



An outlook of the theme of sanctity in *to kill a mocking bird*

Saeid Rahimipour

Faculty Member, Farhangian University, Iran
sdrahimipour@yahoo.com

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Abstract

Literary works have some great implications for the readers. They project upon the minds of the readers their intended meanings and condole their anguishes respectively. This article has tried to attribute, pinpoint, and find the application and exemplification of the theme of sanctity in the novel To Kill a Mocking Bird. Through content analysis of the novel and via the general mode of presentation of the course of novel, this research has tried to deal with the survey of the theme of saintliness in the novel and, if any, its projection to similar concepts at postmodernism era. The paper through the text extracts as well as their projection upon common and tangible concepts at postmodernism has presented some interesting manifestation of sacred phenomena like a mocking bird which have been framed by author's special selection of characters and settings. It has detected the idea of sacredness and its expansion and attribution to other things and persons in detail which would prove fascinating for the readers and researchers.

Keywords: Outlook, sacredness, theme, mocking bird.

Introduction

Literature and literary works have contributed a lot to the revelation of themes of different types. They convey some sort of themes which can be harbinger of some realities and they may lead to the solution or eradication of that problem. This paper has a tendency to reveal realities which have driven humanity to the corner. Among these obsessions, literary works have flourished and given way to the administration and eradication of such phenomena in the society. A great number of the existential obsessions of postmodern man has been highlighted in the works of art and have been eradicated at the result of such activities. After the industrial revolution, human life and society changed drastically. These changes caused new burdens and obsessions on the way of humanity and his being. Racism has been one of the great challenges of mankind for a long period in the history of humanity. Many a pieces of art have targeted themes of this type which have proved to be successful regarding the delineation of these themes. When the works of art expose people to the reality of what is going on circulating in the society and finally the decision-makers come up with the idea of how the phenomenon can be settled down. The majority of advances occurred regarding man and his life has been due to the nature of such literary endeavors. This paper has tried to show how the areas of the novel *To Kill a Mocking Bird* has dealt with the revelation of the theme of racism and a sort of invisible oppression and slavery in the story by choosing the title of the term the mocking bird which to many people and cultures signify sacredness and innocence. The paper through the content analysis of the novel illuminates the reality of the sacredness of the antagonist as a symbol of innocence and suppression going on during the course of the novel. Harper

Lee¹ has been able to show this reality by the unfair trial of a Negro named Tom Robinson for the accusation he has really done.

Analysis

Harper Lee, on the line of the illustration of the theme at hand, has done this delicately through her novel *to Kill a Mocking Bird*. She has delicately chosen a small town as its setting in order not to let other factors interfere with the major theme of the novel and this has enhanced the centralization of the theme and its development. She has done it in a way that this trial has obsessed the mind and the soul of almost every member of the town whose great manifestation has been the crowded hall of the court on the day of the trial. The mode of the story regarding the type of the guilt committed and the atmosphere of the story all in a sense give rise to the intensification of such modes. The mode of her story is to a great part harrowing and unfair as it may lead to the removal of some social problems deriving man to the corner. Harper has done her best to "offer child-embodied racial innocence as a solution to injustice"². When a phenomenon is dealt with directly, for sure, it will be justified or even intensified by the authorities or those in charge of or exercising it calling for other types of tacts to deal with it more efficiently. This may have inspired Lee in her refuge to the framework of fiction and novel genre and via the theme of sanctity to illuminate this area of man and his obsessions. She has tried to intensify the theme of racism and race discrimination as the final aim of her artistic goal and she has proved to be promising with this regard. She has maneuvered over the elements of fiction, mainly characterization and setting to add to the manifestation and revelation of the theme in her

novel. The extracts and the clarification of the concepts would highlight her tact in revealing the theme as she juxtaposes the questions of humanity, race, and color. Whiteness as a privilege for the white has attributed the right of being superior even in the court to them something which for both the black and the white has turned out to be one of the great existential obsessions. The black knowing the fact that although they are innocent they will be charged with guilt from the negative portion of the society and this in a sense has called their inner status into question. This even comes true in case of humanitarian activists like Atticus Finch the protagonist of the story in taking the case of a black and in keeping silent though aware of the inequality of the court in its judgment. Tom Robinson has been serving the white lady sincerely but is accused of immoral acts he himself and her really know that this has not been so. To get rid of the public blame, the court and the lady assign the wrong action on Tom because his initial status is under question as a Negro. The terms holy, sacred, innocence, and suppression all deal with the reality of being so direct in striking the mind the idea of seclusion, detachment, deprived and condemned. The court through this condemnation at a micro level deprive the negroes from being judged equally and at a macro level they try to support racism. This novel highlights one of the long lasting bitter tension going on in the society of America at that time in their deployment of slavery which alongside other movements like suffrage movement took great energy of the literary intellectuals and the politicians to find a way of stabilizing human rights which in the end results in human rights organization. This leads to the international treaties on the relationship between countries and the condition of human being on every part of the globe. The political side of the trial overshadows the judiciary procedure which although everything from attendance in the court to the right of having a lawyer is superficially controlled but in reality this is just a kind of show of bitter nothingness exercised on the black as designed by Harper Lee. The black had experienced injustice for a long period of time whose slavery and suppressions have been asserted by the creation of works of art which have technically targeted them. It reveals the fact that "you never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view... Until you climb inside of his skin and walk around in it" (MB, 33). During the course of the novel, Lee revolving around the sense of sympathy and innocence has attracted the core of the viciousness in progress at that time. Lee attributes this phenomenon to other nations in which this condemned phenomenon is practiced as "skin color and types of human body are used as classification in society, not only in America but in most countries in the world"³. For Lee, to uncover the real nature of the deeds of the people of her time in her novel, she deals with indirect reflection of the brutality of the Whites' attitudes which is revealed via the collaborative impact of the setting, characterization, and above all the point of view of a child's third person view point which time and again is centralized on the child figure character of the novel, Scout from first person viewpoint. The innocent view of the little female figure of the novel, Scout, in preventing the whites from

hurting Tom has been effective as she has targeted the reality of innocence in their unconsciousness.

The night before the trial, many white men armed come to take Tom, but at the suggestion and impressive speech of Scout the little girl character in the story they left without objection. "So it took an eight-year-old child to bring 'em to their senses, didn't it?" said Atticus. "That proves something- that a gang of wild animals can be stopped, simply because they're still human" (MB, 180).

One can detect the obedience of the white in being loyal to the principles of morality and those of the society, but what pans out regarding the deeds of the white is sheer suppressive and biased judgment. The text has been written by a white female writer indicating that she just like her protagonist, Atticus, has tried to help the removal of racism by the selection of the implicit title of mocking bird and comparing Tom Robinson to a mocking bird which this sort of projection has been confirmed in many studies. She has assigned her own gentle female affection and attention to the nature of the cruelty of behavior of the white against the black by elevating the black status to the level of a mocking bird, its respect, and the accompanying security from being shot and killed by people. The very idea of her title selection for the purpose is alluring as people for no good reason except the religious or moral beliefs assign upon the bird this sacredness whose equivalent concept has been assigned on Tom as a paragon of the black community and the white color privileged one. It becomes clear that "racial discrimination occurred because of the existence of social system that divides people into two major classes where the majority class using racist ideology to legitimate their power in society"⁴.

Throughout the novel the allusions to religion and religious beliefs as well as mysterious events can be seen which pave the way for the flourishing of sanctity of a mocking bird.

My confidence in pulpit Gospel lessened at the vision of is Maudie stewing forever in various Protestant hells (Mocking Bird, henceforth, MB, 49).

"Son," he said to Jem, "I'm going to tell you something and tell you one time: stop tormenting that man. That goes for two of you." What Mr Radley did was his own business. If he wanted to come out, he would. If he wanted to stay inside his own house he had the right to stay inside free from the attentions of inquisitive children, which was a mild term for the likes of us (MB, 54).

Atticus's prevention of his children regarding their interference with Radley's affair shows his respect for the rights of the individuals on the one hand, and his house in the vicinity of a mysterious man proves his rejection of racism on the other hand. Such attitudes can also be detected elsewhere when one can see Atticus' assertions when he gave the children air guns:

Shoot all the blue jays you want, if you can hit 'em, but remember it's a sin to kill a mockingbird" (MB,102).

The mode of arranging the setting as well as the type of characters deployed during the course of the novel pave the way for the administration of the theme of saintliness. The connotation of the sacredness can also be detected in the characters' social class, too. One can see that "Among families with diverse backgrounds, these facts create a class stereotype in the town, with The Finches and other 'common folks' as the upper and middle class resident" (Nurbudhiati, 2015: 5)⁵. In Chapter 5, page 50, Miss Maudie tells Scout " Sometime the Bible in hand of one man is worse than a whiskey bottle the hand of-oh, your father."The feeling grew until the atmosphere in the courtroom was exactly the same as a cold February morning, when the mockingbirds were still, and the carpenters had stopped hamming on Miss Maudie's new house, and every wood door in the neighborhood was shut as tight as the doors of Radley Place (MB, 240). What is more evident in this extract is the illustration of setting in time and place of the novel which is emerald with the selection of special characters.

"And so a quiet, respectable, humble Negro who had the unmitigated temerity to "feel sorry for a white woman has had to let out his word against two white people. I need not remind you of their appearance and conduct on the stand-you saw them for yourselves (MB, 233).

Time and again, during the course of the novel setting, characters, and tone of the novel coagulate on the projection of the desired themes like loneliness, deprivation, and sanctity.

After the accusation procedure they meet at home. Every member of Atticus family was surprised at the judge's decision.

Atticus "said Jem bleakly.
He turned in the door way. "What, son?"

"How could 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 that only children weep. Good night' (MB, 244).

His sermon was a forthright denunciation of sin, an austere declaration of the motto on the wall behind him: he warned his flock against the evils of heady brews, gambling, and strange women (MB, 138). The way characterization has been deployed paves the way for the illustration of the theme at hand. "This case, Tom Robinson's case, is something that goes to the essence of a man's conscience- Scout, I couldn't go to church and worship God if I didn't try to help that man"(MB, 120).

Atticus Finch, an illustrious lawyer in Maycomb, takes Tom's case which arises the hatred of the white. Lee has delicately highlighted this aspect of characterization in her work. She characterizes Atticus Finch "the wise and patient white lawyer who is a model of heroism and enlightenment in Mockingbird is

found espousing segregationist views as he responds to the burgeoning civil rights movement in the South in the mid-fifties"⁶ to pave the way for capturing Lee's themes.

The kind of guilt in the form of assault to Mayella and its final sentence ending in Tom's death, Atticus's children Jem and Scout and their involvement in the real process of the trial and its outcome, Mr Ewel's assault and attack to the children, and finally their rescue by Radley intermingle the tone of the novel into a mysterious one. The narration of a little girl will show that what has been asserted embodies the highest degree of innocence and originality in message. The classification of the novel characters according to their needs and deeds reflect the idea that the majority of the characters, settings, messages, and themes are roughly sub classified under the rubric of innocence and enthusiasm highlighting who and what is really being the victim and can be considered as the mocking bird and taken as a saintly figure. Lee has delicately deployed the characters' action by orientating their attention towards things that can be serving a special purpose. Atticus gives Scout some words of wisdom when he says, "You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view... Until you climb inside of his skin and walk around in it" (MB, 33). What Lee has been innocently and indirectly in pursuit of has been highlighting the American society in which there "is the ever-raging conflict between, on the one hand, the valuations preserved on the general plane which we shall call the "American Creed," where the American thinks, talks, and acts under the influence of high national and Christian precepts, and, on the other hand, the valuations on specific planes of individual and group living, where personal and local interests are concerned"⁷.

Scout as the narrator and as she is not an omniscient character leaves the Burden of coming up with the real mocking bird in the story upon the reader himself. "While I would argue that this private, often familial, mode of introduction has certainly contributed to the tomboy figure's cultural power, it is also a reflection of gender inequities"⁸. This point of view of narration indicates the great prosaic selection of Lee's narrator. "She frequently uses epistemic modality markers to alert the readers to the possibility that her subjective impressions may or may not be correct"⁹ leaving the hunches upon the readers". So the novel challenges the reader to "figure out what the child Scout is missing, to make the inferences she can't make, so we might see the story like the adult Scout looking back"¹⁰. What Harper has tried to bold has been the fact that if some special phenomenon is supposed to be eradicated it should either be abandoned by force or be put across the individuals' religious or human nature. The removal of a great action like racism which has been practiced for centuries on the globe has proved not to be an easy task to achieve unless it is given different tacts like the sanctity of a mocking bird whose sacredness has a long history taken back to the old tradition. She has delicately elevated the status of the black race who have been suppressed by the whites cruelly to that of a saint, a symbol figure respected as long as the history of human being and its adherence to religious ideas

and beliefs. Some like Kafka take refuge in psychologically ill characters in *the Trial* to highlight the miserable condition of human being, some others like Lee maneuver over the sacredness of the characters to give rise to the creation of the soothing and harrowing atmosphere to which all attention will be attracted. "I, too. I am the darker brother. I, too am American"¹¹. Through such theme development, Harper has chosen the most lenient and alluring atmosphere through the mouth of a child to hinge upon the innermost feeling of the reality of attracting attention of the reader or viewer to eradicate the miserable phenomena of the society of that time which would pave the way for the stability of human being in the future. As indicated this novel has "stood for social justice and humanism over the tyranny of bigotry and hate"¹².

Conclusion

Harper Lee in her great novel *To Kill a Mocking Bird* from the view point of the youngest character of the novel has tried to illustrate the suppression and cruelty exercised against human being by highlighting the saintliness of phenomena or people under such actions. Instead of direct address of the theme at hand, she has turned to the opposite side of the continuum of viciousness, injustice, and cruelty to the kindness, sympathy, and humanity by dealing with the theme of saintliness and selecting the title of a mocking bird. She has referred to the wrong privilege of whiteness and their suppressions of the black leading to bitter racism as her final literary aim in this novel. She has technically contributed her share in the revival and restoration of the rights of the black in the society via reflection of the inner and pure human nature of a white lawyer as her protagonist. This novel and has done its best in the removal of the horrible existential obsessions of people by dealing with the theme of innocence and sanctity. In the end, it has tried to conclude the book as the protagonist, Atticus, in response to Scout's assertion that everybody is nicely asserted that "most people are, Scout, when you finally see them." (MB, 323) which adds to the sanctity attributed to human being.

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