

INTERPRETATION OF WOMEN CHARACTERS IN HARPER LEE'S TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD

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ABSTRACT

It is a widely accepted fact that literature reflects society. Harper Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird is the reflection of 1930's America. Lee meticulously captures the issues, beliefs, prejudices of the Americans in this time period in the setting of a fictitious town, Maycomb, Alabama. Maycomb is a small town of close-knit families living for decades in that town. Though this is her first and the only novel (1920) till she would go on to publish Go Set a Watchman (2015) in 2015, Mockingbird received rave reviews and critical acclaim for her novel. Mockingbird received the Pulitzer Prize and went on to become a classic American novel which is prescribed in American Schools. The narrative is partly autobiographical as it is vaguely based on the incidents Lee witnessed in her hometown in 1936. The novel though deals with a very critical issue, racial prejudice, is simultaneously warm and educative of human values. The protagonist, Scout Finch, learns her lessons of compassion and courage at the hands of her father, Atticus Finch and their domestic help, Calpurnia.

The present paper deals with the portrayal of women in Mockingbird. Lee portrays her women as strong, assertive, ethical and nurturing. Simultaneously, we have certain social characters who are stereotypes and the accuser, Mayella of Tom Robinson, a negative character. It is interesting to note the strong roles, both positive and negative, the women characters play in this novel. The paper makes a note of the strikingly contrasting characteristics and attempts to study the autobiographical elements behind the portrayal of women characters in the Mockingbird.

KEYWORDS: Characters in Mockinbird; women characters in Mockingbird; Interpretation of characters in Mockingbird; and autobiographical elements in Mockingbird