Through the Eyes of the Child: Huck and Scout as Visionaries

by

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TO MY SISTER,

MY VERY OWN VISIONARY

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Abstract

This thesis examines the white child as a literary tool, or instrument, with which to create a new paradigm for viewing interracial associations in American fiction. I maintain that Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* employ adolescents to present social criticism about "sivilization" and about the worldview that sustains racist ideology. By forcing the reader to witness the reality of racial friction through the eyes of white children, the authors present the reader with a fresh way in which to break down reinforced racism. What is unique about these works is that they expose white/black friction in an invigorating and unrivaled way; they break down the racial barrier by inventing legitimate, although somewhat problematic, interracial connections which are expressed through the child's voice. Huck's relationship with Jim, a slave escaping down the Mississippi River, and Scout's relationship with Tom Robinson, a young black man accused of raping a white woman, exist for the same purpose. The white children and the black men stimulate each other's minds, whether directly or indirectly; as I argue, these symbiotic relationships present a visionary pattern for interracial associations, especially those carved in the heated South. Through informal, unconscious means, enlightenment of some sort is the end result for both the characters in the novels and for the readers of the texts.

Chapter 1 examines Twain as he is defined by his role as social critic. I show the ways in which his thoughts on various social, political, and economic issues provided the basis for the creation of Huck and for the writing of his novel. Chapter 2 analyzes Huck, a white child, as a visionary. I introduce the notion, held by many critics, that Twain's novel is a "boy's book." This construct is essential to my argument, as I will prove that moralistic stories are best received by readers when presented by an adolescent narrator. I continue by characterizing the friendship of Huck and Jim, the union of misfit boy and escaping black slave, as an experimental interracial relationship that must be explored as a model even though, at times, the dichotomy between the two is quite problematic. Chapter 3 explores Lee as a teacher of morality. I present her work's detailed literary and historical context to show the ways in which Lee's writing amidst the racial climate in the Deep South greatly influenced her novel. Chapter 4 examines Scout as a visionary child. I maintain that she is the narrator of Lee's social commentary for the same reason that Huck is the narrator of Twain's social criticism, attesting to the fact that *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a "girl's book" similar to the "boy's book" that I examined earlier, thereby emphasizing its capability to increase the productivity of American fiction. I explore the friendship of Scout and Tom, the union of an 8-year-old tomboy and a young black man accused of raping a white woman, as I did the relationship of Huck and Jim. Chapter 5 tackles the controversial reception and censorship of the novels. I attest to the importance of the novels, due to their impact on stereotyping and other prejudicial practices, as being connected to, and not separated from, the controversy that they have provoked in the past and continue to provoke today. This chapter explores the novels' receptions, as measured to some extent by the presence of the novels in the classroom. Chapter 6 explores the film adaptations of both texts. I conclude this thesis with a new assertion about the way in which both works should be read. I maintain that the "child's book" of American fiction—a combination of the "boy's book," *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn,* and the "girl's book," *To Kill a Mockingbird*—is a literary tool, or instrument, for breaking down racism. I stress the morality implicit in these two novels and conclude by reinforcing the ways in which the works provide a critical examination of society by urging us, as readers, to view racism and interracial associations through the eyes of the white child.

CONTENTS

Short Titles

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Preface

After reading Mark Twain's canonical text, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Doron Flake, a black student attending public school in New Haven, Connecticut, offered these words: "Blacks are the murderers, the rapists, the gang-bangers, where everything that is negative is [sic] society, **why do I have to go to school and be Jim too?** Because whenever I read about the slave who is gullible and stupid, that [stereotype] becomes a reflection of me, too" (*JD* xi). This startling reaction to the portrayal of the runaway black slave, Jim, in Twain's novel causes us to pause for a moment and then provokes us to question our motivation for placing books such as Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* on middle school and high school reading lists throughout the country. Both novels, at some point in time, have been banned in rural towns and even in urban cities for the controversial issues that they bring forth and for the moral questions that they pose. It is imperative to question this reasoning: Is it because those that ban and those who are offended, like young Doron Flake, believe that the works portray black men in a negative light? Or is it because the white children, Huck and Scout, see beyond color and form a connection—either directly or indirectly—with the black men, therein breaking down the fixed notion of racism that those opposed to the works struggle to uphold? It is to this disturbing question that I turn in this thesis.

Introduction

"The world never seems as fresh and wonderful, as comforting and terrifying, as good and evil, as it does when seen through the eyes of the child" (*film*). Gregory Peck, by transforming into words his emotional attachment to Harper Lee's narrative, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, poignantly expresses the beauty and the purpose of what I have termed the "child's book." It is from this statement that I set out to prove the ways in which Huckleberry Finn, known as Huck, and Jean Louise Finch, known as Scout, are visionaries positioned by their creators to alter our very perception of race. Mark Twain and Harper Lee require us to witness the reality of white/black friction through the eyes of the child; in forcing us to look at Jim, Tom, and Boo, not through our own eyes, but through the eyes of Huck and Scout, they present us with a fresh and, in many ways, shocking premise, one that was not frequently espoused in 1884 and in 1960: the black men triumph, not because a white person has allowed them to go free but because, with the children at their side, they are eager to free themselves. [Tom's death does not negate this premise, as I will show that Boo is a stand-in for, or reincarnation of, Tom.] By looking through the eyes of Huck in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and through the eyes of Scout in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, we, as readers, essentially become the white children whose vision we have been tempted to make our own. We find that we begin to see the freshness, the wonderfulness, the comfort, the terror, the good, and the evil to which Peck refers in his passionate remark.

By choosing to equip Huck and Scout with a narrative voice, Twain and Lee began to enunciate controversial and often unspoken ideas about the nature of racial prejudices, ideas that were stifled by the restraints of Southern society. Many literary critics have written off Huck and Scout as naïve and unreliable narrators who have yet to be transformed by the prejudicial

practices of grown-ups; I attest that their insatiable sense of wonder about the black men and, in Scout's case, about the overly-white Boo Radley, calls for a much closer examination. It is not by chance that these children are bewildered by an adult world that practices and preaches racism and narrow-mindedness. Their struggle with this prevailing moral pattern is meant purposely to lay the foundation for a frightening social commentary on the majority. The construction used in the two narratives, the voice of a real boy or girl talking out loud—the "boy's book" or "girl's book" format—has drastically altered the structure of American fiction and the way in which it functions. It becomes clear that Twain and Lee, through their respective works of American fiction, continue to urge us to look at Jim, at Tom, and at Boo (who represents the "other") not through our own eyes, but through the eyes of the child.

"From a modern perspective *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* creates the environment conducive for the reader to observe and learn [these] historic and contemporary truths from a comfortable distance rather than from an 'in your face' point of view" (*JD* 131-32). In this thesis, I go as far as to say that the "child's book" as a literary construction creates this relaxed environment in which to observe and learn. It is Huck and Scout who preach these historic and contemporary truths, but it is not the fact that they do so that makes the reading of the novels a lesson in morality; the narrators succeed primarily because we, as readers, are unaware that we are observing, that we are learning, and, ultimately, that we have been enlightened by their discourse. When we do gain awareness by distancing ourselves from the works, we see that Huck and Scout are not childish and that they are not unreliable and naïve narrators. Instead, we begin to see them as visionaries and ourselves as receptors of their vision. It is through this gift that we are taught the moral lessons necessary "to survive in a world where racism does still exist" (xxi).

Chapter One

With regard to the roots of Twain's main character, Huckleberry Finn, all sources "give Twain's book a genealogy that is unequivocally white" (*WHB* 3). According to one critic, Shelley Fisher Fishkin, this may not be so. Fishkin, after carefully studying those who have inspired Mark Twain in his writing, asserts a contradictory claim: "Compelling evidence indicates that the model for Huck Finn's voice was a black child instead of a white one and that this child's speech sparked in Twain a sense of the possibilities of a vernacular narrator" (4). Nevertheless, persuasive evidence refutes her claim, as Twain himself held that "'Huckleberry Finn' was Tom Blankenship," a poor, white outcast child that he remembered distinctly from his childhood years:[1]

> "In *Huckleberry Finn* I have drawn Tom Blankenship exactly as he was. He was ignorant, unwashed, insufficiently fed; but he had as good a heart as any boy had. His liberties were totally unrestricted. He was the only really independent person—boy or man—in the community, and by consequence he was tranquilly and continuously happy, and was envied by all the rest of us. We liked him, we enjoyed his society. And as his society was forbidden to us by our parents, the prohibition trebled and quadrupled its value, and therefore we sought and got more of his society than of any other boy's" (*WHB* 14).[2]

Fishkin deems Twain's comment to be odd because, in all of his descriptions of Tom Blankenship, he never once inferred that there was anything memorable about Tom's "talk"; this is inexplicable as, arguably, Huck's "talk" is the most memorable aspect of his character. Accordingly, Fishkin suggests that "there was another 'real boy talking out loud' whose role in the genesis of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* has never been acknowledged" (14).[3] Clearly,

this controversial allegation prompts us to pose a question: If the model for Huck was not Tom Blankenship—a white child—who was the child that could have assumed this role? And, more importantly, was this child black?

On November 29, 1874, two years before Mark Twain published *Tom Sawyer* or began *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, he published an article called "Sociable Jimmy" in the *New York Times*. This article is prized as the first published piece of Twain that is dominated by a child's voice; the main character of the story is based on a black child who waited on Twain at a dinner in the Midwest. The black child captivated Twain, prompting him to send a record of the boy home. Twain said that he "wished to preserve the memory of the most artless, sociable, and exhaustless talker [he] ever came across"; in the letter, he emphasized, "I listened as one who receives a revelation" (*WHB* 14-15).[4] The voice of Huck has the same effect on readers of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* as did that of the young black boy on the novel's author; this link may be a coincidence or it may very well be the case that the voice of Jimmy *is* the voice of Huck. If this is so, then Twain, whether intentionally or subconsciously, placed a black voice in a white boy's body. It is apparent that Twain experimented with black dialect in his feature article, "Sociable Jimmy" but, nevertheless, we remain uncertain of the influence that the real-life Tom Blankenship had on the creation of the fictional Huck.

Fishkin admits that it is feasible that the black characters in Twain's novel are the only ones to speak the Negro dialect, but that may not be the case. Because phonology alone cannot describe a voice (as voice involves syntax and diction, the cadences and rhythms of a speaker's sentences, the flow of the prose, the structures of the mental processes, the rapport with the audience, the characteristic stance as regards the material related) (*WHB* 15-16),[5] Fishkin holds that it is quite possible that Huck Finn did indeed speak the Negro dialect in Twain's work. In

other words, Twain may have blended black voices with white ones to create the voice of his white narrator, Huck.

While it may be a coincidence that the voices/dialects of Huck and the main character of "Sociable Jimmy" are similar, we cannot ignore the fact that the two boys share other noteworthy features. Their character traits and the topics of conversation that they choose to explore are almost identical; the adult world remains confusing and cryptic to both and both have a strong aversion to violence and cruelty because of brutal acts that they have witnessed. Hence, I believe that Twain tested his idea of a child narrator by writing and then publishing "Sociable Jimmy":

> In "Sociable Jimmy," Twain gave his reader an early glimpse of a narrator too *innocent* to understand the meaning of all he said. By the time he wrote *Huck Finn*, of course, Twain had figured out how to use a narrator's naïve responses to the world around him to unmask the hypocrisy and pretensions of the world (*WHB* 22).

Twain himself emphasizes the importance of the "boy's book" in American fiction, a format that he used in the short story and in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, which was to be written shortly after the publication of "Sociable Jimmy":

> "Experience has taught me long ago that if ever *I* tell a boy's story ... it is never worth printing. ... To be successful and worth printing, the imagined boy would have to tell the story *himself* and let me act merely as his amanuensis" (*WHB* 26).[6]

This statement, made by Twain, urges us, as readers of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, to pose a significant question: "What enabled Twain to transform the voice of a black child into the voice of a white one so effortlessly, confidently, and, possibly, unconsciously?" (*WHB* 28). [Of course, we are only tempted to ask this question if we believe that the narrator's voice is that of a

black child.] Fishkin hypothesizes that Jimmy's speech may have reminded Mark Twain of memorable voices from his childhood years; evidence does indeed reveal that Twain was candid about his preference for black playmates throughout his youth. Nevertheless, this hypothesis remains unproven. Thus, we must examine Twain's childhood experience and delve into his thoughts on various social, political, and economic issues closely, as they are the keys to understanding the basis for his writing of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and, more importantly, for his inspiration for his creation of Huck.

Most of Twain's childhood years, from the age of four to the age of 18, were spent living in Hannibal, a town in northeast Missouri; by examining the characteristics of Twain's hometown, we begin to understand the ways in which his Southern upbringing functioned as a strong factor in the formulation of his adamant objection to slavery:

> Despite Mark Twain's impression very late in life that Hannibal epitomized small-town democracy "full of liberty, equality, and Fourth of July," he acknowledged that it had its own little aristocracy. "You perceived that the aristocratic taint was there," he noted. But the class division, he insisted, was not based on wealth. Ancestry was a prime factor in determining what families belonged to the aristocracy, and those from the South were looked up to. Hence, the Clemenses, who were of Southern origin, and slaveholders, were accepted as people of "good family" despite their poverty. As Twain was later to emphasize, a major evil of slavery was that it fostered an aristocracy (*SC* 11-12).

After his father passed away, Twain continued his education for only a year, at which point he was introduced to journalism, which "was to influence all phases of his later development" (13).

Early on, Twain was inspired by a book about Joan of Arc which "crystallized suddenly within him sympathy for the oppressed, rebellion against tyranny and treachery, [and] scorn for the divine right of kings" (*SC* 13). Accordingly, many of his earliest writings contained the elements that, in sum, characterize political satire. His first piece of this sort, "Blabbing Governmental Secrets," "was a feeble, naïve political satire, to be sure, but it shows the young writer experimenting with a form he was to use so effectively in his mature work" (15). Thus, Twain's writings in the Hannibal *Journal*, of which the article previously mentioned is a common example, mark the beginning of his career as a political satirist. Clearly, "much that went into the making of the social critic was derived from his experiences in Hannibal. ... [It was] the source of his vigorous opposition to slavery, superstition and aristocracy" (15). Interestingly, "[h]is Hannibal writings reflect little of the social critic. But when he reached maturity as a writer, the Hannibal experiences would influence to no small extent what he was to say to the world" (16).

Determined to leave Hannibal in 1853, at the age of 18, Twain traveled throughout America for four years as a printer, setting type in composing rooms in various states. Later, he served as a pilot on the Mississippi River and, in addition to mastering the River in two years, he simultaneously widened and deepened his understanding of a broad scope of people. This is apparently so, as "[t]he influence of the greatest of American rivers permeates every phase of Mark Twain's development" (*SC* 17). Twain, himself, remarks on the effect that his journey had on his interaction with literature of all types:

> "I got personally and familiarly acquainted with all the different types of the human nature that are to be found in fiction, biography, or history. ... The feature of it I value most is the zest which that early experience has given to my later

> reading. When I find a well-drawn character in fiction or biography, I generally take a warm personal interest in him, for the reason that I have met him before—met him on the river" (17).

More importantly, Twain's journey of four years had a distinctly recognizable effect on his own authorship and on his identity as a satirist. The phrase, "By the mark, twain," was called out by the leadsman on the River "when he sunk his line to the two-fathom knot, a cry which meant that the boat was safe with twelve feet of water under her" (19); of historical importance is a legislative article published in the *Territorial Enterprise* under which, for the first time, Samuel Clemens' writings appeared over the signature "Mark Twain." Thus, we see how Twain's experience on the Mississippi changed the course of his life.

Twain eventually left Nevada, where he was at one point stationed, and "became a leading figure in the San Francisco literary world" (*SC* 21); "[b]y the time he left California, he had already experienced most of what was to go into *Tom Sawyer*, *Huckleberry Finn*, *The Gilded Age*, *Life on the Mississippi*, *Roughing It*, and many of his sketches and stories" (23). Most critics agree that "[t]he busy and productive years between 1874 and 1885 embraced Mark Twain's happiest period. They marked the publication of his greatest books, [including] *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (published in 1884)" (28).

Because Twain's work combines humor and satire in a way that strikes readers and critics alike as fascinating, but often as perplexing and troublesome, the critical attitudes that emerged in the 1890s and have extended into today's critical discussion of Twain are manifold. In October of 1892, a writer of the *Atlantic* held that "[o]ne of the attractions in reading Mark Twain is that one never knows when he may be coming upon something serious. Though laughter rules, for the most part, now and then the jester puts aside his bells, and the tragic

passage comes upon one with striking force" (*SC* 49). Charlies Miner Thompson, another writer of the *Atlantic*, also chose to use humor to demonstrate the way in which Twain's intended message emerges from what appears, on the surface, to be material valuable only for its comic effect:

> Under the humorist in Mark Twain lies the keen observer, the serious man, the ardent reformer, and he took note of all that was evil in the life he knew and proclaimed it indignantly to the world. His tenacious memory for detail, his microscopic imagination, and his real interest in the serious side of life make his pictures of the crude society in which he was born both absolutely accurate and surprisingly comprehensive. His writings cannot be neglected by anyone who wishes to know that life, and it is one which is in many respects highly important for us to understand (50).

Another critic declared, "Mark Twain's love of liberty is shown unostentatiously, incidentally as it were, in his sympathy for, and championship of the downtrodden and oppressed" (50). In August of 1983, Frank R. Stockton, noted editor, novelist, and "principal humorist of the genteel tradition" published an analysis of Twain's literary technique in *Forum*; Stockton held that "[Twain's] most notable characteristic is courage" and went on to explain that few others "would dare to say the things that Mark Twain says" (49). While some critics continue to bash Twain, "[t]he majority of critics gladly [accept] the fact that Mark Twain was a philosopher as well as a humorist, and [dwell] on his profundity, his strong philosophic vein, and his serious moral purpose" (52). A new critical trend culminated in Archibald Henderson's appreciation in *Harper's* of May, 1909, in which he praised the "universality and humanity" of Twain's humor; Henderson labeled Twain as "a factor of high ethical influence in our civilization," insisting that

"the philosopher and humanitarian look out from the twinkling eyes of the humorist" (53). Thus, this notion that, through humor, Twain presents a lesson of universal importance originally emerged from the early critical discussion of his work.

After examining Twain's upbringing and the subsequent influence that his childhood years and his journey on the Mississippi River had on his career as humorist and satirist, we come across a problematic question: In writing books, such as *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, did Mark Twain intentionally or inadvertently degrade the Negro people? "From time to time, Twain's novels and stories have been criticized as being 'racially offensive' to the Negro people. This is based on the use of dialect and derogatory references such as the word, 'nigger'" (*SC* 214). Before we criticize Twain's choices, we must place his writing of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* in its literary and historical context:

> In explaining the derogatory references to Negroes in Twain's works, it must be pointed out that apart from the fact that these were used in most of the literature of the period, it was inevitable that a book written about Missouri when it was a slave territory would contain references from which decent Americans would recoil today. It would have been a violation of reality to put twentieth century anti-racist expressions and concepts in the mouths either of the Missouri slaveowners or its backwards people (215).

We must continue to remind ourselves that Twain spent his formative years in a town in northeast Missouri and that, naturally, his mentality, even if remarkably different from that of the majority, was still that of a Southerner. I do not intend this explanation as an excuse for his choice of language, as I praise Twain for employing his Southern origin and his "good family" status to shape new attitudes that defy what was once the belief system of the majority:

> Yes, Mark Twain was a Southerner, and it is to be expected that his novels should be filled with traditional images of steamboats on the river, cotton plantations, the great house, and the slave quarters. Novels in his day provided readers with the same set of stock scenes and characters. But Mark Twain added something different—wonderful scenes in which the evils of slavery are laid bare; quiet, tender scenes in which Negroes voice their longings for freedom; and dramatic scenes picturing Negro heroism. Twain's novels proclaimed to the world that the Negro had never accepted slavery, had fought for his freedom, and was entitled to enjoy the full fruits of democracy (216).

It is clear that Twain, instead of conforming to the racist ideologies that were the norm in the South, made an outright proclamation of his belief in equality.

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn and many of Twain's other works denunciate the mistreatment of blacks in the South, sometimes forthrightly and sometimes through indirect means. What is at the crux of any analysis of the text is the understanding that the belief system that emerges from Twain's works is not simply constructed for literary value. Without a doubt, Twain practices what he preaches:

> Once Twain was asked whether he, as a Southerner, thought that lynching of Negroes was necessary as a protection for the whites. He retorted angrily that even the asking of the question was an insult; that when a hundred men killed one trembling, terrified Negro, they were guilty of both murder and fantastic cowardice (*SC* 218).

Twain did not just speak of his feelings towards blacks, but made his convictions known to all through the formation of close friendships with men of color, a choice for which he was derided by many:

> Twain made the acquaintance of a Negro [Frederick Douglass] who had risen from slavery to the position where he was recognized as the militant spokesman for his people. ... What Twain admired in Douglass was the Negro leader's insistence that emancipation of the Negro slaves was not enough; that to make it meaningful, political, economic and civil rights had to be added; and his constant emphasis that only through militant struggle would the Negro people win full freedom. ... Twain was proud to claim Frederick Douglass as a 'personal friend.' Negroes were welcomed to his home as equals. ... Twain would lecture any time in a Negro church even if he was too busy to speak for a white congregation. He paid the way of one Negro student through a Southern institution, and that of another through the Yale Law School (217-18).

This strong belief in equality for blacks permeates his texts; "Twain's hatred of and contempt for lynchers was brilliantly expressed in the powerful scene in *Huckleberry Finn* where Colonel Shelburne's scorn withers the bravados of the mob" (219). Thus, Twain probably did not struggle in creating a "warm portrayal of the indomitable, great-hearted Jim" (311), as it is evident that the author stood behind his convictions; his close friendship with Douglass and his furious reaction to the possibility that he may believe in the practice of lynching Negroes are pieces of evidence that attest to this assertion.

Through the tone of his writing, we can gauge just how intensely Twain must have felt about the issues of race which he addresses in his works of satire. Consequently, we are often

so overwhelmed by the forcefulness of his stance that we tend to lose track of his main message:

> There are many varied strains running through Twain's social criticism, expressed in his very crude early sketches, his travel books, his recreation of the Mississippi River country, his novels, letters, notebooks and pamphlets. But the dominant one is a burning hatred of all forms of intolerance, tyranny and injustice, an abhorrence of cant and pretension, a passion for human freedom, a fierce pride in human dignity, a love for people and for life, a frank and open contempt for the mean, the cruel, the selfish, the small and petty. Despite all hesitations and contradictions, he was true to the precept that the man of letters must with all his force oppose every form of tyranny. "Satirize all human grandeurs & vanities," he wrote in his notebook. This he did with the weapons of caricature, burlesque, irony, biting sarcasm and humor, and with a style that represented a high point in the craftsmanship of satire (*SC* 308-9).

It is absurd to assert that "Twain took a forthright stand only 'on minor and safe things, like Christian Science and Foreign Missions," as "it is necessary only to read him to see that he was a critic of the major bigotries and oppressions of his time" (310). As such, "[n]o American writer has ever been more dedicated to the welfare of mankind, and no one more grievously wounded by its follies" (312). With the strength of Twain's personal convictions in mind, we now turn to an examination of the author's most important literary creation—the relationship between Huck Finn and Jim.

Chapter Two

One reading of the relationship between the 14-year-old white child and the black slave that develops in Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* focuses on the ways in which Jim's color creates a barrier, both tangible and psychological, that divides the two characters. A prevalent perspective of black critics, though one that is not by any means embraced by all black critics of Twain's work, this interpretation proves to be quite convincing, but only at first glance. A fair amount of textual evidence supports this notion that the friendship of Huck and Jim is naturally flawed at its birth because the two are not able to move beyond the white/black division that defines their existence in the South, but any discussion of this inherently complex relationship requires a significantly deeper examination.

When recalling the moment at which Huck sees Jim for the first time outside of the widow's house, Huck comments, "Miss Watson's big nigger, named Jim, was setting in the kitchen door; we could see him pretty clear, because there was a light behind him" (*HF* 18). Thus, at the precise point at which the two make initial contact, Huck connects the slave's defining characteristics with his color and then immediately proceeds to extend this notion of color to derive Jim's identity as a man. One critic notes, "Jim's race is indelibly etched on his face, making it a formidable obstacle to Huck's enlightenment" (Davis 77). It is true that Huck acknowledges Jim's skin color throughout the novel as contrasting sharply with his own; in doing so, the boy inevitably ends up making overarching assertions about the ways in which the black man lives. The boy hints subtly at the extension of the difference as applied to Jim's inner-workings when he exclaims, "I knowed he was white inside" (*HF* 279), thereby inferring that race penetrates deeper than the surface. However, this white/black contrast alone does not even

begin to touch upon the complexity of the relationship that binds the white boy and the black man together.

Although many, like Mary Kemp Davis, who identify the presence of degradation in the friendship will argue that it is in this early moment of contrast that we are introduced to the emergence of the white/black friction in the friendship and in the novel as a whole, it can also be argued that it is Jim's skin color that seizes Huck's attention but that it is the man himself that eventually wins the heart and the respect of the white boy. Some critics emphasize the point that Huck continues to treat Jim as if he was a subordinate fool as a reason for completely disregarding their problematic friendship. If this qualification is sufficient and if we are to brand their relationship illegitimate from the outset, then why does their camaraderie deepen through the series of separations and reunions that occur as they move down the Mississippi River on the same raft? In fact, it is observed that "Huck utters substantive social comments as his sight and insight improve because of Jim's influence over the course of their adventures" (*JD* 119). Presumably, as both search for freedom as they move downstream, Huck grows to need Jim just as much as Jim grows to need Huck.

Toni Morrison's "This Amazing, Troubling Book" phrases this startling question in a unique way and goes as far as to offer an explanation for the existence of such a symbiotic attraction: "What does Huck need to live without terror, melancholy, and suicidal thoughts? The answer is, of course, Jim" (Morrison 387-88). She not only points out that Huck and Jim are the only "we" in the text of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, but sets out to prove that their relationship exists to achieve a purpose that many critics refuse to acknowledge:

> Unmanageable terror gives way to a pastoral, idyllic, intimate timelessness minus the hierarchy of age, status or adult control. It has never seemed to me that, in

> contrast to the entrapment and menace of the shore, the river itself provides this solace. The consolation, the healing properties Huck longs for, is made possible by Jim's active, highly vocal affection. It is in Jim's company that the dread of contemplated nature disappears, that even storms are beautiful and sublime, that real talk—comic, pointed, sad—takes place. Talk so free of lies it produces an aura of restfulness and peace unavailable anywhere else in the novel (388).

It is evident, as highlighted by this passage, that there exists a special, almost idyllic, bond between Huck and Jim, but, as Morrison foreshadows, the relationship, by its very nature, cannot continue in this peaceful state forever, as the degradation of the black slave by the white boy is inevitable. There is some degree of truth in this conclusion.

Although it is apparent that Huck and Jim find comfort in each other's presence as they drift down the Mississippi, Huck does not choose to display their relationship for all to see nor does he offer any hints as to how he truly feels about the black man. In fact, as noted specifically by Morrison, Huck is unable to articulate his deepest feelings for Jim to anybody; he allows only the reader to grasp how much the attainment of Jim's freedom means to him. The boy's silence may not only indicate his uncomfortable position but may serve to uphold the racist viewpoint of the white majority in the South, comprised of persons who would condemn any glorification of a runaway slave:

> Until the heaven-or-hell choice, Huck can speak of the genuine affection and respect for Jim that blossoms throughout the narrative only aslant, or comically to the reader—never directly to any character or to Jim himself. While Jim repeatedly iterates his love, the depth of Huck's feelings for Jim is stressed, underscored and rendered unimpeachable by Twain's calculated use of

> speechlessness. The accumulated silences build to Huck's ultimate act of love, in which he accepts the endangerment of his soul (Morrison 389).

Even though Huck tells the reader that he is willing to "*go* to hell" (*HF* 223) for Jim and tears up the letter that he has written to Miss Watson at the end of the novel, thereby reaffirming his promise to see to it that Jim is led to freedom, the speechlessness that dominates the majority of the novel says something about the extent to which Huck would honestly risk his place in an unequivocally white "sivilization" for the Negro slave. Because of this silence, there exists a "disproportionate sadness at the center of Jim's and [Huck's] relationship" (Morrison 392); this unwillingness or inability to communicate feelings, especially during moments at which Jim is able to declare openly his love for Huck, may stem from the white/black fiction that surrounds the friendship during its formation.

From the outset, Huck and Jim find themselves in parallel situations, as the boy's quest for an escape from the "sivilization" that Widow Douglas embraces and tries to force upon him is much like Jim's quest for freedom from slavery and from the role that is given to him by Miss Watson. Accordingly, their trip down the Mississippi River symbolizes their combined search and sets the stage upon which the interracial relationship is established. At first glance, it seems as though Jim may merely fulfill Huck's natural desire for a father who he can control;[7] as evidenced by the way in which Pap treats his son, this substitute figure cannot be a white man. Jim does appear to be the boy's "father-for-free" (Morrison 392), but it becomes obvious that Huck and Jim's relationship extends far beyond this patriarchal structure.

Most importantly, Huck Finn is overwhelmingly lonely and, as he finds himself isolated in a "sivilization" that is defined by the lessons and prayers of Widow Douglas, naturally longs for human contact. In Chapter I, even before Huck runs away from the proper home of his

unofficial guardian, he solemnly states, "I felt so lonesome I most wished I was dead" (*HF* 16); it is not long before Jim fills this immense void in Huck's heart. The friendship begins in Chapter VIII, a point in the story at which the young boy needs companionship the most. Apparently, Huck's boyhood friend who develops fantastic schemes, Tom Sawyer, is not able to give to Huck what he needs at this time. Stranded in the woods for three days, "Huck is alone. For the psychological evolution that is taking place, he must confront each of his own learned truths, one at a time" (*JD* 84) by himself. Huck is desperate for a companion, someone with whom he can share his adventures, to whom he can confess, and with whom he can cook a meal; this person, this longed-for friend, turns out to be Miss Watson's black slave, Jim.

When Jim appears in the woods, Huck exclaims, "I was ever so glad to see Jim. I warn't lonesome, now. I told him I warn't afraid of *him* telling the people where I was" (*HF* 53). Just as Huck believes that there is no way that Jim will tell anyone of his whereabouts, the boy aims to ease Jim's fear of being discovered and thrown back into slavery by attempting to convince him that he will never rat Jim out. Huck declares, "People would call me a low down Ablitionist and despise me for keeping mum—but that don't make no difference. I ain't agoing to tell..." (55). Thus, trust is formed at the start of the relationship, as Huck places his safety in the hands of a black runaway slave who he has come across only once before at the widow's house and as Jim does the same.

During Huck's first encounter with Jim, the black man's superstitious nature is revealed through the discussion of the "five-center piece" that Jim wears "around his neck with a string" (*HF* 19). Even though this belief in superstition is quite foreign to Huck, the boy respects Jim's superstitious notions and accepts them, as they seem to be based upon common sense, practicality, and knowledge of natural surroundings. Huck admits, "I had heard some of these

things before, but not all of them. Jim knowed all kinds of signs" (56). Seeing as the white South would never praise a slave for his conceptual understanding of any given topic, it is noteworthy that this white child gives credit where credit is deserved.

When Huck and Jim take shelter in the cavern for protection and relaxation, their relationship progresses to a new level, as circumstance forces them to acknowledge each other's presence. With the tender kindness that only a young boy can exhibit, Huck divulges, "Jim, this is nice. I wouldn't want to be nowhere else but here" (*HF* 60). It is at this responsive moment that Jim realizes how genuinely important he is to Huck's survival, not just in the physical sense but in the psychological sense as well. Jim makes clear, "Well, you wouldn't a ben here, 'f it hadn't a ben for Jim. You'd a ben down dah in de woods widout any dinner, en gittn' mos' drownded, too, dat you would, honey" (60). The equal appreciation extended by both Huck and Jim offers counter-evidence to the claim made by many critics that Huck's constant degradation of Jim automatically works to destroy any chance that an interracial relationship will develop between the two.

The reader witnesses Jim fulfilling the patriarchal duty that Pap is not at all capable of handling before his death. Many critics attempt to explain the union of misfit boy and escaping black slave by claiming that Jim merely fills the void that Pap negligently leaves in his son, a notion put forth by Trilling. It is important to note that Jim feels wholly devoted to his own children and, accordingly, understands the intimate relationship that naturally exists between parent and child. When he observes Pap dead in the floating cabin, he refrains from telling Huck that his father is gone. Some suggest that Jim's motivation for not disclosing what he knows of the whereabouts of Huck's father is his fear of being stranded by Huck if the boy should decide

to reenter the "sivilization" that Pap had made so very bitter. This logic seems implausible, as Jim's intent throughout seems to be most sincere.

Huck repays Jim for the fatherly concern that he has displayed when he places the same value on protecting the runaway slave as he does on protecting himself. In the face of danger, Huck's concern for Jim is magnified, as he "made Jim lay down in the canoe and cover up with the quilt, because if he set up, people could tell he was a nigger..." (*HF* 62). At a later point in their shared adventure, Huck once again puts his own safety on the line when he goes back to find Jim after his disguise as Sarah Williams fails and the two are subsequently found out. Interestingly, they are really only after Jim, as being a runaway black slave draws more attention than would being an adventurous, white misfit. Nevertheless, Huck risks his own life to warn Jim with the message, "They're after us" (72). The use of the term "us" signifies that, at this point, Huck completely identifies with Jim and with Jim's plight. Hence, the runaway slave's struggle becomes Huck's struggle as well. If this is not friendship, then what is?

A critical moment that marks the progression of the friendship of Huck and Jim comes to pass in Chapter XVI. Huck's troubled conscience brings him frighteningly close to revealing Jim's whereabouts, thereby putting the slave in grave and immediate danger: "'A sound heart & a deformed conscience [come] into collision & conscience suffers defeat,' Twain summed it up, years later, in his notebook" (*SC* 208). At the exact moment at which this troubling thought enters Huck's mind, Jim subconsciously forces Huck to reconsider. "Masterfully, Jim succeeds in conveying his sincere love and gratitude to Huck, once again placing on Huck's heart and conscience, and on the reader's conscience, the import of the relationship they have thus far forged together" (*JD* 76). Jim praises Huck just in time:

> "Pooty soon I'll be a-shout'n for joy, en I'll say, it's all on accounts o'Huck; I's a free man, en I couldn't ever ben free ef it hadn' ben for Huck; Huck done it. Jim won't ever forgit you, Huck; you's de bes'fren' Jim's ever had; en you's de *only* fren' ole Jim's got now. ... Dah you goes, de ole true Huck; de on'y white genlman dat ever kep' his promise to ole Jim" (*HF* 111).

Regardless of what Huck has done for Jim by way of securing his freedom thus far, it must be acknowledged that the sole way in which Huck was able to procure the survival of Jim was to convince the men that "[h]e's white" (111). This lends credence to the belief held by many critics that no matter how sincere the relationship of Huck and Jim seems to be, the friendship is inherently doomed because there is no method by which to rid an interracial relationship of the white/black friction that prevails in the heated South. Nevertheless, Jim thanks Huck again and again, saying, "I 'speck it save' ole Jim—ole Jim ain't gwyne to forgit you for dat, honey" (114).

In Chapter XX, the frauds forcefully question Huck about the presence of the black man on the raft and Huck, using his exceptional imagination, creates a make-believe story that links his life situation with that of Jim. Still, the boy presents Jim in a derogatory fashion, asking, "Goodness sakes, would a runaway nigger run *south*?" (*HF* 143). In this scene, Jim's identity is manipulated to protect all who are on the raft because if any outsider were to question his presence, they would say that he is a runaway slave who they are returning to captivity for a monetary reward. Although it may very well be the case that Huck has Jim's best interest in mind when he decides to tell this fictional story and to contrive this survival strategy, it is nevertheless disturbing that Jim's color is used as a way in which to protect him from displaying his identity for all to see. In other words, Jim is indeed a runaway black slave, but there should exist another reason for valuing and, thus, for protecting his life.

Although Huck has displayed a genuine concern for Jim, the young boy neglects to consider Jim's feelings at the conclusion of Chapter XXIV. Huck vehemently damns the actions of the king and the duke and his tirade includes the racially-charged saying, "Well, if ever I struck anything like it, I'm a nigger" (*HF* 176). In this declaration, Huck essentially degrades the man who he calls his friend by drawing a comparison between the despicable actions of the king and the duke and Jim, inferring that the actions of the duo can be compared to those of a "nigger." This statement, regardless of Huck's purpose for using this derogatory term, inevitably destroys, to some extent, the validity of the relationship because his words indicate that even though he has accepted Jim as his companion, he still views black men as "niggers." If it is true that Huck Finn believes that blacks are inherently inferior to whites, then it cannot be the case that he and Jim compliment one another in an equally-balanced interracial friendship.

At the end of Chapter XXIX, Huck's excitement and relief over escaping from the threatening rogues immediately lead him to return to Jim; this second decision to value Jim's survival as being as important as his own safety emphasizes and reaffirms the importance which Huck places on his friendship with Jim. Once again, Jim gives back to Huck the same emotional support; Huck recalls, "Jim fished me out, and was going to hug me and bless me, and so on, he was so glad I was back and we was shut of the king and the duke" (*HF* 215). Once again, the two find themselves on fairly equal footing in terms of the effort that each puts forth to keep the friendship going strong.

When the king goes ashore and sells Jim as a runaway slave for forty dollars in Chapter XXXI, Huck is righteously angry, claiming that Jim is *his* property and, accordingly, that he cannot be sold without his explicit permission. As he did once before, Huck has a struggle with his conscience; he battles with himself to decide whether to return Jim to Miss Watson:

> The physical and vocal juxtaposition Twain establishes here between Huck and Jim is critical in that Jim completely understands the tenuousness of his position of slavery/freedom; Huck is beginning to understand the extent of a commitment, a commitment that stands in direct contradiction to what he has been taught, has observed, and has believed. Huck at this point has trouble accepting such a commitment. By placing the characters in such distinctive, contrastive positions, Twain engages the audience in complementary psychological aspects of the Jim dilemma. The reader identifies not with Jim alone or with Huck but with each representative mental attitude simultaneously. Whether we agree or disagree with Huck or Jim, Twain thrusts us into their world. If we align ourselves with Huck's awakening, we question many of our own social premises about property and authority (*JD* 71).

As in the past, the young boy's remarkable love for the runaway black slave surpasses all other so-called ethical/moral interests. The passage that follows demonstrates best the unwavering strength of the interracial relationship that exists between Huck and Jim:

> And [I] got to thinking over our trip down the river; and I see Jim before me, all the time, in the day, and in the night-time, sometimes moonlight, sometimes storms, and we a floating along, talking, and singing, and laughing. But somehow I couldn't seem to strike no places to harden me against him, but only the other kind. I'd see him standing my watch on top of his'n, stead of calling me—so I could go on sleeping; and see him how glad he was when I come back out of the fog; and when I come to him again in the swamp, up there where the feud was; and such-like times, and would always call me honey, and pet me, and do

> everything he could think of for me, and how good he always was; and at last I struck the time I saved him by telling the men we had small-pox aboard, and he was so grateful, and said I was the best friend old Jim ever had in the world, and the *only* one he's got now; and then I happened to look around, and see that paper (*HF* 222-23).

It is clear, by the conclusion of Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, that Huck, a young, white misfit, is more than willing to risk his own safety to "free" the runaway black slave, Jim, from the "sivilization" that denies him the physical and psychological freedom for which he longs. But, "Huck [does weigh] the question of betraying Jim. He tries to persuade himself that Jim would be better off at home, after all, with his family. He considers the advantage to himself, realizing that he would become a hero in the eyes of his home town. But he cannot do it. His conscience pulls at him in all directions" (*SC* 207). Despite this inner-struggle, he tears up the letter that he had written to Miss Watson concerning the return of Jim to her supervision; in vowing to set Jim free, Huck breaks down the white/black friction that penetrates the heated South in order to form a legitimate friendship that is prohibited. In sincerely pledging, "All right, then, I'll *go* to hell" (*HF* 223), Huck Finn does his part to break down reinforced racism in American fiction.

The way in which the character of the runaway black slave, Jim, has been portrayed in Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* has been praised by some critics and has been strongly frowned upon by others. Langston Hughes, the acclaimed black poet and author, contends that the novel "punctured some of the pretenses of the romantic Old South. The character of Jim in *Huckleberry Finn* ... is considered one of the best portraits in American fiction of an unlettered

slave clinging to the hope of freedom" (*JD* xii). If we agree with this proposition, then we need to *see* Jim; Chadwick-Joshua has suggested a way in which we can delve into his character:

> Consider the constellation of his virtues: his sense of honor, ethics, loyalty, indomitable faith in the nuclear family (a faith that extends into guardianship of Huck Finn), masterful ability to manipulate language, sturdy sense of duty, grasp of the deep meaning of friendship, clear perception of himself as a man, unintimidating wisdom, desire to be self-reliant, and conscious awareness of taking risks. These traits are the marks of a hero (xii).

Thus, it becomes clear that the "Jim dilemma" to which Chadwick-Joshua refers must be realized in order to better understand the complex relationship of Huck and Jim and to comprehend Twain's narrative as a whole:

> The value we are holding to as if it were the measure of all others is, of course, Jim. Huck's relation to and involvement in Jim's freedom lift him out of the childhood world and lift his lies from what we might call the world of low picaresque into what we want to see as the realm of higher humanity. The antislavery sentiment affixed to Jim and his freedom functions as an absolute moral yardstick by which to measure other values (Bloom 96-97).

Thus, in Twain's canonical text, we are not just presented with a situation in which the white boy saves the black man; as a close analysis of the text and a critical discussion has shown, it is Jim, the black slave, that emerges as the hero. It is because Twain allows for the black man to be labeled as such that we can accept the problematic nature of the friendship and still view the union of Huck and Jim as one that is legitimate.

Chapter Three

On April 28, 1926, Amasa Coleman Lee and Frances Finch Lee gave birth to their fourth child, Nelle Harper Lee. The young girl that came to be one of the most influential writers of our time was raised in Monroeville, Alabama; located in southwest Alabama about halfway between Montgomery and Mobile, this city of approximately 7,000 people is a part of Monroe County, which is inhabited by approximately 24,000 people. Monroeville is clearly the model for Maycomb, the fictional locale of *TKAM*, which is "some twenty miles east of Finch's landing ... on the banks of the Alabama River" (*TKAM* 10) in the southwestern part of the state. Lee attended Huntington College from 1944 to 1945, continued on to study law at the University of Alabama from 1945 to 1949 (leaving one semester short of receiving a Juris Doctorate degree), and studied one year at Oxford University. In the 1950s, Harper Lee worked as a reservation clerk with Eastern Air Lines and BOAC in New York City. In order to concentrate on her writing, she eventually gave up her position with the airline. Shortly thereafter, her father's sudden illness forced her to divide her time between New York and Monroeville, a practice which she has continued into the present day and which has provided her with the real-life material needed in order to write accurately about life in the South.[8]

In 1957, Harper Lee submitted a manuscript of *TKAM* to the J.B. Lippincott Company, a publishing company based in Philadelphia. A representative from the publisher told her that the novel currently consisted of a series of short stories strung together to form a whole; he adamantly urged her to do a rewrite. For the next two and a half years, Lee reworked the manuscript with the help of her editor at the time, Tay Hohoff. *TKAM*, Lee's only published book, was presented to the world in 1960. Critical discussion of Lee insists that her writing of the novel ran the gamut from courageous to revolutionary. Others, such as Eric Sundquist—a

critic that praises the novel in some respects and criticizes it often for its crucial flaws—thinks otherwise:

> It was Harper Lee's fortune to write at a moment when white America was ready for fictive salvation, and the risk she took cost her widespread scorn in the South for betraying her region and its way of life; but it was also her fate to write at a moment when other voices were being heard—in boycotts and demonstrations, in demands for enforcement of the law—and when other options for literary representation of the struggle for black justice were readily apparent ("BFAF" 206).

Interestingly, after the novel's publication, Harper Lee continued to write articles—namely "Love—In Other Words," which appeared in *Vogue*, and "Christmas to Me," which appeared in *McCalls*—although she has published no other novels to date. While her literary absence may at first seem to support Sundquist's contention that Lee was not independently courageous and was merely the follower of movements that sought change, I, along with many others, disagree emphatically.[9]

In June 1966, Lee was one of two persons named by President Johnson to serve on the National Council of Arts, an honor not afforded to many. She attended the Alabama History and Heritage Festival in Eufaula, Alabama in 1983 and, while there, presented her essay, "Romance and High Adventure." In addition to these noteworthy accolades, Lee has received a number of honorary doctorates, perhaps four, from various colleges and universities around the country. In 1990, she was one of five recipients to receive such a degree at University of Alabama, but oddly refrained from speaking to the audience at the ceremony and from making herself available for an interview to discuss the honor. In 1997, Lee was awarded an honorary doctorate of humane

letters at Spring Hill College in Mobile, Alabama. A professor at the institution, Margaret Davis, commented that Harper Lee was being recognized for her "lyrical elegance, her portrayal of human strength, and wisdom"; again, Harper Lee refrained from responding to this praise via a speech or interview.[10]

Interestingly, many connections between Harper Lee's immediate family and the Finch family of her fictional novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, can be drawn. The author's father, Amasa Coleman Lee, was an accurate portrayal of Atticus Finch in many respects; he was a valued citizen of Monroeville, Alabama, practiced law as a profession, was a member of the State Legislature from 1926-1938, and edited the *Monroe Journal* from 1929-1947. Harper's mother, Frances Cunningham Finch Lee, was a member of a Virginia family that came to Monroe County and founded Finchburg. It is quite clear that her daughter derived the name of the Cunningham family from her mother, as well as the name of the main family in her novel, the Finches, from the name of her mother's family. The name of Lee's sister, Louise Lee Conner, is apparently tied to the name of the novel's child narrator, Jean Louise Finch, who is known informally as Scout. Lee's sister named her son Little Hank, a name from which the name of Maycomb's sheriff could have been derived.

In addition to the connections just presented, there exist obvious similarities between the childhood of Nelle Harper Lee, shortened to Harper Lee, and that of Jean Louise Finch, whose nickname came to be known as Scout. Both grew up in the 1930s in a rural Southern Alabama town. Harper's father was an attorney who served in the State Legislature of Alabama; Scout's father followed this same course in his professional life. Harper's oldest brother and a young neighbor, Truman Capote, were playmates. Similarly, Jem, Scout's older brother, had a playmate, a young neighbor named Dill. Harper Lee, as a young child, was an avid reader; it is

made known that Scout knows how to read before she enters school and that she is even able to read the *Mobile Register* while in the first grade. There is also a historical similarity between the childhood of Harper and Scout. The author was six-years-old when the Scottsboro Trials were meticulously covered in state and local newspapers; Scout is six-years-old when the trial of Tom Robinson takes place and is reported by Mr. Underwood in Maycomb's local newspaper. It is this similarity that is probably most significant to the construction of the novel as a whole.

There are a great many parallels between the trial of Tom Robinson documented in *To Kill a Mockingbird* and one of the most notorious series of trials in the nation's history—the Scottsboro Trials. "The capital rape case of Tom Robinson tried by Atticus Finch occurs in 1935, set in a small-town Alabama courtroom that would inevitably have been reverberating with the impact of the ongoing trials of the young black men known as the Scottsboro boys" ("BAF" 185). But, in order to grasp this connection fully, we must understand what led to the outrageous trials of the young African-American men involved. On March 25, 1931, a freight train was stopped in Paint Rock, a tiny community in Northern Alabama. Nine young African-American men who had been riding the rails were arrested after having been accused by two white women (one underage) of rape. Within a month of the accusation, the first man was found guilty and sentenced to death. From that point on, there followed a series of sensational trials condemning the other men solely on the testimony of the older woman, a known prostitute, who was attempting to avoid persecution under the Mann Act, which prohibited one to take a minor across state lines for an immoral purpose, such as prostitution. Although none of the accused men (aside from the first) were executed, a number of them remained on death row for many years. It was not until 1976 that the case was settled; the pardon of the last of the Scottsboro defendants did not come until 45 years after the alleged rape had occurred.

Both the Scottsboro Trials and the trial of Tom Robinson took place in the 1930s, although the Scottsboro Trials transpired in northern Alabama and Tom's trial is set in southern Alabama. The Scottsboro boys and Tom were both charged with rape by a white woman and, during trial, the poor white status of the white female accusers of the boys and of Tom's accuser, Mayella Ewell, was a critical issue highlighted by the defendants' attorneys. A central figure who arose out of the Scottsboro Trials was a particular heroic judge; he was a member of the Alabama Bar who chose to overturn a guilty jury verdict against African-American men. In Tom Robinson's trial, the central figure is Atticus; he is a lawyer, legislator, and a member of the Alabama Bar who chooses to defend a local black man. The judge went against public sentiment in trying to protect the rights of the Scottsboro boys; similarly, Atticus arouses anger in the Monroeville community in trying to defend a black man, Tom Robinson, who he believes to be innocent. The first juries in the Scottsboro trials failed to include any African-Americans, a situation which caused the United States Supreme Court to overturn the guilty verdict. The verdict of guilty in *To Kill a Mockingbird* is rendered by a jury consisting of the poor white residents of Old Sarum, a neighboring community. The juries in both cases ignored crucial evidence; the women that supposedly were raped by the Scottsboro boys suffered no injuries and Tom has a useless arm. In general, attitudes about Southern women, poor whites, and blacks complicated both trials. "From the Southern point of view Scottsboro was a call to arms. ... Outside the South, though, Scottsboro was emblematic of southern injustice and a litmus test of sectional paranoia" ("BAF" 185); thus, we can see how Lee's writing of *To Kill a Mockingbird* is, metaphorically, a litmus test of the white/black tension as well. With this knowledge of Harper Lee's upbringing and of the Scottsboro Trials in mind, we now turn to a close reading of

the text as a way in which to gauge the influence that both had on the creation of the narrator, Scout, and on the creation of the black man, Tom Robinson.

Chapter Four

When asked to determine the effectiveness and overall success of Harper Lee's choice of narrator in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, literary critics of the novel offer a wide range of responses. Phoebe Adams, reviewer for *Atlantic Monthly*, insists that this element of the work is not worthy of praise:

> It is frankly and completely impossible, being told in the first person by a six-year-old girl with the prose style of a well-educated adult. Miss Lee has, to be sure, made an attempt to confine the information in the text to what Scout would actually know, but it is no more than a casual gesture toward plausibility (*TB* 21).

Malcolm Bradbury, writing for *Punch*, provides a more positive commentary:

> She chooses to tell her story through the eyes of children, a strategy that I cannot normally bear because it prevents an adequate moral judgment on the fable. But Miss Lee has taken her risks and emerged triumphant (*TB* 21-22).

Nevertheless, Bradbury still holds that the "boy's book" format (or the "girl's book" format, in this case) is inherently flawed, contending that a young narrator is naïve and lacks the moral awareness necessary to present a lesson to the reader. Richard Sullivan of the *Chicago Sunday Tribune* seems to acknowledge the success of Scout as the teller of the "fable" which Bradbury contends that she cannot sufficiently relate:

> The unaffected young narrator uses adult language to render the matter she deals with, but the point of view is cunningly restricted to that of a perceptive, independent child, who doesn't always understand fully what's happening, but who conveys completely, by implication, the weight and burden of the story (*TB* 22).

It is this positive, yet problematic, interpretation of Sullivan that I embrace as one that delves into and grapples with the magical complexity of Scout's ability as a narrator.

William T. Going, in his *Essays on Alabama Literature*, speaks of Lee's choice of narrator as consisting of two girls—the young Scout who witnesses the atrocity that surrounds Tom's trial and murder and the matured and developed Jean Louise Finch who tells of her childhood experience in Maycomb, Alabama. He notes the importance of the child's point of view, but always implies that Scout's growth manifests itself fully only when held at a distance, that is, when she looks back upon her childhood by employing her cognition of the past. Going holds, "Jean Louise's evolving perception of the social milieu in her home town as she grows up in it and as she recalls her own growing up involves the reader in an understanding of the various strata of Maycomb society and its Southern significance" (*EAL* 28). He incorporates a Jamesian technique into his appreciation of Lee's choice of narrator:

> The modification of a Jamesian technique of allowing the story to be seen only through the eyes of a main character but to be understood by the omniscient intelligence of Henry James is here exploited to bold advantage. The reader comes to learn the true meaning of Maycomb through the eyes of a child who now recollects with the wisdom of maturity (28).

Whether intentionally or inadvertently, Going seems to address the point that I am trying to make in that he talks about the way in which we, as readers, are unaware of the fact that Scout is actually preaching to us about the moral education that she obtained during her childhood in the South:

> Maycomb and the South, then, are all seen through the eyes of Jean Louise, who speaks from the mature and witty vantage of an older woman recalling her father

> as well as her brother and their childhood days. This method is managed with so little ado that the average reader slips well into the story before he realizes that the best evidence that Atticus has reared an intellectually sophisticated daughter is that she remembers her formative years in significant detail and then narrates them with charm and wisdom (28).

He concludes his discussion of Scout as narrator by praising the effort of Harper Lee and the overall success of her work:

> Miss Lee has mastered an eclectic technique of a meaningful point of view along with validity of idea and freshness of material. She echoes Faulkner in her deep concern for the inchoate tragedy of the South, and like him she is not afraid to pursue the Gothic shadows of Edgar Allan Poe. But her eclecticism is her own: she has told a story of racial injustice from the point of view of thoughtful children with "open, unprejudiced, well-furnished minds of their own," as the *New York Times* has phrased it (30-31).

Despite his overwhelming admiration of Lee's format, Going acknowledges what many other critics also see as a major flaw of the text in stating, "Though Miss Lee may not have solved all her problems of style in the dual approach of child eyes and mature heart, *Mockingbird* demonstrates the powerful effect and economy of a well-conceived point of view..." (29). As I hold as one of the most basic foundations of my argument, Lee, in constructing her novel with Scout Finch—child and adult—as the narrator, accomplishes a virtually unprecedented goal by using a technique that was barely explored at the time. What I will ascertain, through a close analysis of the child's growth, is that she has a mature heart, even as a child. Her body may be that of an adolescent, but her vision is developed more fully at a young age than one would

expect; it is through this unique feature that Scout emerges as the visionary of *To Kill a Mockingbird.*

In opposition to my assertion stands a well-known critic, Eric Sundquist, who does not share my belief that Scout is the best choice of narrator for Lee's story. Thus, I must address his argument now as a way in which to complicate and reinforce my own. Sundquist holds, "Because it filters Tom's story through the legal representation of Atticus Finch and the storytelling representation of Scout Finch, ... *TKAM* denies Tom even this much of a voice in his story and therefore precludes a full portrait of the African-American struggle for justice" ("BAF" 201). I do not contend that Scout is the divine teller of the Negroes' search for freedom, as there is no possible way that, as a white child, she could understand the plight of Tom's people; what I do hold is that the lesson spoken by Scout does encompass the voice of the Negro man, even though this voice is marginal. Because the white child's learning experiences in Maycomb are based primarily on her exposure to the trial of Tom Robinson and the racial tension that it provokes, it is through her growth and, in turn, through her story, that the voice of the black man emerges.

It is clear from the beginning of *To Kill a Mockingbird* that the novel is concerned primarily with the development of a white child; thus, from the outset, the reader must be aware that each documented experience is designed to give the adolescent narrator, Scout Finch, a further understanding with regard to the harsh reality of life and to the prejudicial nature of many people. As Scout is both the teller of the story and an active participant in the many events that transpire in Maycomb, Alabama, every episode in Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* leads to some sort of learning experience for the young girl. Thus, the general storyline allows us, as readers, to develop by forcing us to witness the development of Scout as it occurs in a linear fashion over

a period of one year. If I am suggesting that development of the reader will occur, then the question must be raised: Who comprises the audience to which Scout Finch speaks? Sundquist states that Lee, through Scout, "speak[s] first of all to white America, or to the moderate white South," holding that this "must also be counted, if not as a failure of nerve, at least as an internalization of Jim Crow" ("BAF" 192). It is crucial to keep in mind at all times that Scout is a *white* child who is trying to teach readers a lesson about white/black tension in the South—an aspect of Lee's construction that is undoubtedly problematic and irresolvable as such—but this fact alone does not discredit her presence as the narrator of *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Scout begins the story of her childhood by emphasizing the stability of Maycomb to which she has adjusted herself and which she has accepted as the norm:

> There was no hurry, for there was nowhere to go, nothing to buy and no money to buy it with, nothing to see outside the boundaries of Maycomb County. But it was a time of vague optimism for some of the people: Maycomb County had recently been told that it had nothing to fear but fear itself (*TKAM* 11-12).

During the Great Depression, President Roosevelt's commonly heard slogan soothed the American public's apprehension about the economic situation but, as Lee expresses in her work, Roosevelt's words of assurance could not possibly be applied with regard to the racism that penetrated the South, as white/black friction prevailed and would continue to prevail for some time:

> *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a novel of childhood, but one saturated in narrative consciousness of deeper regional and national time. Although it is not, strictly speaking, a historical novel, its careful deployment of familial genealogy, state history, and the romantic stereotypes of southern "breeding" create a context in

> which the pressure of contemporary time, with its threatened destruction of a white southern way of life, becomes urgent ("BAF" 186).

Scout, at the outset of the work, demonstrates this urgency without even realizing that she does so; the child presents a contentment that will soon be shattered by Tom Robinson's trial. Little does she know that, in a flash, the quiet town on which she depends will be disrupted by a white/black friction that will not be pacified nor contained.

"*To Kill a Mockingbird* is a masterpiece of indirection that allows young readers [and, I contend, old readers] to face racism through the deflecting screen of a frightening adventure story, just as it allows American readers to face racism through a tale that deflects the problem to the South" ("BAF" 186). Scout embarks on this trying adventure; her first lesson and, in turn, our first lesson, stems from her interaction with the Cumminghams and the Ewells—two white families, widely recognized as poor, whose behavior is often criticized as improper by the upper-class whites of Maycomb. Scout, although she has not willingly placed herself into this social class, is a member of this ridiculing group. When she confronts Atticus with this issue, he presents her with words of wisdom that come to stand as one of the overarching lessons of *To Kill a Mockingbird*: "'[I]f you learn a simple trick, Scout, you'll get along a lot better with all kinds of folks. You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view—until you climb into his skin and walk around in it'" (*TKAM* 36). It is clear from this first heart-to-heart conversation between father and daughter that Atticus treats Scout as a mature individual, not as a naïve child; the respect afforded to her at such an early age allows Scout to respond in a productive way to this treatment. Thus, Atticus must be given some credit for the lessons that we learn from his daughter, as he affords her the opportunity to teach us by instilling in her the requisite values.

Shortly, the main emphasis of the novel shifts to the Tom Robinson case and, due to Atticus's participation in the trial, to the accusation that Scout's father is a "nigger-lover." She hears her father referred to in this derogatory fashion at school and cannot comprehend the meaning of this racially-charged slur. When she approaches her father about the name-calling incident, he explains that he is defending a Negro man who is accused of raping a white woman. Scout gets into a fight defending her father's name and explains to us her mindset at the time of her showdown with Cecil:

> My fists were clenched and I was ready to let fly. Atticus had promised me he would wear me out if he ever heard of me fighting 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. He had announced in the schoolyard the day before that Scout Finch's daddy defended niggers (*TKAM* 82).

Thus, although we are able to detect that the young girl divulges most information presented to her by employing a mature mental process, as she understands her father's words and intends to abide by the rules that he has set for her with regard to fighting, she does indeed react like a child when prompted by another child. Clearly, Scout's ability to rationalize complexities is overly developed for her age, but it must be noted that she remains a six-year-old who, naturally, exhibits childlike tendencies; this is not only acceptable but quite essential if I am going to conclude that Scout is the chosen teller of this tale due to the fact that she is an adolescent who is forced to tackle mature problems.

One critic of *To Kill a Mockingbird* claims that "[t]he struggle of the children [Scout and Jem] toward maturity ... occupies more space than Atticus's struggle to free Tom, the central

episode" (*EAL* 24). Sundquist agrees with this contention wholeheartedly, as he stresses "the book's minimal attempts to enter into African-American life" and holds that "they may be chalked up to the effects of Scout's limited point of view" ("BAF" 192). Sundquist emphasizes the absence of discussion about the African-American struggle as one of great importance:

> In its sympathetic portrayal of Calpurnia and Tom, as well as a few secondary black characters, the novel was without question a step ahead of most popular white fiction of its era. Yet the whole psychological design of the narrative ... sacrifices the legitimate exploration of an African-American perspective in order to enforce its searching critique of white liberalism in crisis. Of necessity, and with a diminution of power that would only become completely clear in historical retrospect, its narrative marginalization of black life functions as a form of segregation whose effect is to focus our attention not on region or state alone but on the nation come at last to its own southern crossroads (192).

At first glance, the introduction of Tom's trial may appear to be a temporary tangent or escape from the overall plot and, in turn, from Lee's central message. If that is the case, then the black man's story would remain separated from the story that outlines the development of Scout and her brother, thus placing it in the periphery due to its perceived marginal nature. As I will demonstrate, this is not the case; I hold that the two tales are purposely interwoven, as it is the trial and murder of Tom that stimulate Scout's progression in the novel. Accordingly, I claim that Scout will surely undergo her most significant learning experiences in connection with the Tom Robinson trial. It is because of this indirect connection between Scout and Tom that their symbolic relationship is formed.

From the start, Atticus uses the rape case to which he has been assigned as a way to convince Scout that she must find a way to fight with her mind instead of with her fists. He urges her to think about non-violent alternatives when placed in a situation similar to the one in which she felt that Atticus had been degraded by Walter Cunningham:

> "You just hold your head high and keep those fists down. No matter what anybody says to you, don't you let 'em get your goat. Try fighting with your head for a change ... it's a good one..." (*TKAM* 84).

Later, during the infamous mob scene, Scout uses this brand of mild psychological warfare to control the fighting mentality of the adults.

When Uncle Jack is a guest at the Finch household, we witness a situation in which the adults do not understand the children and, surprisingly, it is the children who are wiser than the adults. Uncle Jack learns more from his niece, Scout, than she learns from him; Jack is only willing to listen to one side of the story, while Scout insists that she would consider both sides before inflicting punishment if she was the decision-maker of the household. Without reservation, Scout declares, "You're real nice, Uncle Jack, an' I reckon I love you even after what you did, but you don't understand children much" (*TKAM* 93). When Atticus tells his brother, "You've a lot to learn, Jack," Jack responds by admitting, "I know. Your daughter gave me my first lessons this afternoon. She said I didn't understand children much and told me why. She was quite right. Atticus, she told me how I should have treated her..." (95). Atticus concludes by proclaiming, "Children are children, but they can spot an evasion quicker than adults, and evasion simply muddles 'em" (96). This fight between Scout and her uncle and the conversation about it that ensues between Atticus and Jack may seem like an inconsequential family dispute that cannot be applied to other situations in the novel, but this is simply not the

case. The fact that Uncle Jack admits that Scout is wiser than her years and that he has learned a great deal about familial interaction from a child is crucial to my contention that Scout, as a narrator and, more importantly, as a visionary, is anything but naïve and unreliable.

The title of the novel is first introduced in Chapter Ten when Atticus warns the children not to kill a mockingbird because it contributes beautiful music and causes no damage to anyone. Atticus warns the children, "Shoot all the bluejays you want, if you can hit 'em, but remember it's a sin to kill a mockingbird" (*TKAM* 98). Miss Maudie reinforces Atticus's longing to protect the bird: "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. That's why it's a sin to kill a mockingbird" (98). It is my claim that Atticus's warning to Scout and Jem is one of the most crucial lessons in Lee's novel as, through this metaphorical speech, he essentially provides his children with a way in which to better understand the importance of the "mockingbirds" of Maycomb—Tom Robinson and Boo Radley.

At one point in the novel, Scout asks her father to define the racial epithet—"nigger-lover"—with which Cecil offended Atticus earlier. This is the first instance in which Scout is taught a lesson by Atticus that presents its moral by confronting race head-on:

> "[N]igger-lover is just one of those terms that don't mean anything—like snot-nose. It's hard to explain—ignorant, trashy people use it when they think somebody's favoring Negroes over and above themselves. It's slipped into usage with some people like ourselves, when they want a common, ugly term to label somebody" (*TKAM* 117).

Sundquist takes issue with the ways in which Atticus teaches his daughter:

> Atticus's moral courage forms a critical part of the novel's deceptive surface. Whether to shield his children from a confrontation with their own recalcitrance, Atticus, for all his devotion to the truth, sometimes lies. He employs indirection in order to teach his children about Maycomb's racial hysteria and the true meaning of courage, but he himself engages in evasion when he contends, for instance, that the Ku Klux Klan is a thing of the past... Indirection and displacement govern both the novel's moral pedagogy and, in the end, its moral stalemate ("BAF" 194).

I adamantly disagree with Sundquist's argument that Atticus takes the easy way out and that the book is plagued by the "evasion of the hardest moral questions" (192); in fact, I support the opposite contention. Scout's father, by choosing to define the term instead of opting to ignore his daughter's uncomfortable question, becomes a role model to white parents who, at some time or another, are placed in a similar position, as all white children inevitably ask their parents about race and, more particularly, about racial slurs. Atticus's definition of "nigger-lover" does not conceal or soften the racism that permeates society, especially that which breeds intense hatred in the South; his explanation of the racial epithet not only acknowledges the prejudicial mindset of many people, but admits that words such as "nigger-lover" have "slipped into usage." Thus, Atticus demonstrates that even good people can be led astray by the collective conscience of their environment, although he makes clear that there is no excuse for such impropriety.

As the trial of Tom Robinson approaches, Jem and Scout attend the Negro church with Calpurnia and hear that a collection is being taken up for the Negro man whom their father is going to defend. Scout's inquisitiveness abounds in this somewhat awkward situation as we overhear her conversation with Cal. The young girl asks, "My curiosity burst: 'Why were you

all takin' up collection for Tom Robinson's wife?'" (*TKAM* 133). Scout does not cease the interrogation as, by probing, she is determined to find answers to the questions that baffle her. What we, as readers, must realize is that the curiosity of our narrator—a 6-year-old little girl—enables us to participate in her search, thereby allowing us to probe for answers to questions that we may be too uncomfortable to ask for ourselves. Scout continues to scope out the environment in which she has been temporarily placed and, unaware of the racial implications that lie behind some of her questions, to scrutinize the actions of the Negroes that she encounters there: "'Cal,' I asked, 'why do you talk nigger-talk to the—to your folks when you know it's not right?'" (136). Scout, as a white child, is inherently confused by the language used by Cal and the other Negroes who belong to the church. Atticus has lectured her repeatedly about improper "talk" and has warned her against using the epithets espoused by "ignorant, trashy people" (117) such as the Ewell family, but Scout, as she is so young, cannot always differentiate between the improper talk of whites and the comfortable "talk" (dialect) which Negroes use to speak to other Negroes. It seems as though Lee compels Scout to ask Calpurnia of this oddity as a way in which to make readers aware of the fact that the narrator is naturally limited in her comprehension of the Negro culture due to her age and, more importantly, to her color.

The climatic scene of Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*—the spectacle that transpires in front of the jail in which Tom is being detained—allows for us to witness Scout Finch at her finest. Present at this crucial moment are Atticus, who is guarding Tom's jail cell, the lynch mob come to murder Tom, and the children. Interestingly, Scout describes all that occurs at the mob scene at the jail without being able to understand the implications of many of her reported observations; above all else, the young girl does not realize that Tom and her father are clearly in danger. Because she is completely unaware of the gravity that the presence of the mob implies,

Scout reacts as naturally as a normal child would when speaking to any adult: "Hiding in the doorway of the Jitney Jungle, Scout rushes forward in time to disconcert the Cunningham mob by asking innocent questions about Walter—her classmate" (*EAL* 25). To Cunningham, the first adult she recognizes, she asks, "'Don't you remember me, Mr. Cunningham? I'm Jean Louise Finch. You brought us some hickory nuts one time, remember?'" and then says to herself, "I began to sense the futility one feels when unacknowledged by a chance acquaintance" (*TKAM* 164-65). The fact that Scout speaks to Mr. Cunningham without a second's hesitation is commendable; the fact that she senses the inability of her words to affect the adult is not only quite perceptive but is remarkable, to say the least. Scout's sagaciousness leads her to see that she must try again if she is ever going to connect with Mr. Cunningham. Immediately, Scout mentions that she goes to school with Walter, an idea that she derived directly from an approach that she learned from her father:

> Atticus had said it was the polite thing to talk to people about what they were interested in, not about what you were interested in. Mr. Cunningham displayed no interest in his son, so I tacked his entailment once more in a last-ditch effort to make him feel at home (164-65).

Scout is too inexperienced to know that discussing one's entailment is not appropriate subject matter, but this flaw in her worldly understanding does not warrant the labeling of her character as wholly naïve. Despite the fact that she does not know how to apply the lesson of her father to every situation does not mean that she is not cognizant of the underlying message that Atticus's instruction relates. She does indeed know that she should "make [Mr. Cunningham] feel at home"; the fact that her plan to talk about the entailment does not achieve this goal should not cheapen the child's honest attempt in any way. We, as readers, know in our hearts that Scout is

trying her best to connect with Mr. Cunningham. It is this valid undertaking that we deem respectable and, in many ways, visionary.

The mob's reaction to Scout is similar to our very own response to the young child's behavior. She relates the shock that envelopes those around her:

> The men were all looking at me, some had their mouths half-open. Atticus had stopped poking at Jem: they were all standing together beside Dill. Their attention amounted to fascination. Atticus' mouth, even, was half-open, an attitude he had once described as uncouth. Our eyes met and he shut it (*TKAM* 164-65).

Thus, in this climatic scene, we are just as stunned by the approach of young Scout as are her father and the members of the mob come to lynch Tom Robinson. The young girl continues to provide us with a detailed picture of the way in which those present at the jail are altered, at least temporarily, by her words. She speaks of the immediate effect that her words have on her father and, more importantly, on the mob:

> Atticus said nothing. I looked around and up at Mr. Cunningham whose face was equally impassive. Then he did a peculiar thing. He squatted down and took me by both shoulders. "I'll tell him you said hey, little lady," he said. Then he straightened up and waved a big paw. "Let's clear out," he called. "Let's get going, boys." As they had come, in ones and twos the men shuffled back to their ramshackle cars. Doors slammed, engines coughed, and they were gone (165).

Scout describes Mr. Cunningham's suddenly soft gesture as an act of peculiarity; she knows that his attempt to be kind to her is clearly out of character, but what Scout cannot comprehend is that, by forcing Mr. Cunningham to rethink his plan, she simultaneously saved two lives—that of

her father and that of Tom Robinson. The young girl comments on the mob's retreat from the jail as she would any inconsequential passing, as she cannot possibly begin to fathom the evil deeds that the mob had planned to enact. Thus, even though Scout's age bars her from understanding the immense positive effect of her presence at the jail, we, as readers, are able to calculate her importance in this scene. In turn, we are able to get at the significance of the child as narrator, as there is no suitable replacement for Scout in terms of her natural ability to convince the other characters and readers that her approach is the one that works.

Later in Lee's novel, when Atticus goes to the courthouse to defend Tom Robinson at trial, Scout and Jem, due to their overwhelming curiosity and their intense longing to be a part of all that transpires in Maycomb, follow. When they arrive at the courthouse, the children meet Dolphus Raymond, a white man who openly admits that he prefers to live with the Negro population instead of with the other whites of Maycomb County. When the issue of the life of a mixed child is raised, Scout asks Jem to define such a child for her. Jem explains, "'They don't belong anywhere. Colored folks won't have 'em because they're half white; white folks won't have 'em 'cause they're colored, so they're just in-betweens, don't belong anywhere'" (*TKAM* 172). Scout later employs this description in an attempt to derive a motive for Mayella Ewell's accusation of Tom.

Because all the seats in the white section are filled, Scout, Jem, and Dill sit with some of their Negro friends in the balcony. Not surprisingly, the children's decision to sit among the Negroes is unacceptable to the white portion of Maycomb society. It is important that Lee places the white children in the Negro section, as this is the only way in which we, as readers, are able to experience the trial of the black man on two levels. As the narration of the story comes from Scout, we automatically see the trial through her eyes, which are unequivocally "white." But it

is essential to note that because Scout is sitting with Tom's people, we come as close as we possibly can to understanding the plight of the innocent black man accused of raping a white girl. While there are limits to what we can experience, as the white child's voice is dominant throughout the novel, Lee does succeed in presenting a way in which to bring us closer to experiencing the trial through the eyes of Maycomb's black population.

Tom Robinson's trial becomes the plateau of Scout Finch's learning experience in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, as it is here that she is presented with evidence (offered by Mayella Ewell) that Tom is a disreputable and shameful man, judges him using her own constructed standards, and then comes to the conclusion that Tom is a person of good character who has simply been trapped by the racism of the heated South. It is fascinating to witness a 6-year-old comprehend and account for legal evidence, synthesize a great deal of detailed information, and then process this information to derive what seems like a simple, but nonetheless shocking, conclusion. Scout has a revelation while sitting in the balcony with the Negroes and her perceptiveness in relating this revelation is quite extraordinary:

> As Tom Robinson gave his testimony, it came to me that Mayella Ewell must have been the loneliest person in the world. She was even lonelier than Boo Radley, who had not been out of the house in twenty-five years. ... She was so sad, I thought, as what Jem called a mixed child: white people wouldn't have anything to do with her because she lived among the pigs; Negroes wouldn't have anything to do with her because she was white (*TKAM* 204).

Scout does not accept the prejudicial worldview of the South; she refuses to include Mayella, a white woman, in her social group and thinks about Tom, a black man, as someone to whom she could relate. She reinforces this attitude toward Tom by stating, "It occurred to me that in their

own way, Tom Robinson's manners were as good as Atticus's" (207). By placing a black man in the same category as her father—a man to whom she gives the utmost respect—Scout overturns the fixed notion of racism that abounds in the South; by rejecting the white woman and by including the black man, the child defies the rules that have been set by the Southern majority.

After the trial, the children come across Dolphus once again. Interestingly, Dolphus admits that he can explain his predicament to Scout and Jem because, as children, they have not yet developed the prejudices of the region that prevent emotions, such as tolerance and compassion, to develop. Dolphus explains to the children that the older people of Maycomb County do not understand that Negroes are people just like everyone else. By implying that Scout thinks differently, the white child is encouraged to arrive at the realization that, unlike the white adults, she should never judge any person by rumors that circulate in the town but should disregard such prejudicial nonsense and attempt to see each person's view as offered by that particular person. When Scout asks Dolphus why "[he had] entrusted [her and Jem] with his deepest secret," he responded by reaffirming what he had said earlier about the ability of children to be more receptive than adults. He explained to them, "'Because you're children and you can understand it" (*TKAM* 213). When Dill feels sick after exiting the courtroom, Dolphus once again emphasizes the unfair plight of Negroes in the South: "Cry about the simple hell people give other people—without even thinking. Cry about the hell white people give colored folks, without even stopping to think that they're people, too" (213). Dolphus's conversation with the children makes us aware of the racist ideology that penetrates Maycomb society and reaffirms the revelation that Scout had in the courtroom with regard to the character of Tom Robinson.

During the aftermath of Tom's trial, Scout and Jem openly discuss what they believe will be the verdict:

> After the trial when Jem cannot comprehend the injustice done Tom Robinson by the jury, he asks his father, "How could they do it, how could they?" Atticus replies, "I don't know, but they did it. They've done it before and they did it tonight and they'll do it again and when they do it—seems only the children weep" (*EAL* 26).

Jem is overly confident that Tom, backed by his father and their childlike prayers, will be set free; this naïve confidence demonstrates that the sensitive and innocent children have not yet come to a greater understanding of the complexity of life in Maycomb and, more generally, in the South. We, as readers, applaud the white children for taking the side of the black man at a time and in a place in which the term "nigger-lover" was a commonly heard racial epithet. Thankfully, Jem does not let Tom's color shadow over his innocence. Nevertheless, we must realize that Jem's hope that Tom will be set free and his actual belief that the verdict will make official this freedom are not one in the same. Because Jem is just a child, he unconsciously turns his desire into his premonition. This is one instance in which the children act as visionaries; Tom Robinson would be set free if the members of the white jury held the same idealistic belief of equality as does these two white children. During the children's conversation, Jem claims that his sister is too young to understand the workings of Tom's trial, as it is far too complex for a 6-year-old to grasp. To this accusation, Scout responds, "'It most certainly is not, I know every word you're saying'" (*TKAM* 221). Scout wishes to prove her knowledge to her older brother; simultaneously, she wishes to convince us, the readers, that she is capable of serving us as a mature and reliable narrator.

After being told by our narrator, only a short while ago, that she is mature enough to present an accurate picture of the events surrounding Tom Robinson's trial, we are reminded once again that Scout is, indeed, an adolescent:

> I remembered something that Jem had once explained to me when he went through a brief period of physical research: he said if enough people—a stadium full, maybe—were to concentrate on one thing, such as setting a tree afire in the woods, that the tree would ignite of its own accord. I toyed with the idea of asking everyone below to concentrate on setting Tom Robinson free, but thought if they were as tired as I, it wouldn't work (*TKAM* 222).

Even though this plan is clearly a childish attempt to use the notion of magic to alter the course of events and, therefore, is a plan that we, as readers, must disregard as simply the irrational strategy of a child desperate to control a world that cannot be controlled, we must nevertheless look closer. The purpose of the visionary is to provide ways in which he/she would change the world if afforded the opportunity. Scout, even though she is a mere 6-years-old, knows that concentration alone will not free Tom Robinson, but it is her suggestion that makes a difference for us, as readers. If young Scout was given the chance, she would free Tom; enlightened by her vision, we feel the same way. Shortly after Scout presents her adolescent concentration plot, we are once again reminded of her worldliness and of her adult-like perceptiveness. As the verdict is about to be read, she states, "A jury never looks at a defendant it has convicted, and when this jury came in, not one of them looked at Tom Robinson. The foreman handed a piece of paper to Mr. Tate who handed it to the clerk who handed it to the judge. ... I shut my eyes" (*TKAM* 223). In fact, "[b]oth children know that Tom Robinson has been condemned when they see the jury file in and never once look Tom in the eye" (*EAL* 12-13). Scout's realization makes clear that

while the children have not developed the prejudices which contribute to Tom's conviction, they do in fact recognize the prejudices in action and are aware of the terrible effects that such prejudices can have on the true course of justice.

The mockingbird theme is emphasized further after we discover that Tom Robinson has been murdered. At one point, Scout is told not to step on a harmless insect; simultaneously, Helen Robinson, Tom's distraught widow, is described as being crushed like an innocent ant under the prejudices that led to the death of her innocent husband. In addition, Mr. Underwood writes an editorial in the local paper about the "senseless slaughter of songbirds" and applies this metaphor to the death of Tom Robinson. Scout describes, "He likened Tom's death to the senseless slaughter of songbirds by hunters and children. ... Then Mr. Underwood's meaning became clear: Atticus had used every tool available to free men to save Tom Robinson, but in the secret courts of men's hearts Atticus had no case" (*TKAM* 254). From this editorial, Scout learns another lesson about the impact of racist ideologies on the lives of the Negroes living in the South and finally begins to understand that even men incapable of exhibiting hatred, like her father, are unable to break down the fixed notion of racism that exists in Maycomb County and beyond. Accordingly, it becomes the job of our narrator—a white child—to work toward accomplishing this task; by telling a story that shows the effects of the racism that lies in the "secret courts of men's hearts," Scout helps us, as readers, to break down racism ourselves.

Whether the death of Tom Robinson is a significant loss to Maycomb County as a whole becomes a topic of discussion into which Atticus and his children delve. Atticus does not hide the racist beliefs of the white residents of Maycomb, as he tells the children that Tom's death is insignificant to them, as he is just one Negro among many black men. He touches on the sad nature of this realization, commenting, "What was one Negro, more or less, among two hundred

of 'em? He wasn't Tom to them, he was an escaping prisoner" (*TKAM* 248-49). Sundquist takes issue with Atticus's explanations once again:

> Although he too recognizes racism as a delusion, Atticus Finch stops short of asking for dramatic sacrifice in the name of justice. In fact, although he pleads directly to the readers of 1960, warning of a day of racial cataclysm rather than one of harmonious justice, Atticus, like Lee, seems satisfied with the "baby-step" taken toward racial justice and appears to hope for a postponement of the fire next time ("BAF" 191).

Awareness of this prejudice is emphasized again, yet no one is willing to disbar the stereotypes that keep racism alive:

> "To Maycomb, Tom's death was Typical. Typical of a nigger to cut and run. Typical of a nigger's mentality to have no plan, no thought for the future, just run blind first chance he saw. ... Just shows you, that Robinson boy was legally married, they say he kept himself clean, went to church and all that, but when it comes down to the line the veneer's mighty thin. Nigger always comes out in 'em" (*TKAM* 253-54).

Yet, implicit in this awareness is the head of racism itself. Here, the epithet "nigger" is associated with the bad overcoming the good in a person; hence, the commonly-held belief of whites is that a black man who suppresses his race may be able to survive in life. The association of color and a corrupt/disreputable nature is one that helps whites provide an explanation for Tom's demise; this rationale is itself disgraceful.

Following the Halloween play that takes place at the children's school, Jem and Scout are attacked by Bob Ewell and, fortunately, saved by their mysterious and secretive neighbor—Boo

Radley: "Thematically the aftermath of the injustice done Tom and the growing up of a boy and girl are brought together in the Halloween episode. The structural problem of joining Boo Radley and Tom Robinson into some sort of juxtaposition is solved" (*EAL* 27). Interestingly, Lee has not presented Boo to the children until now; quite possibly, Lee intends Boo to be a reincarnation of or a stand-in for the deceased Tom Robinson. If this is so, then my assertion that the black man saves the white child in some way can be better explained. Scout, throughout the trial, works toward saving Tom indirectly, as she makes the whites around her aware of the fact that the racism that exists in Maycomb is foolish and dangerous. By forcing people, such as Mr. Cunningham, to reevaluate their belief systems, the young girl educates the Southern community; unfortunately, Tom Robinson cannot be saved. It seems as though Lee wants the Negro community to acknowledge Scout for her attempt but does not have the means with which to do so. In an attempt to solve this problem, Lee creates Boo to save the children, as he seems to be the only white character in the novel who Scout fully addresses as being marginal, although possibly in an unconscious manner.

Because the Halloween scene is one that has not been fully explained through critical discussion, it is essential for me to present a hypothesis that seeks to provide a deeper understanding of this crucial episode. Sundquist has an interesting, yet highly unlikely, theory to offer:

> The novel's concluding Halloween sequence ... tells us that true danger comes from "white trash" ("Boo" evolved into the insidious "Bob"); and it offers the illusion that racial hysteria—the Klan, night-riding mobs, the White Citizens council—can be likewise unmasked, humiliated, and brought to justice once the South disposes of its childish fears and moves forward..." ("BAF" 187).

It is implausible to insist that Lee's motive was to make a statement about "white trash," but Sundquist does raise one point that is striking in its more universal message. Hypothetically, Lee may have made a white man the dangerous character in the novel as a way in which to demonstrate that good and evil are not determined by the color of one's skin. If we follow this line of reasoning, then uncovering the identity of the perpetrator can be viewed, metaphorically, as a way in which to break down racial stereotypes.

Scout's final learning experience comes when she tells her father that to bring Boo Radley to trial for killing Bob Ewell would be equivalent to killing a mockingbird; for the first time, the young girl is able to stand in Boo's shoes. At this moment, Scout sees that the advice her father gave her early on—that "[y]ou never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view—until you climb into his skin and walk around in it" (*TKAM* 36)—helps her to understand Boo Radley as well. But, there is a problem with the ending of the novel, which Sundquist makes apparent:

> As much as the farcical trial of Tom Robinson, of course, the conclusion of the novel also demonstrates that the law—most of all, the Constitution or the Supreme Court, may be incapable of rendering justice. The lesson latent within Atticus's willingness to cover up Boo's part in the killing of Bob Ewell is that circumvention of the law, even violent civil disobedience, may be necessary in order to create even an approximation of justice—though it remains a real question at the end of Scout's narrative whether the way of life in Maycomb has changed at all ("BAF" 205).

Sundquist may be correct in criticizing the law for not bringing about justice in Maycomb, but it would be to our detriment to ignore the private justice which individual actors bestow upon one another in the novel.

Scout's description of Boo as he stands in the room with Jem is one of the most descriptive in the novel and, if we look closely at its underlying message, it is one of the most important passages as well:

> As I pointed he brought his arms down and pressed the palms of his hands against the wall. They were white hands, sickly white hands that had never seen the sun, so white they stood out garishly against the dull cream wall in the dim light of Jem's room. I looked from his hands to his sand-stained khaki pants; my eyes traveled up his thin frame to his torn denim shirt. His face was as white as his hands, but for a shadow on his jutting chin. His cheeks were thin to hollowness; his mouth was wide; there were shallow, almost delicate indentations at his temples, and his gray eyes were so colorless I thought he was blind. His hair was dead and thin, almost feathery on top of his head (*TKAM* 284).

Through Scout's eyes, Boo's features are strangely white, just as Tom's features are strikingly black. At the courthouse, Scout had observed, "Tom was a black-velvet Negro, not shiny, but soft black velvet. The whites of his eyes shone in his face, and when he spoke we saw the flashes of his teeth" (204). Both men are clearly different from Scout in the physical sense, and it is important to understand that she notes this difference. What is significant is that Scout perceives both the white man and the black man as standing in contrast to her own skin color; both men, therefore, appear to her as unfamiliar persons (the "other"). Thus, when Boo Radley saves her and her brother, it is almost as though Tom Robinson was the hero. By responding to

the prejudices that exist against both men throughout the novel, Scout teaches us that an acceptance of all men should be the new paradigm for viewing race. In stating, "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" (294), Scout leaves us, the readers, with a lesson that she urges us to apply to all people, including those of a different race, religion, and class.

At the culmination of her learning experience, at least that which is documented in the novel, Scout concludes, "I think there's just one kind of folks. Folks" (*TKAM* 240). Going comments on the young narrator's conclusion:

> This naively sophisticated sociological rationalization is far more valid and persuasive in its two-pronged approach. As mature readers we realize its mature validity; as observers of children we delight in their alert reactions to the unfolding events. The convolutions of the "mind of Henry James" have given way to the immediacy and pithy wisdom of Jean Louise's first-person narration (*EAL* 29).

Thus, it becomes clear that, in order to grasp fully the moral that lies within this story, we cannot simply look at the happenings that transpire with our own eyes as, hypothetically, we have a mature outlook on life; as I have argued all along, we must observe the racism that prevails in Maycomb County, particularly by looking at the trial of Tom Robinson, through the eyes of the child. Harper Lee has chosen Jean Louise Finch—a six-year-old white child—to guide us; she is our visionary and we are the receptors of the vision that one day, there will exist only one kind of folks, "folks."

Chapter Five

Reception of Twain's Text

In the 1890s, critics had been searching for the "Great American Novel" and, as *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn's* "setting was native, its flavor was American, its language colloquial, its characterization based on first-hand knowledge, and its theme universal" (*SC* 47), Mark Twain naturally expected his novel to win critical acclaim:

> But when the book appeared in the spring of 1885, most American critics received it very coldly. The guardians of the genteel tradition fumed over Twain's satirical handling of the bigots and hypocrites of the ante-bellum South and his audacious elevation of the rowdyish Huck Finn and the Negro runaway slave, Jim, into heroes (47).

Louisa May Alcott went so far as to say, "If Mr. Clemens cannot think of something better to tell our pure-minded lads and lassies, he had better stop writing for them" (47). This opinion is negative, but at least it is presented as a personal dislike of the work; others' opinions speak for society as a whole.

"The most vitriolic comments came from New England, seat of the genteel tradition, and were sparked by the action of the Public Library Committee of Concord, Massachusetts, which excluded the book as 'a dangerous moral influence on the young'" (*SC* 47). This type of criticism streamed from the educational systems of other states as well, but outcry in opposition to the banning of the book accompanied it:

> [N]ews [that the book had been banned by the New York City Board of Education] produced a series of editorials and letters, the vast majority of which expressed indignation at the removal of *Huck Finn* from the approved textbook

> lists, and pointed out that to do so on the ground that it was "racially offensive" to the Negro people was to overlook the fact that the book's central theme was that slavery and racial equality are evil. The *New York Times* editorialized: "The truth is that *Huckleberry Finn* is one of the deadliest satires that was ever written on some of the nonsense that goes with the inequality of races. ... It should ... be available in for use in New York schools" (214).

To this end, backlash occurred:

> The New York *Herald Tribune* took the same editorial position. But it went still further, sponsoring an essay contest among elementary and high school students on the topic, "What *Huck Finn* Means to Me." The essays submitted vigorously opposed banning the book, revealing clearly that the reading of Twain's novel had opened the eyes of the young people to the evils of slavery, had deepened their respect for the heroism of the Negro slaves, and their understanding of the broad significance of Huck's final decision to help Jim escape (214).

Students' responses help to explain why, despite its controversial reception, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* has become a required staple for American high school students who study a survey of American literature.

Philip Foner, in outlining Twain's role as social critic, perceives a reason for the banning that has nothing at all to do with the novel's alleged immorality:

> Small wonder, then, that *Huckleberry Finn* was barred from certain libraries and schools. While the reasons advanced by the authorities were "the book's endemic lying, the petty thefts, the denigration of respectability and religion, the bad language, and the bad grammar," it was clear to anyone who read the attacks on

> the book thoughtfully, that the authorities regarded the exposure of the evils of slavery and the heroic portrayals of the Negro characters as "hideously subversive." And, as Twain pointed out bitingly, the fathers of these same authorities had "shouted the same blasphemies a generation earlier when they were closing their doors against the hunted slave, beating their handful of humane defenders with Bible text, and billies, and pocketing the insults and licking the shoes of his Southern masters (*SC* 209-10).

Nevertheless, even though Foner deplores the fact that the book was ever banned, he is willing to acknowledge some of the misgivings that many have about *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn's* place in American literature, especially as a canonical text:

> The defenders of this masterpiece of American and indeed of world literature are clearly in the right in deploring its banning. Yet it is necessary to point out that there is a real problem here which must be solved. Men and women, deeply concerned that this might assist the cause of the white supremacists, have argued that in exactly reproducing dialect and in degrading references to Negroes, Twain's books help to perpetuate the myth of Negro inferiority. The solution to this problem is not to ban the books and deprive young people of acquaintance with great literature and great documents in the progress of human relations and understanding, but to require teachers to explain the background of the language used by Mark Twain, and why words accepted passively in the 1880's are today labeled terms of opprobrium (214).

For example, "[s]tudents' reaction to Jim's statement of owning himself, and his 'worth,' then, is a nonreaction until the teacher aids them in understanding how the slave trade practiced in the

South affected the African American slave's self-perception" (*JD* 9-10). Nevertheless, there are still some, like outspoken critic John Wallace, who unwaveringly assert that the teaching of this novel, with its use of the word "nigger," does nothing more than to perpetuate the teaching of racism in the classroom (5),[11] regardless of the way in which the work is taught.

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn did find defenders among contemporary American critics and literary figures. Joel Chandler Harris sums up the positive responses to Twain's text in the most effective way possible:

> [T]here is not in our fictive literature a more wholesome book than *Huckleberry Finn*. It is history, it is romance, it is life. Here we behold human character stripped of all tiresome details; we see people growing and living; we laugh at their humor, share their griefs; and, in the midst of it all, behold we are taught the lesson of honesty, justice and mercy (*SC* 47).

If we do not want this sort of lesson taught in the classroom, then there is surely a lack of morality in the curriculum of educational institutions.

RECEPTION OF LEE'S TEXT

Jill P. May argues that Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a "case study of how such censorship works in young adult literature" (*TB* 14)[12] and contends that, initially, there were two distinct waves of censorship that surrounded Lee's work. The first wave rose in the mid-sixties, as complaints were voiced by southern conservatives who stated objections to the profanity, sex scenes, and immorality presented in the novel; nevertheless, the hidden reason for their disapproval proved to be the work's "candid portrayal of Southern white attitudes" (15), as stated by May. In the seventies and the early eighties, the second wave of censorship presented itself in the East and in the Midwest by the religious right and by African-Americans; the latter group

adamantly objected to the toleration of institutional racism that it believed was implicit in *To Kill a Mockingbird.*

Over the years, the objections put forth as reasons to censor Lee's work have been more clearly defined. A study of book censorship efforts in schools and libraries includes a list of 25 objections regarding book content that English teachers and librarians most often hear about works on their reading lists and shelves. At least ten of these objections have been raised about *To Kill a Mockingbird*: (1) portrayal of conflict between children and their elders, or children questioning the wisdom of their elders; (2) profanity or questionable language; (3) ungrammatical speech by characters; (4) use of black dialect; (5) references to the supernatural or witchcraft; (6) depictions of violence; (7) references to sex; (8) negative statements about persons in authority, the U.S., or American traditions; (9) lack of portrayal of the family unit as the basis of American life; and (10) unfavorable presentations of blacks. These objections are ironic in the sense that it is for these explicitly stated reasons that Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* has been praised by many.

One of the apparent reasons that the novel was seen as controversial from the outset was that it was said to display openly the naïve views of the white child toward the subordinated in Southern society—the blacks—and toward the ingrained system that allows for the victimization of the marginalized portion of society to occur. Scout holds up a mirror to hypocrisy; accordingly, many Southerners, upon reading the novel, find themselves staring straight into the mirror in an attempt to *see* themselves and to reevaluate their own belief systems. Sundquist asserts that "the novel has remained a particular touchstone of white liberalism" ("BAF" 182). James Carville, Bill Clinton's presidential campaign manager, has been described by historian Gary Wills as spending his formative years in the 1960s South:

> "It was then also that he read what he calls the most important book in his life, Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird.* 'I just knew, the minute I read it, that she was right and I had been wrong'—about blacks. 'I don't want to make it noble, or anything. I was just bored with all that talk of race'" (*TB* 16).

Carville is only one of many who have reacted to Lee's narrative in such a dramatic way:

> Likewise, in arguing against the Confederate iconography of the current Georgia state flag, Governor Zell Miller recently cited the famous scene in which Scout's innocent banter disperses the mob come to lynch Tom Robinson as a model for his appeal to the state general assembly as "fathers and mothers, neighbors and friends" who had been taught in Sunday school to do the right thing ("BAF" 182).[13]

Although Sundquist asserts that "[d]espite the importance of such testimony, it is nonetheless tempting to ascribe the book's immense popularity, especially at the time of its publication, to its indulgence in comforting white sentimentality and to assume its fawning readership was overwhelmingly white" (182-83), research has clearly shown that this is not the case; *To Kill a Mockingbird* accomplished and continues to accomplish much more.

To critics, teachers, parents, and children alike, Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* has been and always shall be identified as a text that has "made a significant difference in the lives of individuals and the culture as a whole" (*TB* 13). Thus, it is ironic that in the 39 years since its publication, the novel has never been the focus of a dissertation and has been the subject of only six literary studies, several of them extending no longer than a couple of pages.[14] The explanation as to why such a renowned novel has been neglected by literary critics, at least to

some extent, has yet to be offered and can only be hypothesized about through a discussion of the text's immense importance to society.

In a study of bestsellers, Alice P. Hackett and James H. Burke have found that in an 80-year period (1895-1975), *To Kill a Mockingbird* was the seventh best-selling book in the nation and the third best-selling novel. Since 1960, the novel has never been out of print in either hardcover or paperback, as indicated by the On-Line Catalog of the Library of Congress, and has appeared on secondary school reading lists as often as any book in the English language. A sign of the novel's far-reaching impact is evident in the "Survey of Lifetime Reading Habits," which was conducted in 1991 by the Book-of-the-Month Club and the Library of Congress's Center for the Book; the survey found that among the books mentioned by its 5,000 respondents, *To Kill a Mockingbird* was second only to the Bible in being "most often cited as making a difference" (*TB* 14)[15] in people's lives.

Due to the rise of internet usage among children, one high school teacher has created a website,[16] accessible to the virtual community at large, entitled "The Student Survival Guide for *To Kill a Mockingbird*." It is an annotative source, including over 400 words, allusions, and idioms that are defined and explained for students of all ages and links that have been added to provide further clarification of complex topics. The creator of the website notes that her motivation for creating this service is the fact that while *To Kill a Mockingbird* is the fourth most taught piece of literature in the United States (behind only *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth*, and *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn)*, it is not the easiest book to teach.

As such, the creator provides a link to websites that stress the importance of preparation of students for the study of *To Kill a Mockingbird* in today's multicultural classrooms. These sites emphasize that the teaching of Lee's novel offers educators the opportunity to help students

work through several major issues that they must deal with in life but rarely have the chance to discuss; issues and terms that make the book a challenge to teach can be viewed as chances to heal wounds and scars that have long remained out of classroom discussion. In fact, there exists an official *To Kill a Mockingbird Writing Team* that assembles a teacher study guide. The most important point that is emphasized by the team is that the teacher must prepare himself and must prepare the class fully; this is critical to any successful teaching of the novel, as students will inevitably hear terms and discuss themes that can cause discomfort and hard feelings to develop in the classroom setting.

One suggested method of prepping students is to utilize themes as a way in which to structure the lesson; some suggested themes include "Gender Issues—Then and Now" (since the point of view of the story is that of a young, white Southern female who is faced with having to tell her tale at a time of great social and racial upheaval), "Issues of Class—Then and Now," and "Laws and Justice for the Rich and Poor—Then and Now." Slowly building to the more sensitive issues and terms—such as the use of the racial slur, "nigger"—is critical. Students must not be cheated out of discussing and being faced with these issues; students must feel safe and be able to trust the classroom atmosphere. In addition, the team suggests activities that will prepare students for consideration of many of the themes, allowing them to engage in initial reflection and interaction. Through these pre-reading activities, students are inevitably forced to explore their own experiences, ideas, and feelings about Lee's novel. Some of the suggested activities are role playing, sentence starters, outward appearances and inner qualities differentiation, the brainstorming and discussing of heroes, a discussion of dialect, and exploration of stereotypes. Clearly, what these suggestions attest to is the fact that the teaching of *To Kill a Mockingbird* and, for that matter, the teaching of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*,

require careful planning and close attention, as students' responses to both novels greatly depend on the way in which the works are presented in the classroom.

Chapter Six

ADAPTATION OF TWAIN'S TEXT

It is important to note that *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* has been made available to the public on film at various points between 1920 and the present, as it has been adapted to the screen 11 times. Unlike the film version of Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, which was instantly met with much praise, the film and television adaptations of Twain's novel never received such recognition; to the present day, not one of the film versions has enjoyed widespread popularity and not one has been acclaimed by critics. Despite this current lack of recognition, it seems as though the novel's transformation from text to film has potential, a belief that continues to challenge filmmakers to produce a piece that meets the standards set by the canonical text. Nevertheless, we must keep in mind that the fundamental differences between the printed novel and the film ensure that no movie version will ever be able to live up to its written source in every detail. Transformations are subject to adaptive distortion; the original work must be altered to some extent in order to accommodate the requirements of film:

> Does such a substantial difference exist in the movie versions that the essence of Twain's message loses its power and transformative ability? The answer is emphatically, yes. In effect, by revising, drafting, collapsing, creating, and merging scenes—some completely out of sequence or others never introduced at all—moviemakers are acting as social censors, reinforcing reductive stereotypes. In an industry that asserts its own right to free speech, this is a terrible irony (*JD* 30-31).

Fortunately, despite minor changes that are inevitable, the differences between Lee's written text and Mulligan and Pakula's film version seem to be minimal, as will be examined later; this is not the case with regard to the *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* adaptations.

One major problem evolves from the fact that typical *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* adapters generally chose to avoid most of Twain's novel, as it has been shown that they preferred the creations of their own imaginations to the overwhelming strength and controversial content that lie within the work itself:

> Consequently, most *Huck* films are works of cinematic taxidermy: Twain's story line is broadly preserved, the native life of the novel is displaced, and the remaining carcass is stuffed with someone's special agenda; after which attempts are made to breathe a new, albeit strange, life back into the remains (*FTA* 1).

This is unfortunate, as it is this "native life" of the work that is crucial to the preservation of the novel's spirit; in following, the vitality that Twain manifested in his work must be preserved in any film adaptation in order for it to be deemed a success. Thus far, no adaptation has been able to sustain the content and to maintain the spirit of the novel from beginning to end.

The first *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* film adaptation premiered in 1920, backed by Paramount Studios and directed by William Desmond Taylor. Excellent casting choices were made; Taylor was praised for these casting choices because Lewis Sargent, who plays Huck, and Gordon Griffith, who plays Jim, bore a striking resemblance to the drawings in Twain's first edition of the text. Taylor, set on dealing extensively with the moral problems that naturally emerge from Twain's novel, was determined to find a script that he deemed worthy of the book's name. He went with Julia Crawford Ivers' script, as it encompasses virtually the entire book and omits only a few of the most memorable episodes, thereby providing him with the opportunity to

grapple with the many ethical issues that Twain presents in his text. Thus, in this first version, the framework of the general plot is present, although the plot is not always presented scene by scene nor with all the details included.

Ironically, even though this first film is a silent version, it turned out to be more ambitious than all but one subsequent adaptation. The film is structured as if its body was a dream that Twain had one night; the spirit of young Huckleberry Finn visits Twain at his bedside precisely during the moment at which Twain is falling asleep and speaks to him, although Twain is unaware of the boy's presence. This take on the novel is generally liked by critics who promise wholeheartedly that the film will thrill "those who have read the Twain story, whether they be boys of 8 or 80" (*FTA* 19).[17] The film is geared toward the family and the *New York Times* praised the 1920 adaptation because Taylor, the director, "did not seek to use Mark Twain's book as material for a conventional movie of his own," but "did seek, with care and intelligence, to translate as much as possible of the book into moving pictures, and so [has] won the gratitude of the public" (19). Although the location work was done in Missouri, thereby warranting praise for its authenticity and natural beauty, critics nevertheless acknowledge the fact that "only part of what Mark Twain wrote can be said in the language of moving pictures" (20), as is true of any film adaptation that stems from a great novel.

Even though the 1920 *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* adaptation has been deemed one of the best of the 11 existing versions, it is nonetheless inherently flawed, as it emphasizes the Huck-Mary Jane "love-interest," thereby de-emphasizing the much more important relationship between Huck and Jim. The 1939 Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer version, directed by Richard Thorpe, is regarded as the Huck-Jim version because it makes central this interracial friendship between Huck, played by Mickey Rooney, and Jim, played by Rex Ingram. Because this version stirs up

the white/black friction by focusing on the friendship, it was and is still regarded as the most controversial *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* adaptation to date and, unfortunately, has been untouched by critics since the day of its release. Ironically, it is this 1939 version that has enjoyed the most public awareness; it is safe to make the claim that this adaptation has been seen by more viewers than any other and, perhaps, more than all the others combined.

The primary characteristic that sets this version on a platform above its adaptive predecessors is its overarching theme; the 1939 film is the first *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* adaptation in which the relationship between Huck and Jim is the central theme. Writing credit for the picture goes to Hugo Butler, but the exploration of this volatile theme, given the racial climate of America in 1938, has unofficially been attributed to producer Joseph Mankiewicz. Kenneth Gist has noted that the producer "has always had strong sympathies for the plight of blacks in America" and says that "as early as 1938, in his production of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Mankiewicz had his screenwriter, Hugo Butler, transform Huck into an unequivocal abolitionist at the end of the film, proclaiming of the slave, Jim, 'No human being has the right to own another human being'" (*FTA* 58).[18] It is now clear that the decision to concentrate on the Huck-Jim friendship was not only courageous from a box-office perspective but artistically sound; to pursue the strongest moral impulse in Twain's controversial novel is, beyond a doubt, the most instinctive and matter-of-fact way to tackle the moral issues presented in the text. Although it is possible that the 1939 film emphasizes the Huck-Jim relationship more than the text itself does, this change has been viewed as a positive one. By focusing on the risks that Huck takes for Jim, Huck is given the voice to demonstrate explicitly his commitment to the runaway slave's quest for freedom; as this is at the center of the film, it becomes clear that the "film's purpose is to offer an adaptation that departs from the book in order to show the lengths

to which a white boy might go for the sake of his black friend" (58). Like the score of the *To Kill a Mockingbird* film, Frank Waxman's score in the 1939 *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* adaptation beautifully expresses the radiance of the child. Although this particular adaptation follows the Twain text narrative least closely, it exists as one of the best to date; it surpasses most of the other adaptations primarily because of its mature treatment of Huck's relationship with Jim and because of its keen awareness of the spirit of Twain's narrative.

The most recent film version, done by Walt Disney Pictures, premiered in 1993 and was directed by Stephan Sommers, the first director of a *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* adaptation to also write the screenplay. Elijah Wood, highly acclaimed for his appearances in a number of popular adolescent movies, plays Huck and Courtney B. Vance plays Jim. The film is by no measure a faithful adaptation of Twain's text, but it is nevertheless entertaining, marked as "a slam-bang action movie with an antislavery message" (*FTA* 153).[19] The movie is said to have failed because Sommers did not film a close reading of Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*; the film adaptation glosses over and alters many of the novel's crucial details and then infuses this combination with Sommers' personal vision. As a result, very little of Twain's narrative remains in the movie; "the bottom line is, [the 1993 film is] about a kid who risks his life to save a runaway slave and it's about a slave who teaches the kid to grow up" (154).[20] Anyone who reads the text knows that Twain intended for more to emerge from his story of the interracial relationship that is formed by Huck and Jim.

Despite this obvious flaw, Sommers was extremely careful of the way in which Jim is presented, as he did not want Jim to be portrayed "in the insulting way that Hollywood depicted blacks in the 1930's and 40's" (*FTA* 154).[21] The producer of the film, Laurence Mark, reaffirmed this concern:

> "We wanted to translate Mark Twain into today's terms ... What we always kept in mind was one thing: no matter what indignities were going on around [Jim], we tried to make certain that he would always retain his own dignity and stature as a human being" (154).[22]

Even though Huck and Jim did not survive Sommers' translation as Twain had created them, the 1993 adaptation has been received quite favorably. One newspaper critic held, "It's peppy and entertaining and makes its moral points with humor and compassion" (158),[23] and noted that Elijah Wood and Courtney B. Vance, together, "convincingly sell the friendship and loyalty between Huck and Jim" (158).[24] Nevertheless, many critics attest to the fact that the 1993 version does not "capture [Twain's] satirical spirit" (159),[25] an irreconcilable flaw that cannot be overlooked simply because the film is said to be entertaining to watch. The Walt Disney film has come to be known as "a pale shadow of its original" (159); thus, it is not surprising to learn that the movie was banished to a few rerun houses after little more than a month in first-run theaters and, more recently, that it has been limited to cable TV and video.

Surprisingly, Twain's original text and the 1993 adaptation are similar in that they both long for their respective Jims to be free; nevertheless, it can be argued that neither of the Huck characters has anything against slavery as a practice. The Walt Disney movie has come to be regarded as one of the most faithful *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* adaptations in terms of textual detail, but the novel and film are said to have nothing in common with regard to character, flavor, and, most importantly, theme:

> The film stresses from the outset that Huck and Jim already like each other, but we are never shown why they should. No attention is given as Huck and Jim mature as friends. We don't see them deal with each others' faults, quirks,

> interests, or strengths. As a result, there is something oddly impersonal about their friendship (*FTA* 168).

It is this impersonality that prevents the film from meeting the standards set by Twain's narrative.

After examining the strengths and weaknesses of the three most recognized adaptations (those of 1920, 1939, and 1993), it seems natural to want to compare the 1939 and 1993 versions, as the 1920 version lacks sound and is thereby difficult to tackle. The 1920 and the 1993 *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* adaptations are virtually identical in terms of general narrative structure but are thematically opposed to each other in the sense that their respective Hucks do not share the same viewpoint about the controversial issue of slavery. Due to these differing belief systems, the 1939 version has come to be known as an abolitionist film, while the 1993 version has not. In the 1993 film, the director and the actor who plays Jim work the antislavery scene with such intensity that the audience expects Elijah Wood (Huck) to champion the antislavery cause by the end of the movie; like Twain's Huck, he is no more of an abolitionist at the end of the narrative than he is at the beginning. This is a disappointment, as we, the readers and the audience, long to see a change in Huck's moral character not only with regard to his opinion of Jim but with regard to the notion of slavery in general.

The overarching conclusion of Clyde V. Haupt's study is that the value of an *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* adaptation rests on two things: (1) the personality strength of the actor who plays the title role of Huck Finn and (2) the amount of narrative focus on Huck and on his relationship to Jim:

> If the actor playing Huck gives a weak performance, or if the center of attention is not on him, there is little hope for the picture as a whole. On the other hand, a

> *Huck* adaptation typically gains immeasurable value when the picture focuses on Huck and Jim even when Huck is poorly cast. More specifically, in the sound era, a strong Huck-Jim relationship is, invariably, at the center of the best adaptations (*FTA* 172).

Unfortunately, most of the adaptations fail in this respect:

> This objective is waylaid in the movies, which degrade Huck and Jim's dynamic dialogue into comic patter and "gee whiz!" dramatizations. Pivotal scenes, such as the discussions between Jim and Huck on Solomon, family, language, freedom, and friendship, are abandoned in these (re)visionings of Twain's actual text. Hollywood allows a broad license to the term *adaptation*, and the "adapted" films of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* contribute, in part, to modern misinterpretations of Twain's Jim (*JD* 32).

This analysis lends credence to the belief that the friendship that develops between Huck and Jim is at the heart of Twain's narrative.

ADAPTATION OF LEE'S TEXT

By examining the chronological sequence of events that paved the way for Harper Lee's novel to be shaped into other entities, a deeper understanding of the work's immeasurable worth can be acquired. When no others bid for the film rights of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Robert Mulligan and Alan Pakula stepped forward as purchasers and the two decided to direct and produce the motion picture for Universal Pictures in the spring of 1961. Horton Foote immediately took on the task of writing the screenplay, but only after Lee declined the initial offer. Gregory Peck was cast as Atticus Finch and Southern children were sought to play Scout and Jem. Around the same time that the film was moving forward, the novel won the Pulitzer

Prize for literature, propelling Lee's work into the spotlight. It was April 1961, not even a full year after publication, when the award was announced; nevertheless, *To Kill a Mockingbird* was at a point in which it had already sold 500,000 copies, had been translated into ten languages, and had been presented with the Brotherhood Award of the National Conference on Christians and Jews. In 1962, only two years after publication and already having sold 2.5 million copies in hardback editions and 2 million paperback copies, *To Kill a Mockingbird* was awarded the Bestseller's Paperback Award in recognition of its overwhelming reception. Lee proceeded to go to Hollywood in 1962 as a special consultant to the producers of the film as a way in which to ensure that the integrity of the novel was being preserved during the process of transformation; shortly thereafter, the film premiered and, in the winter of that same year, it was greeted with nominations for eight Academy Awards, ultimately winning four. In 1964, Foote's film script, complete with a foreword by Lee, was published; the forward displayed the author's feelings about the transformation that had occurred.

A play by Christopher Sergel based on Lee's novel was published in 1969 and was met with long-standing success in stock companies throughout the United States. The play became extremely popular in the 1980s in England and, interestingly, remains a standard in provincial theaters in both the United States and in England. In 1991, a new television series entitled "I'll Fly Away" drew much attention, as it was obviously influenced by the central themes of Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*; highly praised, the series was set in the 1950s South and focused on a small-town lawyer who frequently tried cases involving race while raising his three children with the help of a black housekeeper. The recognition afforded to the novel and, equally, to the film was boundless in the years following the publication and the premiere, evidenced by these numerous awards and theatrical and television spin-offs. Even today, the novel continues to

maintain a level of notoriety that is unsurpassed by other canonical works, as does the film version.

Gregory Peck, in his introductory remarks that precede the 35th Anniversary Commemorative Edition of the film based upon Lee's novel, describes, in just a few words, but with much passion, the illuminated perspective that the audience possesses after having experienced *To Kill a Mockingbird*. He contends, "The world never seems as fresh and wonderful, as comforting and terrifying, as good and evil, as it does when seen through the eyes of a child" (*film*), essentially claiming that Scout Finch, as child visionary, allows for her receptors—the readers of the novel and the viewers of the film—to receive such insight. Peck acknowledges that to create such a dynamic between enlightened child and an adult world that is content with racism and narrow-mindedness is by no means a simplistic endeavor to be glossed over without due recognition; he insists, "For a writer to capture that feeling is remarkable" (*film*), thereby praising Lee for forcing her audience to witness the reality of white/black friction through the eyes of the child.

Elmer Bernstein, the composer of the musical arrangement used in the film, describes his score as "suggest[ing] a sort of childish mystery" (*film*). With regard to the way in which his melodic creation frames the story, he comments that "[i]t doesn't say anything, but it asks a question" (*film*). Upon close examination of the novel, it seems as though the ability to question is exactly what the author wants for her audience to acquire, as there is no end to the search for answers with regard to the many evils of racism; there exists only a process that allows us to come closer to the solution. The novel merely takes a step in the direction of morality by providing a new way in which to identify and then to break down the fixed notions of racism, especially those that stem from the heart of the Deep South. By "seeing an adult world and

really serious adult happenings through the eyes of children" (*film*), Bernstein suggests that the audience is given what is necessary to search within for the answers to the many questions that Scout has the ability to ask each and every one of us.

Mary Badham was cast as Scout straight out of Birmingham, Alabama, along with the actor that played her fictional brother, Jem. Years after the movie was released, she expounds what she believes to be at the core of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, holding that deep in the novel/film is "an understanding that the children finally come to about the reality of the world and how they have to take what life gives them, somehow using these experiences to better not only their own lives, but the lives around them" (*film*). This statement can be joined with the comment of Alan Pakula, the producer, which holds that *To Kill a Mockingbird* is "as much a part of the American myth as *Huckleberry Finn* and *Tom Sawyer*" (*film*), to make an overarching assertion about the success of Lee's project. Scout makes better the life of Tom Robinson as Huck makes better the life of Jim, but Badham's feelings can be taken to a higher level, one that directly addresses the audience. Lee and Twain create a means by which the two children can use their experiences to better the lives of the receptors of their enlightened vision by forcing them to view racism through adolescent eyes.

Conclusion

"It is no mistake, perhaps, that the white children of *To Kill a Mockingbird* never grow up. ... Scout and Jem are the timeless inheritors of the liberal vision" ("BAF" 206). Ironically, it is in our best interest for Huck and Scout to remain poised in this state, as it is through their distinctly adolescent eyes and voices that we, as readers, are able to enter into the relationships that they form with Jim and Tom, respectively. In gauging the success of the "child's book" format in the exposition of the controversial issue of racism, it is clear that a critical examination of society through the medium of American fiction is best presented and best received when told through the eyes of the child. When we read *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*, we are told "[stories] of racial injustice from the point of view of thoughtful children with 'open, unprejudiced, well-furnished minds of their own'" (*EAL* 30-31); what is unique to the construction of the "child's book" is that we are enlightened by the vision of these children "from a distance rather than from an 'in your face' point of view" (*JD* 131-32). As I proved, this distinction is critical to the successful reception of the moral lessons being taught.

Critical discussion of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and *To Kill a Mockingbird* has concluded that these texts are effective pieces of social criticism, but the current discussion fails to provide a concise explanation for the success of the works; my thesis tackles this absence of explanation. I insist that the "child's book," as a literary construction, creates an environment in which we, as readers, learn historic and contemporary truths about interracial associations. Unaware that we are being taught by the children, we come upon black men whose freedom lies in the hands of the white Southern majority, a social group to which both Huck and Scout belong, at least in the physical sense.

It is at this point that we are asked by the authors to evaluate the union of white children and black men not through our own eyes but through the eyes of the children. What is unique to my argument, and what has been left out of critical discussion, is that the development that takes place in the lives of the white children is energized entirely by their relationships with the black men. Many critics will contend that the relationships are illegitimate, as the white/black friction that exists in the novels never disappears fully. What I argue is that these interracial relationships, at least at the individual level, are symbiotic and, accordingly, can be viewed as being of a legitimate nature.

In *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, the symbiotic friendship is quite clear, as Huck and Jim provide physical and emotional support for each other as they journey down the Mississippi River on the same raft. While many critics hold that stereotypes are reinforced by Twain, as the black man is freed by the white child at the end of the novel, I maintain that Huck also requires a savior and that Jim comes to his rescue by assuming the role of patriarch and friend in the life of the misfit boy. To make the same link between Scout and Tom, we need to look more closely, as their connection is not as explicit as that of Huck and Jim. Scout's most important learning experiences are tied to the trial of Tom Robinson in some way. It is through her incessant confrontation with racial injustice during the trial that she realizes that "[y]ou never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view—until you climb into his skin and walk around in it" (*TKAM* 36). Scout cannot possibly save Tom in the way that Huck saves Jim, as Tom's fate lies in the "secret courts of men's hearts" (254), which are penetrated by racism. But, Scout does indeed save Tom indirectly, as she finds a way in which to disband the mob by appealing to its leader, Mr. Cunningham. It seems impossible for Scout to be saved by Tom in the way that Huck is saved by Jim but I, going against most critics, assert that this is

not the case. In accordance with my claim that Boo Radley is, in fact, a reincarnation of or a stand-in for Tom, Scout and her brother are indeed saved by the character marginalized by society, the "other." Thus, through the eyes of the child, we become entwined in symbiotic interracial relationships that not only stimulate growth but enable us "to survive in a world where racism does still exist" (*JD* xxi).

To this end, Huck and Scout, white children, must be embraced for their visionary outlook, as they are presented in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and in *To Kill a Mockingbird* as models of the way in which to approach the many evils that surround the concept of race. We, as readers of these texts, are thereby positioned as receptors of such vision, even as we are unaware that we are observing, that we are learning, and, ultimately, that we have been enlightened. As a result, we become equipped to create a new paradigm for viewing interracial associations in American fiction and, more importantly, in our daily lives.

Notes

[1] Twain also drew on an experience that had occurred to Tom's brother Bence, who had helped a runaway slave hiding on a nearby island with deliveries of food.

[2] *Mark Twain's Autobiography*, ed. Paine, 2: 174-75. Paine, Albert Bigelow. *Mark Twain: A Biography*. 3 vols. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1912.

[3] Tony Tanner, for example, observed in 1965 in *Reign of Wonder* that "Huck remains a voice. ..." (181); and Keith Opdahl noted in 1990 in "'The Rest is Just Cheating,'" "Huck comes to life for us not as a physical being, since his appearance is barely described in the book (we know only that he dresses in 'rags' and fidgets at the dinner table) but as a voice..." (277).

[4] "Sociable Jimmy." *New York Times*, 29 November 1874, 7.

[5] These elements of "voice" were discussed extensively in Fishkin's text, *Was Huck Black?: Mark Twain and African-American Voices.*

[6] Twain, in Blair and Hill, *America's Humor*, 327. Blair, Walter, and Hamlin Hill. *America's Humor*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978.

[7] Lionel Trilling has asserted that Jim is Huck's "true father." Trilling, Lionel. "The Greatness of *Huckleberry Finn*." (From *The Liberal Imagination*, 1950).

[8] "Harper Lee & *To Kill a Mockingbird* (26 January 2000)," mockingbird@chebucto.ns.ca. (I based my understanding of Lee's background on extensive outside reading. This website provided what seemed to be an accurate outline of Lee's background.)

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] *Ibid.*

[11] Wallace, John. "The Case Against *Huck Finn.*" In *Satire or Evasion? Black Perspectives on Huckleberry Finn*. Ed. James S. Leonard, Thomas A. Tenney, and Thadious M. Davis. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1992. 16-24.
---Wallace, John. "*Huckleberry Finn*: Literature or Racist Trash?" In *The Critical Response to Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn*. Ed. Laurie Champion. New York: Greenwood, 1991. 147-55.

[12] Jill P. May, "Censors as Critics: *To Kill a Mockingbird* as a Case Study," in *Cross-Culturalism in Children's Literature* (New York: Pace University Press, 1988), 91.

[13] James Carville, quoted in Garry Wills, "From the Campaign Trail: Clinton's Hell-Raiser," *New Yorker*, October 12, 1992, 93; Zell Miller, quoted in Celestine Sibley, "Miller Unfurls a Call for Justice and Honor," *Atlanta Constitution*, January 13, 1993, B, 2.

[14] To the best of my knowledge, this remains to be the case.

[15] *Survey of Lifetime Readers*, Prepared for the Library of Congress and Book-of-the-Month Club (Mansfield Center, Connecticut: Information Analysis Systems Corp., 1991), 1-8.

[16] Nancy Louise Rutherford, "The Student Survival Guide for *To Kill a Mockingbird* (26 January 2000)," MooMaiden@aol.com.

[17] *Variety*, Feb. 27, 1920, 46.

[18] Kenneth Geist, *Pictures Will Talk: The Life and Films of Joseph Mankiewicz* (New York: Scribners, 1978), 153.

[19] David Ansen, "Rites of Passage," *Newsweek*, April 6, 1993, 58.

[20] *Ibid.*

[21] *Ibid.*

[22] *Ibid.*

[23] Julie Salamon, *Wall Street Journal*, April 1, 1993, A12.

[24] Ralph Novak, "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn," *People*, April 12, 1993, 17.

[25] Melinda Miller, "Too Cute for Comfort," *Gusto*, April 2, 1993, 20.

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