them even if it means coming out into a world that scares him.

Often in southern gothic literature there is a character like Boo, someone who for some reason or another does not quite fit in, yet contributes to the character of a community while simultaneously repelling it. There are eccentric people like Boo in many real southern towns. There is the house that the neighborhood children are afraid to walk in front by, like the Radleys'. There is an old man who lives down the street who has supposedly buried bodies in the backyard. There is the old lady in the house on the corner who lives with numerous cats, who also will not give the ball back when it goes into her yard. There is the man who is always dancing up and down the street to the music he hears coming out of the passing cars. They, and others like them, are the myths

and legends that the history of small, southern towns is built upon. They give life to the town's story and make it colorful. They are on the fringe, and their neighbors give them a wide berth, content as long as the outsiders play the roles they are expected to play. How else will the "normal" people in the community be able to gauge their own existences without the "otherness" to compare it to?

Boo's existence and purpose in Maycomb is to be on exhibit even when he cannot be seen, and the invasiveness of this constant scrutiny drives him inward, physically and emotionally. The only thing that brings him out is the threat of danger to the children, and when he puts his mind to it, he overcomes his fear of "out there" and does what he must do to protect Scout and Jem.

Don't be afraid anymore - I'm always here.

There is no reason, reason to fear.

The children's relationship with Boo progresses slowly as they gradually come to the realization that (1) he truly exists and is not just a figment of Maycomb's collective imagination, and (2) he is reaching out to them as a friend, i.e. the gifts in the tree, the mended pants, and the blanket on the night of the fire. The first part of the above lyric can apply to this growing relationship on multiple levels. First, the children no longer have to fear Boo himself. They have, up to their initial contact with Boo, only known what the townsfolk said of Boo, which is that he is a mentally unstable individual who has to be locked away from normal folks who should avoid him at all costs. Boo shows Scout and Jem that there is more to him than the caricature that has been drawn of him. He is a real person, capable of feeling and caring for others.

Second, once Boo kills Bob Ewell, the children do not have to worry about the threat to their lives anymore. Bob Ewell is the real monster, living among the townsfolk and spewing his venom on all around him, including his own daughter Mayella. He comes after Jem and Scout with every intention to do them physical harm, even breaking Jem's arm while trying to stab Scout. Boo, the very picture of evil as far as the townsfolk are concerned, becomes the hero, but known only to a few, slaying the real monster of Maycomb and saving the children from harm.

Ironically, though this act could prove to illuminate the truth about Boo should the townsfolk find out about it, Boo's actions on the night of the attack are shielded from public knowledge to protect him from even more scrutiny; though the attention might be positive, it may still be too much for Boo to handle. Atticus and the sheriff decide that things should remain as they are, and no one but the family and Sheriff Tate knows the truth about what happened that night and Boo's role in it.

Boo is a permanent fixture in the community of Maycomb. He will not venture out any more than he has to, and once the threat of Bob Ewell is removed from the children's lives, he really has no reason to come back out. He will always be there for the children, but at a distance once again, protecting them from afar. The children, meanwhile, have the comfort of knowing that they have a guardian angel in Boo, and Scout in particular understands that he needs their protection as much as, or maybe even more than, they need his.

Keep the world, keep the fear.

Don't mind me – I'll just watch from here.

Boo comes out of the protective walls of his house to make contact with the children, and to defend them from danger. How often he comes out is speculation by the townsfolk, but no one really knows. What is known is that no matter what, he will always retreat back into the safety of his home. He has spent too much time out of the world to live fully in it. He is sheltered, innocent, unable or unwilling to try and rejoin the community that has shunned him. No one knows his true nature but the Finches and the sheriff anyway. As far as everyone else is concerned, Boo is still the ghost of Maycomb, and perhaps it is better that way because as long as people fear him, they will leave him alone. Boo is content to watch the world go by from the protective shield of his house, as a spectator of life rather than a player. As much as the people fear him, Boo most likely fears them more. They taunt him, ostracize him, and criticize him without ever seeing him. Until the children come along, no one tries to reach out to him. His forced isolation does not increase his desire to escape his imprisonment. It has the opposite effect, and Boo essentially becomes institutionalized, content to live apart from the community that will never know his true nature.

After Boo rescues the children and they are safe with Atticus, Scout escorts Boo home, slipping her hand into the crook of his arm and walking him to his front door where he enters and is never seen outside again. Even as a child, she understands that the world has no place for Boo, even the hero Boo. His place is home. She leads him as an adult leads a child, becoming the protector rather than the protected. The mystery of Boo is solved, and it is a comfort to know that he is always there, watching over her and looking out for any potential threat that may come her way. She sees him for who he really is.

Chapter V

"Mayella"

[Stanza 1]

So now you see me, so now you care.

Most other times it's like I'm not even here.

Alone and lonely, filled with despair,

No way out, no hope nowhere.

[Bridge]

My truth is uneasy, in darkness aware.

Don't judge me.

[Chorus]

I'm broken, broken.

[Stanza 2]

You don't see me. I'm invisible, expendable.

What difference can I make?

I got no fight left to fight.

There's no end in sight.

[Bridge]

My truth is uneasy, in darkness aware.

Don't judge me.

[Chorus]

I'm broken, broken.

Broken.

So now you see me, so now you care.

Most other times it's like I'm not even here.

Mayella Ewell's accusation of rape against Tom Robinson sets the wheels in motion that will ultimately lead to the deaths of two men, Tom Robinson and Bob Ewell. She will, with this accusation, tear apart a family and irrevocably wound a community of people she does not even know. Yet Mayella, of all the characters, has no voice of her own, or even the potential to develop one. Even Tom Robinson, through the guidance of his counsel, Atticus, has the opportunity to speak for himself, though circumstance diminishes his impact on those who will decide his fate. Mayella is a victim, not of rape as she alleges, but of the stifling, rigid clutches of poverty and the unrelenting tyranny of her father. There is nothing she can do to change her situation; she can only seek small pleasures to fill up her existence.

The Ewell family is known for living in squalid conditions behind the town garbage dump. Refuse and litter clutter the yard and make the cabin a local eyesore. There is a notable exception though.

> One corner of the yard, though, bewildered Maycomb. Against the fence, in a line, were six chipped-enamel slop jars holding brilliant red geraniums, cared for as tenderly as if they belonged to Miss Maudie Atkinson, had Miss Maudie deigned to permit a geranium on her premises. People said they were Mayella Ewell's. (Lee 194)

Though her surroundings are grim, Mayella stills seeks some aspect of beauty in her life. She does not totally give in to the hopelessness of her situation, and she makes a

statement with this small gesture of cultivating something of beauty and value in her gloomy existence.

Mayella's defiance in the courtroom in the face of Atticus' cross-examination hints at bitterness in her towards those who have ignored her to this point, in short, all of Maycomb. The Ewells are left to fend for themselves and generally are shunned by the community. Bob Ewell's nastiness aside, there are a large number of children in the household, and help for those less fortunate should be in abundance. However, this kindness does not extend often to the Ewells, perhaps because of the community's desire to avoid Bob Ewell. Mission groups like Aunt Alexandra's are blind to the poverty in their own community yet perfectly capable of seeing need in foreign countries. Families like the Ewells suffer in silence as a result.

Alone and lonely, filled with despair.

No way out, no hope, nowhere.

Mayella is the caregiver in her family to all of the Ewell children. There is a lot of responsibility on her shoulders and no one to appreciate her for all that she does for the family. She is nineteen, but at times she is like a little girl seeking companionship, approval, and love. Both Scout and Mayella are motherless daughters, but Scout has Atticus to nurture her and guide her down the right path. All Mayella has is herself.

She reaches out to Tom Robinson, but in doing so, she dooms him. Her only recourse is to try and save herself. There is nowhere else to go, especially if she admits the truth of what Atticus is implying – that she is the sexual aggressor, and that her father is the one who beat her.

My truth is uneasy, in darkness aware.

Don't judge me.

I'm broken, broken.

Mayella's performance on the witness stand is critical to Atticus' case even though he is certain of the improbability of Tom's being found innocent. At first she appears quite sympathetic, afraid of the situation, and not quite up to the task.

> A young girl walked to the witness stand. As she raised her hand and swore that the evidence she gave would be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth so help her God, she seemed somehow fragile-looking, but when she sat facing us in the witness chair she became what she was, a thick-bodied girl accustomed to strenuous labor. (Lee 203)

Mayella is a dangerous chameleon, able to appear guileless one moment and deceitfully cunning the next. She is cornered and threatened, and so she lashes out in order to escape. She is even suspicious of a common courtesy such as Atticus being polite to her in court. She says to the judge, "'Long's he keeps on callin' me ma'am and sayin' Miss Mayella. I don't hafta take his sass, I ain't called upon to take it'" (Lee 207). Mayella is not used to kindness and mistrusts it and anyone who tries to show her any semblance of it.

She is a product of her environment, one ruled by the iron fist of Bob Ewell. What more should be expected of her with a father like him and no other person, perhaps more caring and compassionate, to compare him to and emulate? There is no excuse for Mayella's behavior, but her isolation and the abuse perpetrated by her father may serve as an explanation.

You don't see me. I'm invisible, expendable.

What difference can I make?

I've got no fight left to fight.

There's no end in sight.

Mayella resists being judged, and she demands that the court give her justice, unwarranted as it is. The outcome is predictable not because of who Mayella is as an individual, as Mayella, but because of what she is – a white woman in 1930's Alabama. Like the real life Scottsboro cases of the 1930's in which several young black men were accused of the rapes of two white women and found guilty in spite of evidence to the contrary as well as the questionable morals of the women involved, truth is not the issue – upholding tradition is the goal. In Tom Robinson's trial tradition will always land on the side of the white woman against the black man. Many in the courtroom know this truth, as do Tom and Atticus. Their courage lies in their attempt to find justice in the face of such unwavering opposition. Mayella's actions are monstrous; however, she is a child of desperation, hate, and contempt. She is her father's daughter.

Chapter VI

"The Verdict"

[Stanza 1]

Walking in the light, sun is shining. Here is a new day. Trouble don't last always.

Hope and justice win, truth is revealed. "Hallelujah," we say. We will win the day.

[Bridge]

But do they see what I see? Oh, or are they blinded by bigotry?

How can wrong ever win? How can this happen? When will it end?

[Chorus]

I keep hoping and praying it will be all right, it will be all right.

Just keep hoping and praying it will be all right, it will be all right.

[Stanza 2]

Things have got to change. Who is to blame? Where do we go from here?

How do we conquer our fears? Maybe now's the time for us to shine,

open up our hearts, make a brand new start.

[Bridge]

But do they see what I see? Oh, or are they blinded by bigotry?

How can wrong ever win? How can this happen? When will it end?

[Chorus]

I keep hoping and praying it will be all right, it will be all right.

Just keep hoping and praying it will be all right, it will be all right.

Scout, Jem, and Dill, though young, already understand in their own ways that life is not always fair. Scout and Jem lost their mom at a young age. Dill is shuffled around among relatives while his parents live their lives without him. The children know disappointment, and they understand that generally somebody has to lose in order for someone else to win. However, like many other children, they are hopelessly optimistic and believe that in matters of justice truth always prevails. The trial of Tom Robinson, accused of the rape of Mayella Ewell, is the pivotal event in the novel that slowly begins to lift this optimistic veil of naïvete from the children's eyes.

Walking in the light, sun is shining. Here is a new day. Trouble don't last always.

The situation that Tom finds himself in after Mayella's explosive accusation is a bleak one. Trials for black men in the South, at least until the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s, are less about the defendants receiving a fair trial than they are about meting out swift justice, mob justice preferably. Tom nearly suffers such a fate when the mob from Old Sarum shows up at the courthouse jail one night to take matters in their own hands. Tom, though, has something other unfortunate defendants do not have: Atticus Finch as an attorney.

Tom is already more fortunate in this aspect because Atticus plans to try and win the case. Once Atticus accepts the job, he puts his whole being into defending Tom, despite the naysayers and negative attention paid to him and his family. Atticus knows from the start that his decision to defend Tom will not be a popular decision, but he is willing to step in to make sure Tom has the best chance at serious representation.

Meanwhile, the children are curious about the case: what is Tom accused of doing, and why does Atticus agree to take on the case? They find themselves defending

their father while questioning whether or not he made the right decision in taking the case. As the trial progresses, they come to see Atticus in a new light, not just as a father but as a smart, capable attorney who comes to life in the courtroom. As they watch Atticus defend Tom, the children are assured of Tom's innocence and certain that Atticus has won the case with his brilliant line of questioning. Once Atticus rests his defense, there is no doubt in their minds that Atticus, and as an extension they, will win.

Hope and justice win, truth is revealed. "Hallelujah," we say. We will win the day.

In the children's eyes, before the trial at least, Atticus is an old man, too old to play football or run with, content to come home from work and read his newspapers or books, not one to break out of his daily routine. The first hint that their perception is limited, to say the least, is when a rabid dog threatens the safety of the neighborhood. Atticus solves this problem to the amazement of the children, who have always thought that he really was not good at anything in particular, a sentiment Scout has just expressed to Miss Maudie. When Atticus takes the dog down with a single shot from Sheriff Tate's rifle, neither Scout nor Jem can believe it.

> Miss Maudie grinned wickedly. "Well now, Miss Jean Louise," she said, "still think your father can't do anything? Still ashamed of him?"
>
> "Nome," I said meekly. (Lee 111)

The children love and respect Atticus as their father, but for the first time they see him as more; this growing awareness of Atticus is heightened when they see him in action in the courtroom, and they fully believe that he can save Tom Robinson and win the case. They have faith in Atticus. Atticus to them is justice, and so their faith lies in the justice system that Atticus represents.

But do they see what I see? Oh, or are they blinded by bigotry?

How can wrong ever win? How could this happen? When will it end?

Though the children's optimism is high, the adults around them understand the truth about how the justice system works, especially in regard to a black man accused of raping a white woman. The trial is just a formality as far as most of those watching are concerned, including those on the jury. It is, in fact, not uncommon during the period in which this novel is set for some to take the law in their own hands, like the Old Sarum mob tries to do at the jail one night.

> The threat of Tom Robinson's being lynched occurs in the novel when, after he is transferred to the city jail, a crowd of townspeople visits Atticus at his house at night, and, later, when a mob from the community called Old Sarum drives into town to ask Atticus to move from in front of the jail (that he wisely decided to guard) so that they can abduct Tom. These incidents are well within the realm of plausibility in the South during the thirties. (Johnson, *Threatening Boundaries* 5)

The townsfolk are deeply entrenched in the racist, separatist attitudes that have permeated their way of thinking for years, so much so that they ignore the fact that Tom is physically unable of committing the crime he is accused of; he is found guilty. It is as if they have no real choice in the matter. Acquitting a black man in such a case as this would be unheard of during the 1930s. As previously mentioned, finding the truth is not the goal of the accusers; for instance:

> Another incident occurred in Birmingham in 1931, when a black man who was an invalid and clearly incapable of committing the crime of which he was accused, was shot by his accuser's brother. (Johnson, *Threatening Boundaries* 6)

This victim, like so many others documented and undocumented, did not even get a trial. But, Atticus guards the jail, making sure that Tom does not fall prey to vigilante justice. Scout's presence shames Mr. Cunningham, and he is unwilling to go through with vigilante justice in front of her, perhaps because she is a child, perhaps because she reminds him of his own child, or perhaps because she singles him out by name. Before she recognizes him, he is just a part of the mob, but when she calls his name he is an individual, forced to see what he looks like through Scout's eyes. At first he does not acknowledge her greeting, but when she brings up his son, Mr. Cunningham is "moved to a faint nod" (Lee 174). Scout has penetrated the blind rage of the crowd, piercing Mr. Cunningham's resolve, which eventually leads to the abandonment of the whole affair.

I keep hoping and praying it will be all right, it will be all right.

Just keep hoping and praying it will be all right, it will be all right.

The chorus to the song hearkens back to the hopeful pessimism that surrounds the case. Folks in Tom Robinson's community understand the reality of the situation and probable outcome, but if there is a chance, Atticus holds it in his hands. Through his defense of Tom, Atticus makes it obvious that Tom is innocent; there is no doubt. An acquittal may not be probable, but it is possible, and Atticus has done everything he can as Tom's lawyer, arguably more than another would have done.

Things have got to change. Who is to blame? Where do we go from here?

How do we conquer our fears?

Once the trial is over and Tom is found guilty, there is a sense of disappointment felt by Tom's supporters, not so much for the fact that he is found guilty since that really was the expected outcome, but more for the fact that this time there actually seemed to be

a chance for a different ending, a small ray of hope. The realization that things actually do not have to stay the way they are is an exhilarating yet frightening thing to experience. Now, for the black and white communities of Maycomb, it must be acknowledged that the traditions of race relations in Maycomb are not above challenge. With this trial comes a shift in thinking, at least among some of the youngest trial watchers, Jem, Scout, and Dill. They are the new generation, the ones who may grow up and teach their children the lessons they learned from Atticus and what they went through during the three years detailed in *TKAM*. Therein lies the answer; things will change when people change. People change when they are open and willing to do so. Hope for the future lies within those who will be in charge of it.

Maybe now's the time for us to shine,

Open up our hearts, make a brand new start.

The song does not just describe the feelings and emotions surrounding the trial of Tom Robinson. The lyrics begin to serve another purpose as well. Part of the broad appeal of *TKAM* is its universality. Most people can relate to feeling hopeful, happy, disappointed, hopeless, scared, excited, frustrated, and all of the other emotions the characters deal with. *TKAM* not only tells a great story, but it inspires those who appreciate it to do more, be more, and give more.

Chapter VII

"Brighter Day"

[Stanza 1]

I'm looking for a brighter day, I know that things will go my way

For the ones who came before me led the way, endured the pain so I could stand right here today.

This is the message I'm sending to you, this is the time for beginning anew.

Hold on, be strong, together we can make it through.

[Chorus]

No, there is no doubt about it – we have come a long way.

Segregation, separation was the order of the day.

Now we know it's true, respect is due the price they had to pay.

It's a better situation, it's a better situation.

[Stanza 2]

I'm hoping to make a stand, I want to be a better man,

So I walk in others' shoes before I act, I make pact to try and always understand.

This is the message I'm sending to you. This is the time for beginning anew.

Hold on, be strong, together we can make it through.

[Chorus (Once)]

[Refrain]

We've come a long way, a mighty long way – there's much more way to go.

We've come a long way, a mighty long way – there's much more way to go. (Repeat)

[Chorus]

At the end of the novel, order has been restored to a degree. Bob Ewell is dead. Tom Robinson is dead. Boo is safely ensconced back inside the Radley house, and the Finches are together, safe. Yet as Scout looks out over her community from the vantage point of Boo's porch, what does she see? This is the community Boo looks out upon when he peeks through the curtains. This is the community that condemned Tom Robinson to death as surely as if that Old Sarum mob had been successful in its quest to wrench him out of the jail and take matters into their own hands. Yet it is Boo's home, Scout's home, and there is good there to counter the bad. Scout imagines what Boo sees from his porch:

> It was summertime, and two children scampered down the sidewalk toward a man approaching in the distance. The man waved, and the children raced each other to him....
>
> Summertime, and his children played in the front yard with their friend, enacting a strange little drama of their own invention.
>
> It was fall and his children fought on the sidewalk in front of Mrs. Dubose's. The boy helped his sister to her feet, and they made their way home. Fall, and his children trotted to and fro around the corner, the day's woes and triumphs on their faces. They stopped at an oak tree, delighted, puzzled, apprehensive.
>
> Winter, and his children shivered at the front gate, silhouetted against a blazing house. Winter, and a man walked into the street, dropped his glasses, and shot a dog....
>
> Autumn again, and Boo's children needed him. (Lee 320-321)

Scout understands Boo's feelings for her and Jem. He sees them as his children to look over and protect. She knows now that he watches because he has to in order to make sure they are all right. He is the reason they are alive, to fulfill whatever promise they may hold for the future.

I'm looking for a brighter day, I know that things will go my way.

For the ones who came before me led the way, endured the pain so I could stand right here today.

Each generation owes a debt of gratitude to those people who fought to ensure that things would be better in the future. There are men, women, and children who suffered indignities like Tom whose names may never be known. In my own family, my father's grandfather and great-uncle were accused of some wrongdoing (an official account says they murdered someone), arrested, broken out of jail by a mob, and lynched. They were teenagers, and it was well known who the white man was who actually did the killing. He was never charged. I did not hear this story until a few years ago; even now it is not something the family talks about. It is just part of our history, the way things happened "back then." There are so many stories similar to this one in the city of Tuskegee where I grew up. The young man who was shot and killed for going into a White's Only restroom; the young man thrown off of a bridge by a group of white men and drowned for no reason – there are so many stories, so many martyrs in the fight for civil rights. My generation came after the Civil Rights Movement. We did not have to fight for anything. That fight had already been fought for us. What we must do is remember and honor those who sacrificed all they had so that we could have the lives we lead now.

No, there is no doubt about it. We have come a long way.

Segregation, separation was the order of the day.

Now we know it's true, respect is due the price they had to pay.

It's a better situation, it's a better situation.

Sometimes it is easy to forget about those sacrifices. As each year passes, moving us further and further away from the immediacy of the movement, it becomes another phase of history to learn in a history book, another chapter. Like World War II veterans and survivors for whom the war and its atrocities are still fresh in their minds, those who participated in the movement still feel the sting of the injustices they personally suffered and still see racism lurking under the surface of modern day life. A lot has changed since Jim Crow laws of segregation were abolished. There is still more work to be done, though.

I'm hoping to make a stand. I want to be a better man.

So I walk in others' shoes before I act, I make a pact to try and always understand.

One of Atticus's lessons to Scout is that she should not judge anyone before she knows what it is like to walk in his shoes. It seems like such a simple idea, but it is one of those lessons that lends *TKAM* wisdom and credibility. Scout puts this advice to use when standing on Boo's porch at the end of the novel. Sheriff Tate does the same when he imagines what life for Boo will be like if everyone knows the truth about his role in saving the children from Bob Ewell. The children do it when they visit Calpurnia's church and see her among her family. Fear is the root of most things evil, and generally the fear of what is not known or understood causes the most trouble. It is easy to judge a stranger. There is no relationship to be invested in. But with knowledge comes

understanding, or at least some modicum of it. Dispelling fear is just one step towards the goal of tolerance and understanding in our society.

This is the message I'm sending to you. This is the time for beginning anew.

Hold on, be strong, together we can make it through.

There is so much to be learned from *TKAM* – how to treat family and friends; how to be a valuable member of a community; how to stand up for what is right, even in the face of adversity; how to be supportive; how to talk to children – the list goes on and on. The bottom line is that nothing can be accomplished without help. Mrs. Dubose is able to die with dignity with the begrudging help of Jem. The entire neighborhood comes out to try to help Miss Maudie save her house from a fire. Calpurnia's church members donate money they can ill afford to spare in order to help Tom's family. As a member of a community, one should help those in need. This is a valuable lesson, even now.

There will always be room for improvement in the way we think and live our lives with one another. Perhaps the greatest lesson *TKAM* teaches can be distilled into the simplest form of one word. Grow. Racism, prejudice, hatred, anger, and all manner of negative thinking stunt growth. Those who are mired in these things cannot evolve into any decent contributor to society as a whole. In every imperative Atticus gives to Scout he is asking her to stretch herself, to imagine a different outcome, to free herself from the constraints of small thinking and living. The book implores us as readers to do the same thing, to imagine that we can change what we are not satisfied with in our world. The moment we become complacent with things as they are is the moment we need to look a little closer at what is happening around us. There is always room for growth.

Chapter VIII

Epilogue

Now that this process is over, I find myself in a different place than I was after finishing the initial project for the *TKAM* class. At the time I thought I was done with *TKAM*, but now I realize that though these songs are completed, there are many more songs to be composed, both from this book and from others. There are so many possible uses for material such as these songs, both as entertainment and as an educational resource. Every time I read *TKAM* I find some surprise, some aspect of character that I see in a new light. There is still much to learn from this book, and I know it is not finished with me yet.

Even if this thesis project were the end of my musical exploration into *TKAM*, I have learned a valuable lesson in how to read a book. I have always been one to reread books; I love finding things in the text that I missed the first, second, or third time around. This project has shown me that it is possible to go deeper into a story than I ever imagined. In the past I have read books as if they were movies, seeing the action as if it were playing out on a screen in my head. I am a spectator. Immersing myself into these characters and the story gives me a different perspective. I was not watching Boo; I was Boo. It's similar to what Scout does on the porch when she looks at the neighborhood from Boo's point of view. She says:

> Atticus was right. One time he said you never really know a man until you stand in his shoes and walk around in them. Just standing on the Radley porch was enough. (Lee 321)

Fully engaging readers with her descriptive prowess is Lee's ultimate triumph as a writer. She is not content with just putting these characters into her readers' heads, but she somehow makes it possible for readers to climb into the skin of the characters, just as it does Scout. They are real, living, breathing people who exist on their own terms and allow us as readers to go through their lives with them.

TKAM inspires many to create art, to write, to paint, to sculpt, or to draw. For me it is a symphony, a harmonious blend of characters and events that paints a lyrical image of life in a 1930's town called Maycomb, with all of its triumphs and tribulations. Each time I read *TKAM*, it sings to me, and I hope I have been able to give the characters voices beyond those heard in the novel.

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