

ABSTRACT

Forwards and Backwards: Reading Harper Lee across Time and Text

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The recent discovery of Harper Lee's manuscript, *Go Set a Watchman*, irrevocably changed the way readers approach her original text, *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Introducing a found manuscript and presenting it as a distinct work presents many challenges to readers in regards to the way they read the two texts together and apart. This trio of essays explores Lee's two works and this uniquely historic textual relationship by first examining the texts together through their publishing history, then reconsidering the appeal of *Mockingbird* to young readers in light of *Watchman*, and concluding with an application of the major biblical allusions presented by *Watchman* to *Mockingbird*'s text. Central to each of these studies is the fluidity with which one can read the texts: either forwards through the textual chronology from Scout to Jean Louis or backwards in time according to the order in which Lee wrote the texts.

Forwards and Backwards: Reading Harper Lee across Time and Text

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Few American authors have achieved the same level of widespread success as Harper Lee. Even fewer American authors have achieved that level of success by publishing at a rate of one novel every fifty-five years. Yet ask anyone who has been a part of the American school system in the last five decades if they have read *To Kill a Mockingbird* and the overwhelming response will be “yes.” Some of those people may claim it as their favorite book. Some may even say that Atticus Finch is the reason they went to law school, although those people are more likely to point to Gregory Peck’s performance as the final word on that particular influence. Regardless of when or where people read it, Lee’s primary and solitary novel has installed itself in the American literary canon without question—excepting those who have attempted to censure Lee or who have consistently questioned the authenticity of Lee’s authorship.

That all changed when HarperCollins announced that a new manuscript had been found and the long-desired sequel would finally be released to the public. Enter the sensationalized news stories claiming elder abuse and publisher manipulation and suddenly the revealed existence of a couple hundred pages became one of the most controversial events of 2015. The scandal and cries of outrage did not abate after the summer publication of *Go Set a Watchman*, but instead rose to a fever pitch as the new “novel” effaced the idealized figure of nostalgia and classic American values found in Atticus Finch. Lee’s sequel presented a significant and unprecedented problem to readers

of American literature: when presented with a text that contradicts and essentially rewrites its predecessor, how do we continue to read the original text as we always have?

The following chapters seek to answer that question and explore the ramifications of such an answer. First, we must recognize *Go Set a Watchman* for what it is and can only do that by fully comprehending the historical significance of its publication and the specifics of its relationship to Lee's original publication, *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Once that knowledge base has been established, then we can begin to consider how we can read the texts together as both separate works but also as works that are intrinsically linked together in terms of ideology. The vastly different approaches depicted in each text would seem to suggest that *Go Set a Watchman* is not a text that can appeal to and engage the same readership as *To Kill a Mockingbird*. However, by reading the texts alongside each other in a state of fluid temporality, realistically the texts can build off of one another to provide an even richer understanding of the state of racial injustice in the South. Finally, by exploring the specific biblical allusions connected to *Go Set a Watchman*'s title, we can see how Lee established the foundations of Scout's character in Jean Louise via a comparison to Isaiah. Each of these sections treats Lee's texts in slightly different ways, but the goal of each is to begin tracing the outlines of one of the most bizarrely complex and interwoven textual relationships in American literature.

CHAPTER TWO

Found Manuscript to Published Book: The History and Relationship between Two Texts

Despite her reputation as one of the most widely-read novelists in American literature, Harper Lee defied expectations for fifty five years by never publishing a follow-up novel to her Pulitzer Prize winning *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Lee became nearly as notorious as J.D. Salinger for being a recluse, a comparison many find befitting not only for their extreme habitual shunning of the public eye but also for their reputations as one-hit wonders of the literary world. Lee gave her last official interview in 1964, only four years after the novel that would make her a household name had hit the shelves. Tuesday, February 3, 2015 marked a significant event in the landscape of American literature: HarperCollins announced that they would be publishing the sequel to Lee's first novel. While the press release clearly hints that the document discovered by Lee's lawyer, Tonja Carter, is the original manuscript of *To Kill a Mockingbird* that was presumed lost for all of these years, the rhetoric of the release buries this fact under a barrage of descriptions of "another book" (HarperCollins "Press Release"). Jonathan Burnham, the Senior Vice President of HarperCollins, says that it reads "in many ways like a sequel to Harper Lee's classic novel." It reads that way, but should it have been labeled that way? The reported failure of *Go Set a Watchman* as a sequel can be traced to several factors including the publisher's flawed presentation of the book before its publication as a sequel, the loss of authorial control over the manuscript, as well as a potentially gross misunderstanding of the actual use of such a document. The first two of

these issues cannot be changed, but we can still change how we approach *Go Set a Watchman* as readers. If we are to move forward with any scholarly consideration for the text, some basic assumptions must be made first: *Go Set a Watchman* is not a sequel; *Go Set a Watchman* is a rough draft for *To Kill a Mockingbird*; and when juxtaposed against each other, a tension is formed that highlights the editorial choices made between rough draft and finished text. Read not as a second novel but as a pre-cursory exploration into the world of the final product of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Go Set a Watchman* provides unique insight into Lee's earliest drafts that are not tucked away in an archive, but available for public consumption. A comparison between the two books outlines a tension that can reveal some of the intricacies of the editorial process.

Understanding the background of how *Go Set a Watchman* came to be published is essential to understanding how it has been used as a text and potentially misused. In a 1995 article in the *St. Louis Dispatch*, Sharon Bond quoted Lee as saying, “I don't think I will write another one,' [...] after the success of 'Mockingbird,' she had only one way to go and that was down” (Bond D-3). *Mockingbird* was shocking in its early days of publication and continues to be a mainstay in high school classrooms as a means of sparking conversations among adolescents about issues of racism and injustice. Laura Fine points out in her essay “Structuring the Narrator's Rebellion in *To Kill a Mockingbird*” that Lee's work as a white female author was “revolutionary indeed” in how it used a white man to deconstruct the generally accepted segregation prominent in his society (Petry 75). Atticus Finch, though by no means perfect in his philosophies on race relations, became a beloved and revered character in American literature, one whom

many pointed to as an example of how to enter respectfully into the discourse on racial inequality in a society characterized by its volatile tensions.

With such an intense following behind the original novel, extreme reactions were a given following the publisher's press release early in 2015. Intrigue and outrage were offered in equal parts from the public. *Go Set a Watchman* was simultaneously the most highly anticipated and the most violently denounced book yet to be published. Several articles, including a scathing piece by *Washington Post* journalist Neely Tucker, brought up the ethical issues behind Lee's advanced age and reported dementia as a result of a stroke she experienced earlier this decade. In a 2011 letter sent to Marja Mills, following a dispute over her authorization to publish a book on Lee's life, Alice Lee (Lee's sister) wrote that "Poor Nelle Harper can't see and can't hear and will sign anything put before her by any one in whom she has confidence" (Bahr "Harper Lee Speaks"). This letter came as a response to a published accusation by Lee that Mills' memoirs, a record of her time spent as the Lee sisters' neighbor in Monroeville, AL, had never been approved by Nelle or Alice. These accusations were leveled despite Mills' own claims in the prologue to the book that she had written it "with their guidance" and "with their blessing" (Mills 1). Three years after the initial dispute, the published letter from Alice Lee to Marja Mills revealed that Tonja Carter, a lawyer in Alice's own firm who worked with the sisters, had given Nelle Lee the statement without Alice's knowledge, which she signed and forgot about soon thereafter. Such a major slip in communication between the Lees and their legal representatives on a legal scale of massive proportions was troubling at the time but caused even greater concern at the outset of an even more lucrative enterprise: a second novel. These events and other legal issues over the years concerning her copyright

holdings were still fresh in the public mind at the time of the February press release. The fact that it was specifically Tonja Carter who was credited with the discovery of the manuscript in the fall of 2014 combined with Alice's death only three months prior to the press release did not do much to assuage people's imaginations about how easily Lee's publishers and lawyers could have taken advantage of her mental state.

What is more frightening is that this was not even the first incident where Nelle Lee had her wishes acted against. Along with the Thirty-Fifth Anniversary Edition of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, HarperCollins included "A New Foreword by the Author." However, Lee did not give HarperCollins a new foreword to publish. What appeared in the edition under the label of "foreword" was instead an excerpt from a letter to her agent "in which she stated emphatically that she did not want to make *any* public statements about her novel" (Petry 145; author's emphasis). The so-called "new foreword" as it is printed communicates a wry irony to the reader just by existing there on the page:

Please spare *Mockingbird* an Introduction. As a reader I loathe Introductions. To novels, I associate Introductions with long-gone authors and works that are being brought back into print after decades of internment. Although *Mockingbird* will be 33 this year, it has never been out of print and I am still alive, although very quiet. Introductions inhibit pleasure, they kill the joy of anticipation, they frustrate curiosity. The only good thing about Introductions is that in some cases they delay the dose to come. *Mockingbird* still says what it has to say; it has managed to survive the years without preamble. (*Mockingbird* "Foreword")

Despite being a text that might warrant an explanatory introduction from the author, it is worth noting that Harper Lee's request was granted for *Go Set a Watchman*. It has no introduction or foreword.

Even if Nelle Harper Lee did support the publication of her manuscript, an opinion she is reported to hold though all of her statements regarding the matter have

been transmitted through Carter in whose best interest it remains that Lee be supportive of the publishing agreement, there is an added issue of why the novel was never published before. In the Annie Laurie Williams Papers Collection of Columbia University's Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Lee's original agent's records of publishing contracts expose the truth of the creation of *Go Set a Watchman*. On an index card chronicling the life of *To Kill a Mockingbird* with J. B. Lippincott, the title "*Go Set a Watchman*" appears in line with the contract date on the top line. It was then crossed out at some point after Lee's file was created within the agency, and the words "*To Kill a Mocking Bird*" appear above the original title with an underline. These notations indicate that *Watchman* was the original text sent to the J. B. Lippincott editors in 1957, and which then sparked the revision process to emerge as *To Kill a Mockingbird* on July 11, 1960. Lee's contract allowed for a the option of a second novel, and if Lippincott was already aware of Lee's imagined story continuing past the events of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, it stands to reason that they would have jumped at the opportunity to edit the story and capitalize on Lee's instant popularity. However, either because the material was not up to par with the quality Lee had come to expect from her work or because the manuscript truly was lost, *Go Set a Watchman* was out of the running for publication until a time when all parties involved in the original decisions were either dead or in a dubious position to make legal decisions.

Lee's most well-known biographer, Charles J. Shields, claimed in a 2015 newspaper article that he "feel[s] vindicated ... I've been saying that this novel exists since 2006. I found correspondence at Columbia University between Harper Lee and her agent, Annie Laurie Williams, about this book" (Herman). His biography, *Mockingbird*,

certainly mentions both *Go Set a Watchman* and an earlier draft of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, but since the release of the actual *Watchman* text, Shields' claims of absolute knowledge of the manuscript are dubious at best:

She returned to Crain's office in January 1957 with both a short story, 'The Cat's Meow,' and the first fifty pages of a novel, *Go Set a Watchman*, a title that suggests the scene in the novel when Atticus Finch sits outside the town jail, guarding his client from a lynch mob. A week later, she was back again, this time with one hundred more pages. From then on, she dropped off about fifty new pages with Crain every week through the end of February. Two months of back-and-forth revisions followed between author and agent until, in early May, Crain judged that the manuscript was in suitable shape to send out. But he had never like the title *Go Set a Watchman*. It sounded like the novel had to do with clocks or something. What about just titling it after the main character, Atticus? (Shields 114; Williams box 210)

Shields does mention a manuscript titled *Go Set a Watchman* in his 2006 biography; it is unclear, though, whether the manuscript in question, retitled *Atticus* before it ever made it through the doors of J. B. Lippincott and into the hand of Theresa von Hohoff, is actually the same manuscript that is now known as *Go Set a Watchman*. It is possible that Shields simply did not know that there was a different manuscript. After all, his assumptions about the meaning of the title are far off the mark from the reality: while the words at face value could be read as a reference to Atticus' guarding stance for Tom and his children which later appears in *Mockingbird*, if one has read the actual text of *Watchman* then it is clear to see that title appears in a scene in which Jean Louise listens to a Sunday sermon on Isaiah and recognizes in the biblical passage the same need for a guiding force to give her direction in her own life. Not only that, but Shields also claims that the original draft that "was in the third person, then she changed to the first person and later rewrote the final draft, which blended the two narrators" (Shields 128). *Watchman* does, in fact, consist mostly of third person narrative, but Lee was already experimenting with

perspectives by frequently switching to first person when Jean Louise is under emotional duress or simply needs to make a snarky remark. It is possible that the manuscript which Shields speaks of as the original is not *Watchman* but rather some iteration created after Lee had already shelved the *Watchman* manuscript.

Shields also mentions another novel that Lee had been working on while waiting to hear back from Lippincott about *Atticus* called *The Long Goodbye* (115). This second novel never reappears in Shields' account of Lee's life. He does include rumors from later in Lee's life of a lost second manuscript which remains unnamed. Near the time of Tay Hohoff's death, a film producer for BBC visited Monroeville and spoke to Alice Lee about Lee's rumored second novel:

According to Alice, just as Nelle was finishing the novel, a burglar broke into her apartment and stole the manuscript. It was something about hunting a deer, Griffiths seem [sic] to recall. Apparently, she didn't have the heart to start over. And that was the last ever said by the Lee family about a second novel by Harper Lee being almost done. (Shields 263)

Obviously, this lost manuscript about a deer is not the *Go Set a Watchman* that is in print today, but it is unclear whether Shields or anyone connected to Lee over the years was aware of the existence of this exact manuscript before its recent discovery.

Reporters of various news outlets expressed their concerns for the ethical issues surrounding the publication announcement, though none were so pronounced in their denouncements as Neely Tucker of *The Washington Post*. Her article claims that through "clever marketing and cryptic pronouncements [Lee's publisher and lawyer] have managed to produce an instant bestseller, months before anyone has read it" (Tucker "To Kill a Mockingbird"). Tucker cites several members of Lee's community who have remained reportedly close to Lee even as she has stepped away even further from the

public and into her assisted-living facility. Each person she interviewed has a seemingly conflicting idea of Lee's rational abilities. One man who believed Lee to be "entirely lucid" later qualified his opinion with certain signs that her memory was failing. These and other rumors of the true extent of the complicated circumstances surrounding *Go Set a Watchman* circulated right up until its publication on July 14, 2015.

Part of the "clever marketing" Tucker points to in her article involves the way the new Lee book was presented to the public, subtly linking it to the original novel and creating an imaginary partnership in the minds of the public. A month and a half after the initial announcement, the US and UK publishers released the final covers of the book. Though the two designs differed drastically from each other, they both clearly made the connection to *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The UK version revealed a bright orange background, a bird on a tree branch (presumably a mockingbird) and the new title resting on the equally-sized but darker-colored old title, almost as if *To Kill a Mockingbird* were the shadow of *Go Set a Watchman* and not the other way around. The US version lay on the opposite side of the spectrum. Its design constituted a deep blue cover featuring a tree in the foreground and a train approaching in the distance. The tree on the US cover bears a striking resemblance to the tree used on the original cover of *To Kill a Mockingbird* and which was brought back for the 2015 reprint by HarperCollins.

For the US version of *Go Set a Watchman* and the 2015 reprint version of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the connections do not stop with the cover. The two HarperCollins books even have similar inset black and white images of a tree branch from the cover to drive home the visual connection. The printer used the same jagged edge page detailing to give the books more of a rustic and historic aesthetic, which also creates a distinct physical

sensation when the reader turns the pages. The books match each other in thickness, but this is only by some tricks of the trade: *Go Set a Watchman* uses a thicker paper to beef up its thickness without increasing the page count, and *To Kill a Mockingbird* has a smaller trim size with thinner paper to make up for the sixty page difference between the two texts. While the seed copy on the inside flap of the dust jacket claims that the book “not only confirms the enduring brilliance of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, but also serves as its essential companion, adding depth, context, and new meaning to an American classic” this status as a companion book and not an independent, stand-alone text is directly contradicted by its label as “A Novel” on the front cover (*Watchman*). From a marketing standpoint, it makes sense to draw the connection between the two books as clearly as possible, but what was posed as a nostalgic return to a beloved world quickly morphed into a disappointing shell of what was promised.

The buildup of anticipation led to record-breaking pre-sales of the book and over one million copies sold in the first week. The enthusiasm for what was expected to be a sequel worthy of the Mockingbird name left readers overwhelmingly dissatisfied. Much of the attention from reviewers was placed on the dramatic shift in the character of Atticus Finch, the one-time champion of racial equality, to a man of latent racist sympathies. The fine image of the upstanding man of honor and morality was now shattered, and the hearts of die-hard Atticus fans everywhere broke with a particularly personal feeling of betrayal similar to that of Jean Louise’s in the novel. Atticus, the character the world knew as the champion of “equal rights for all, special privileges for none” had been twisted in the reader’s mind into a more sinister version of himself, a character that embodied the dangerously conservative ideas of 50’s America that the

rights of the state to govern itself superseded the rights of the individual to humane treatment (*Mockingbird* 282). *Time* reviewer Daniel D'Addario pinpoints just how distressing this revelation of Atticus's character is, particularly in a modern reader's mind:

Atticus, more than any other character, has stood for justice and righteousness in the American imagination. And now he's revealed as a bigot? Perhaps especially as anxieties rise over the apparent absence of justice in racially charged cases, it seems somehow too much. We need heroes in our fiction, at least. (D'Addario "Review")

While to a publisher it may have made sense to release this text to the public to turn a profit around the fifty-fifth anniversary of *To Kill a Mockingbird's* publication, there may have been a major miscalculation on the marketing side for a text that so clearly rewrites a major figure of American literature with problematic beliefs. The summer of 2015 was heated in more than just its weather with the steady simmer of the #BlackLivesMatter movement bringing instances of contemporary racism into the public view. Not only did this new book paint Atticus Finch in a new light, it also extended back in time to illuminate the Atticus Finch of *To Kill a Mockingbird* and highlight the issues of celebrating him as a champion for equality even before his sense of justice degenerated. While such a dramatic change in an iconic character of American literature might have gone unnoticed or apologized for in the past, the timing of *Go Set a Watchman's* publication exposed Atticus Finch to a public intensely aware of racial injustice in a post-Civil Rights world. NPR writer Maureen Corrigan supposes that "The novel turns on the adult Scout's disillusionment with her father — a disillusionment that lovers of *To Kill a Mockingbird* will surely share" (Corrigan "A Mess"). She continues to write that the novel as a whole is "kind of a mess that will forever change the way we read a

masterpiece.” Corrigan attributes great literary power to *Go Set a Watchman*, allowing it the power figuratively to rewrite history with changed perceptions of static material. While these comments on the thematic and character relationships between *Go Set a Watchman* and *To Kill a Mockingbird* are valid, they are reliant on the linear progression between the two novels chronologically in a self-contained literary universe. They do not take into context that the real progression is from *Go Set a Watchman* to *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

The horror many felt upon reading the Atticus of *Go Set a Watchman* was amplified because he is traditionally seen as such a proto-equal rights supporter in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. However, the true comparison lies in a retrograde analysis of the characters and story from *Go Set a Watchman* to *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Treating *Watchman* as the original text that then was transformed through Lee’s revising and re-visioning to become the text of *To Kill a Mockingbird* reveals what Lee truly valued in the story. The changes in Atticus’s character specifically demonstrate her goal for the novel and how those priorities changed. In *Go Set a Watchman*, Lee introduces us to Atticus’s interactions with the black community of Maycomb through a summary of his involvement in Tom Robinson’s case. She tells us that he “rarely took a criminal case; he had no taste for criminal law,” but that he took Tom’s case “because he knew his client to be innocent of the charge, and he could not for the life of him let the black boy go to prison because of a half-hearted, court-appointed defense” (*Watchman* 109). Yet, in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, we are told of Atticus’s “profound distaste for the practice of criminal law,” which is so strong that Atticus only takes the case because the judge appoints him as Tom’s criminal defender (*Mockingbird* 5). A shift occurs in the nature of

Atticus's service to the community. Whereas the Atticus of *Go Set a Watchman* is self-assured in his morality, such that he takes on a case for a man of color despite his prejudice, the Atticus of *To Kill a Mockingbird* is more cautious in his self-estimation. He does not wedge himself into situations of conflict in order to prove his moral superiority but rather takes up the tasks that are given to him and completes them as best he can. Because he does not volunteer to take Tom Robinson's case, Harper Lee allows him to proceed in the story with a strong ethos. There is an added layer of depth, then, when he tells Scout that "[s]imply because we were licked a hundred years before we started is no reason for us not to try to win" (*Mockingbird* 86–87). His hesitation to guarantee a positive outcome translates less as the defeatist attitude felt in *Go Set a Watchman* and more as a man unwilling to make assumptions about his own abilities.

Atticus is very straightforward in his values in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, unlike the mysterious equivocations he makes between right and wrong in *Go Set a Watchman*. He takes on the role of teacher in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, telling Jem after Jem has spent weeks reading to Mrs. Henry Lafayette Dubose and must reconcile himself with her true nature following her death that "I wanted you to see what real courage is [...]. It's when you know you're licked before you begin but you begin anyway and you see it through no matter what" (*Mockingbird* 128). Whereas Atticus is the voice of moral instruction in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Jean Louise is the voice of moral outrage in *Go Set a Watchman*. In the scene of her major altercation with Atticus toward the end of the novel, she tells her father that "[y]ou love justice, all right. Abstract justice written down item by item on a brief—nothing to do with that black boy, you just like a neat brief. His cause interfered with your orderly mind, and you had to work order out of disorder" (*Watchman* 248). The

anger that colors her dialogues with her father is powerful and emotionally compelling but not very helpful in regards to how to move forward. Atticus's rhetoric of perseverance and honorable failure in *To Kill a Mockingbird* lends more to the instructive nature that Lee's novel aims for but fails to reach in *Go Set a Watchman*. The changes in Atticus's characterization point toward Lee's recognition that her novel would be more compelling and more impactful if it left the reader with a sense of hope for change, not a resignation that people are incapable of change.

Along with the obvious criticism of the version of Atticus in *Go Set a Watchman* came the critiques of those who simply did not think the book was good. Period. In the press release announcing the upcoming publication, Harper Lee was quoted as saying that the manuscript she wrote in 1957 was "a pretty decent effort" and she was grateful that her current publishers considered it worthy of putting in print (HarperCollins "Press Release"). Some would consider that "pretty decent" a generous description of what *Go Set a Watchman* revealed itself to be. D'Addario explains that the "burst of exposition, as with other clumsy moments of plotting and sporadic jumps back in time, works only because the characters are already famous" (D'Addario "Review"). D'Addario and others with less than complimentary remarks regarding the literary quality of *Go Set a Watchman* are accurate in their brutal honesty. There are clear contradictions in the text that suggest that it was subjected to little to no copy-editing, which is understandable if HarperCollins was in fact limited in its ability to rely on Harper Lee for confirmation of her original intentions when she was posed queries for corrections. This "book" is clearly not a fully-edited piece; intertextual contradictions abound, not the least of which is a sudden change in name and gender for the school principal in the middle of a flashback.

Introduced as a “Mr. Charles Tuffett,” later in the same episode the principal is referred to as “Miss Muffett” but referred to with male pronouns (*Watchman* 216; 221). While the play on Tuffett and Muffett could easily be due to the children ridiculing their principal, there is no reference to the classic children’s rhyme in the text that indicates that this is their intention. It is possible that these different names are indicative of an indecision on Lee’s part when writing the initial draft that simply were never finalized before the transformation of the manuscript into a new draft. While such ambiguous sections pose a problem for reading the text as a finished novel, they only add a layer of complexity to sort through a rough draft found as a work in progress.

Between the two texts, certain stylistic choices clearly received consideration after they first appeared on the page in *Go Set a Watchman*. Since its publication, *To Kill a Mockingbird* has been criticized for its episodic nature. There is a very simple explanation for this quality in the narrative which is that Lee originally wrote *To Kill a Mockingbird* as a series of short-stories. Jennifer Murray references this in her essay “More Than One Way to (Mis)Read a Mockingbird.” She writes, “the chapters of *To Kill a Mockingbird* resonate more with a short story cycle’s interconnectedness than the classical novel’s linear coherence” (77). This is also true of *Go Set a Watchman*, which has distinct moments of storytelling that are then ushered away as the next approaches with little indication of its importance or relevance to the piece as a whole. This may be the reason why some reviewers found the plot to be so disconnected. While these episodes in *Go Set a Watchman* do sometimes feel unrelated to the heart of the story, they pave the way for the storytelling style of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The final product maintains a style similar to a collection of short stories, but the stories are tied

thematically to each other, separated by time in the way that we all experience gaps in memory of our own childhood.

The episodes in *Go Set a Watchman* that are most difficult to process are easily identified because they are flashbacks, a style that stands out in the text as a whole. While *To Kill a Mockingbird* does not slip into scenes set twenty years prior as *Go Set a Watchman* does, the whole of *To Kill a Mockingbird* itself is set up as a flashback. The story of young Scout is told by a mostly unseen and unobtrusive adult Jean Louise. It is only in *Go Set a Watchman* that we see the full influence of this Jean Louise and the progression from Scout to her adult counterpart. The narrative told in *Go Set a Watchman* can feel disjointed if the reader is carrying over those assumptions of a chronological, linear progression from *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Because *Go Set a Watchman* was written before *To Kill a Mockingbird*, some of the pivotal moments of *To Kill a Mockingbird* are retold or summarized in *Go Set a Watchman*. These events may have slight variations from the scenes we are familiar with in the original novel, and some have a completely different tone altogether. This is not surprising since changes happen all the time between drafts but also because the narrators in these two versions are completely different people. Even scenes with minimal changes in the text take on a different appearance on the basis of being told by an adult or child Scout Finch.

The closer we look at the text, the more evident it is that *Go Set a Watchman* was used as a basis for *To Kill a Mockingbird*. When compared side-by-side, we can see some minute changes in how Lee chose to alter the text in line edits between the draft of *Go Set a Watchman* and the final text of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Certain passages, such as the first descriptions of Dill, show clear relationships between phrases and structure. Dill's

descriptions each start with “Dill was a curiosity,” but there are minor changes in the physical details that follow. His hair, initially described as “cotton-headed” in *Go Set a Watchman*, is then described as “snow white” and “like duck-fluff” in *To Kill a Mockingbird* (*Watchman* 55; *Mockingbird* 8). Even the tone behind the passages changes in regards to Jean Louise’s relationship with Dill. In describing the differences in their heights and ages, Lee moves from the practical “He was a year older than she, but she was a head taller” in *Go Set a Watchman* to the more brazen “he was a year my senior but I towered over him” in *To Kill a Mockingbird* (*Watchman* 55; *Mockingbird* 8). What is spelled out in *Go Set a Watchman* in very specific terms is then truncated in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, making the language more efficient but still imaginative. We are not told anymore exactly what makes Dill a curiosity, and we are left to gather from his later actions just how wise in the ways of the world and cunning he is. In the editorial process, Lee opens up more room for demonstrative characterization by reducing the amount of biased narrative characterization that is seen in *Go Set a Watchman*.

Even the way both Scout and the adult Jean Louise look back on life with Dill hits a similar chord of adjusting the small details to create bigger waves of change. In each text, Dill represents the quiet restlessness Jean Louise experienced growing up in Maycomb. *Go Set a Watchman* portrays this through Dill himself, describing him as “the friend of her heart” and a boy who was “born a wanderer. He was like a small panther when confined with the same people and surroundings for any length of time” (*Watchman* 54; 71). However, *To Kill a Mockingbird* shows this through Scout’s relationship with Dill and his symbolic meaning to her: “I had never thought about it, but summer was Dill by the fishpool smoking string [...] With him, life was routine; without

him, life was unbearable” (*Mockingbird* 132). His exuberance for life, which frequently resulted in trouble for Scout and Jem, matched the hunger in Scout to experience life. The transition from a memory built on statements to a memory built on moments in a relationship strengthens the ties between the two characters. Lee takes the bare bones of who Dill is in *Go Set a Watchman* and gives him context and purpose in *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Considering these minute shifts between the texts, typically indicating a transformation from simplicity to complexity, as well as the general controversy surrounding the publication of *Go Set a Watchman*, I argue that this new text is not a sequel, but rather a rough draft that is incomplete on its own. If it is read with the belief that it will be a satisfying whole, then it will disappoint. However, it is most effective when used in conjunction with *To Kill a Mockingbird* to understand how its characters, themes, and style came to be. It is a tool for understanding the origins of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Reading the texts together, we see how easy it would have been for *To Kill a Mockingbird* to never have become the national classic it is now. American literature would have missed out on one of its greatest treasures if a J. B. Lippincott editor had not stepped in and suggested that to be truly great, Lee should try re-writing it from the child’s perspective. *Go Set a Watchman* could have been fashioned into a sequel text if it had been given more work following the original publication of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, independent but just as revolutionary as Lee’s landmark work; now, though, *Go Set a Watchman* best serves its purpose as a support for its literary sibling.

Go Set a Watchman is published, and there is no taking it back despite the ethical qualms many still have about its existence and the potential violation of Harper Lee’s

authorial control. But if publishers are going to continue with this model of publishing unedited and possibly unapproved manuscripts as if they were standalone works, then it is the responsibility of the reader to manage expectations and acknowledge that the text can only go so far on its own. These texts are valuable, particularly to those who are interested in tracing the roots of a text back to its inception. Yet, we should not make the mistake of putting these works on the same level as their more mature and fully-developed successors. These works are not novels themselves, but rather the early stages of a novel, waiting to be crafted and formed into its end product. *Go Set a Watchman* may read as a novel—though a poor one—but it would be a disservice to the work invested in transforming it into *To Kill a Mockingbird* to try to pretend that they are equals and able to be read in the same manner. The inherent challenge in approaching these texts poses an obstacle that is not necessarily insurmountable. In fact, there is abundant opportunity for analysis between these two texts depending on how one approaches them. If read chronologically according to the events of the text (*Mockingbird* and then *Watchman*) the narrative unfolds one perspective on the themes of the texts. However, when one remembers that the foundational ideas behind those themes and the developmental changes that Lee and her editors undertook to actualize those ideas occurred in reverse (first *Watchman* and then *Mockingbird*) the tension between those two readings creates a liminal space where they can be read in conjunction with each other. The contradictions between the texts do not necessarily preclude any acceptance of one or the other, but rather expand the possibilities of study of either.

CHAPTER THREE

Young Adults and Race: An Unexpected Match of Reader and Subject

Before even considering how best to read a text, one must first determine for whom the text was written. Narrowing down the exact intended audience for a novel can be nearly impossible, especially when it has been taken up after publication with zeal by a demographic wholly different than expected. Nelle Lee, based on the few interviews she has given throughout her life, may have originally meant her text to have universal appeal, but its relevance to the Civil Rights movement and the rise of an American ethos of racial justice has shifted the lines surrounding those who are most likely to connect with her work. The most glaringly obvious of these new reader groups are teenagers and young adults; the text's usefulness as a teaching tool to broach the subject of racism in the South has made it a mainstay in the high school classroom. Because of this, *To Kill a Mockingbird* has been unofficially inducted into the genre of Young Adult fiction despite the fact that no such genre existed at the time of its publication. What has come into question, now, is whether the release of this new text as a new side to the classic tale of a righteous lawyer making a stand for an unpopular moral code has altered the make-up of this readership. *Go Set a Watchman*, with its more nuanced and even self-contradicting approach to racial justice in the 1950s, at once presents itself as more universal in its ideology and more pointed at the specific experience of a young person becoming aware of the racial climate of her home and finding herself on the opposite side of the issue from her family. It would seem at first glance that this text would not receive the same

acceptance in high school classrooms and the Young Adult genre at large, but it is precisely because of these challenges of forming a political worldview as an individual, separate from family and social expectations, that *Go Set a Watchman*'s place so solidly belongs in the Young Adult literary world.

Young Adult literature centralizes themes of growth and maturity as well as all the various issues that accompany such themes in a transitional category of literature between children's fiction and a more general or literary fiction for readers in a transitional time of their lives. Maria Glaus defines Young Adult literature as "texts in which teenagers are the main characters dealing with issues to which teens can relate, outcomes usually depend on the decisions and choices of main characters" while using the same literary elements common in what is considered classical literature (Glaus 408). Katie Rybakova and Rikki Roccanti limit their definition to texts in which "the protagonist is a teenager, the plot does not end in a 'storybook' happy ending, and the content is typically a coming-of-age story" (Rybakova and Roccanti 32). Young Adult literature carries a certain stigma of frivolity or lack of depth in comparison with the more refined and complex texts of literary fiction. Many "assume the worst about YAL, focusing on the juvenile and immature covers and the subpar writing in a few bad examples of YAL," but to believe that those few bad examples represent the genre as a whole would be categorically unfair (Rybakova and Roccanti 33). Fiction of any type or genre is made up of a broad spectrum of texts with various factors affecting the overall quality of any particular work. Literary fiction is just as sure to have a few bad apples with questionable artistic merit or intellectual significance as Young Adult literature. In fact, many works that have been deemed classic works in the canon of literary study can

actually be considered Young Adult literature by these definitions: *The Catcher in the Rye*, most of Jane Austen's novels, *Little Women*, *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, *The House on Mango Street*, either of Mark Twain's major novels, and *The Lord of the Flies* only begin to scratch the surface of what turns out to be a vast and generously defined classification of books despite their temporal distance from what has been a relatively recent phenomenon. One of the major draws of the genre as a whole is its ability to achieve a universal appeal despite the limitations placed on it by its definition.

Lee's belief in her novel's universality was consistent in her vision of her call as a writer and places her in good company with Young Adult literature in general. In her interview with Roy Newquist for his radio show, *Counterpoint*, Lee made this very claim:

I would like to leave some record of the kind of life that existed in a very small world. [. . .] This is small-town middle-class southern life as opposed to the Gothic, as opposed to *Tobacco Road*, as opposed to plantation life. [. . .] I believe that there is something universal in this little world, something decent to be said for it, and something to lament in its passing. (Newquist 412)

Throughout *Mockingbird*, the reader certainly feels as if Lee has transported them to this little town in Alabama, and yet there is a constant sense that the events of the novel really could happen anywhere. It may seem an odd comparison, but Lee was not very far off when she expressed the desire to be “the Jane Austen of south Alabama” (Newquist 412). Her own experiences growing up as the daughter of a middle-class, but highly respected, lawyer with an education that both set her apart from her peers and provided her with the means of gaining perspective on her environment, strengthen such a connection—not to mention their status as two of the most widely recognized female authors in literary history. Lee considered *To Kill a Mockingbird* to be “a novel of man's conscience [. . .]

universal in the sense it could have happened to anybody, anywhere people live together” in the same way that Austen captured the themes of family bonds, economic struggle, and love despite her highly specific settings (Allison).

Despite such modest beginnings, Lee found herself in somewhat of an identity crisis as time and the success of *To Kill a Mockingbird* progressed. She still considered herself a part of that small-town middle-class social strata that she hoped to depict in her writing, and yet her novel was bringing in a substantial-enough income that it raised her into the same tax bracket as the wealthy elite. Her agent, Annie Laurie Williams, even apologized to Alice in a letter enclosed with her most recent royalty check, saying, “We know that Nelle Harper wishes these checks would not come in every few months, but I’m sure we understand there’s no way of stopping them” (Williams, 3 August 1964). The scale of her literary success caused Lee considerable anxiety about her ability to continue with this series of universally specific novels, perhaps contributing to her lifelong struggle to produce a second novel. Despite Lee’s worries, *To Kill a Mockingbird* continued to find common ground with a wide variety of readers. High school teachers continue to remark on how the key to teaching any classic piece of literature “lies in its ability to tap into the universality of the human experience and convey feelings and situations to which readers of all ages and eras can relate” (Gibbons 13). This would certainly prove to be true for *To Kill a Mockingbird* as the astounding sales numbers would continue to grow over time, particularly the number of children and students reading Lee’s novel in the classroom.

Lee’s hopes of writing a universally relatable novel of the Southern small town would seem to have been a success if her worldwide sales numbers are any indication.

According to Charles J. Shields's biography, after four years in print, *To Kill a Mockingbird* in its Popular Library paperback edition "had sold about five million copies [. . . and] *Reader's Digest* magazine continued to distribute two million copies of the novel's abridged version," not to mention the six hardback editions in German, Italian, French, Hungarian, Romanian, and Greek with hopes to expand to several Middle Eastern and Indian languages (Shields 242). After three years in print, "[e]ight percent of public junior high schools and high school nationwide had added the novel to their reading lists" and that number rose to nearly seventy-four percent of American junior high and high school classrooms in 1988 according to the National Council of Teachers of English (Shields, 234–35, 271). Lee's popularity with young readers came as a surprise to her since, in her mind, "[t]he novel is about a former generation," which should have been incomprehensible to a current generation (Lawrence). In an interview for the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, Lee responded to Wes Lawrence's praise for her successful attempt to write for children by declaring, "[b]ut I hate children. I can't stand them" (Lawrence). It is hard to believe such a statement to be true coming from an author who essentially wrote a novel celebrating the simplicity and durability of children's morality.

Lee may have never intended for her main readership to be made of children or teenagers, but the traditional character arc depicting a loss of childhood innocence in the midst of political and social turmoil makes *Go Set a Watchman* an ideal text for young readers. *To Kill a Mockingbird* provides a snapshot image of childhood "standing in for the nation, [as it] comes into a racialized innocence designed specifically to register the ever-present anxiety of whiteness, while averting ruin with childhood's inherent promise

of futurity” (Henninger 603). This version of Scout’s story “presents a fantasized wholeness” between Scout and those closest to her that both recognizes the brokenness of her community but also leaves potential for healing through education in the future encouraged by the final sentence that depicts a hopeful future without a definite end: “He would be there all night, and he would be there when Jem waked up in the morning” (Henninger 614; *Mockingbird* 323). Lee promptly shatters any sense of wholeness in *Watchmen* with the death of Jem, the estrangement of Calpurnia, and the shocking revelation of Atticus’s new political alignment. Jean Louise is pointedly and painfully alone in her feelings of indignation and upheaval. In this case, the future is equally ill-defined, but there is more closure and finality to it. Jean Louise climbs into Atticus’s car for the third time in the text, but instead of repeating the injuries of the previous two times, “this time she was careful not to bump her head” (*Watchman* 278). The process of education that is promised in the conclusion to *Mockingbird* sees its beginning stages in Jean Louise’s small act of learning from past mistakes. If there is hope to be found in this forecast of the future, then it is in the possibility of Jean Louise teaching herself to grow and learn even if she cannot change the opinions of anyone around her. Certainly one must teach the self to evolve before reaching a stage at which others can be encouraged to evolve in the same ways, but *Go Set a Watchman* leaves little room for hope that this process of expanding change outward from the self to the community is anything but a long and often fruitless process.

Years before *Go Set a Watchman* presented this more dismal conclusion to Jean Louise’s development, though, educators across the country recognized teaching value in Lee’s original novel and sought to present it to their students in multiple forms, even via

the theater. Annie Laurie Williams received letters from Christopher Sergel, the owner of Dramatic Publishing, as early as 1965 seeking the dramatic rights to *To Kill a Mockingbird* since it was “much more requested than *any* other book” (Williams, 5 January 1965). The 1962 film adaptation contributed substantially to the popularity of the novel and remains almost as lasting an influence as the original text. Gerald Early recalls being inspired to read the novel in high school after watching the movie and finding it to be “clearly a story of courage, of an individual (Atticus) going against the conventions of his community, of a man feeling that he had to put himself to the test to be worthy of his children” (Petty 95–96). In fact, Early considered the novel to be “the quintessential young person’s book” (96). Atticus appeals to the young reader as a firm but nurturing father figure, and he also appeals to the adult reader as “the completely integrated self, the perfect blend of civic and personal virtue” (Petty 97). It is not only the children of Lee’s fictional creation that have captured the hearts and minds of readers the world over, but her iconic depiction of a man rising above the status quo of his society to do, above all else, what is right, a depiction that many feel was undercut by the revelation of an older, far less admirable Atticus in *Go Set a Watchman*.

Because of these vivid characters, *To Kill a Mockingbird* held widespread appeal to educators in drastically different demographics. It seems only natural for such a novel to be taught in Southern high school classrooms as both a generally celebrated American literary text and as an example of local historically relevant literature. However, not every classroom reflects the racial diversity of the nation’s population or possesses those strong ties to the particular historical narrative of Scout’s exposure to Southern racial politics; Louise C. Gibbons, although a high school teacher in Lee’s home state of

Alabama, admits that trying to “develop attitudes of acceptance, tolerance, and understanding” in students who have not yet been exposed to situations that demand those attitudes can be a challenge (8). Yet such a challenge is not impossible to surmount with books such as *To Kill a Mockingbird* which “provides students with opportunities to witness situations filtered through the perspective of their own life events as well as to experience events vicariously” (Gibbons 8). One of the goals of the high school teacher, according to Gibbons, is to “foster attitudes of tolerance in a safe and cohesive classroom learning environment where all students feel respected and valued” (8). Books listed on a high school English required reading lists are chosen for highly specific reasons: they have been deemed a literary classic and therefore have intrinsic value in being studied, they capture the culture and ideology of a particular historical period, they are filled with abundant literary elements that provide opportunity for practicing the skills of reading through a critical lens, or they address certain universal themes of the human experience and are rich with potential for discussion. *To Kill a Mockingbird* fulfills all of these roles, and so it is no surprise that it appears on the required reading list for the majority of high school or junior high students in the United States.

One of the reasons for this enduring popularity is the way in which Scout’s navigation of societal prejudices and expectations reads as a bildungsroman that is relatable to students studying the text (Gibbons 30). High school students find themselves at an age where they are beginning to question the world around them and struggle to find the language required to express themselves and that questioning mindset. Reading novels and stories of other young adults who are experiencing the same process of becoming aware allows them to see their own experiences more clearly and identify in

fictional characters their non-fictional emotions. Of particular benefit to *To Kill a Mockingbird* is that it is primarily narrated by Scout as a child, a “technique [which] makes the book more accessible to a child, giving him or her a character with whom to identify as completely with adult characters simply because children lack their perspective” (Petry 97). Age is a key factor in how receptive a child reader is to a text since an adult character’s ability to understand that child reader is distorted by age. Selecting a text with a relatable narrator who can communicate with young readers in a way that they understand about ideas that they are already somewhat familiar with is essential to guaranteeing that students make an intellectual connection with that text.

Connections between young readers and classroom texts break down when that common ground is lacking. Teachers of high school students frequently cite frustration over relevance as the most common reason for why their young students are indifferent toward reading or refuse to read required texts. A rigid insistence on classical literature as the sole acceptable area of literary study can discourage teenage literacy because “many such books do not deal with teenage concerns, and they were written primarily for educated adults” (Glaus 408). While this is true for *To Kill a Mockingbird* in terms of the intended readership, Lee’s novel—and even her earlier draft—is filled with concerns that continue to be relevant to teenagers. The young adults of today are just as subjected to controversies of racial tolerance and political debates over the prevalence of systemic racism as they were in the 1930s or 50s. Lee illustrates through narrative Scout’s journey from ignorance to awareness which is the same journey all the youth in America must undertake in a supposedly post-racist democracy. There is no more relevant story to be told for young adults in the twenty-first century than that of the gradual forced

recognition of place in a society made up of varied perspectives on what it means to be American. Despite having been in publication for decades, *To Kill a Mockingbird* and now *Go Set a Watchman* possess “the moral sense [found] in YAL that helps teens consider right and wrong in a complex world with unique 21st century problems” (Rybakova and Roccanti 32). Difference in setting do not preclude a younger audience from applying the ideas and questions proposed by a text to their own contexts if such a text is written with enough points of accessibility for them to make those connections. One of the most striking, even “uncanny,” points of interest surrounding *Go Set a Watchman*’s publication was the odd sense of timeliness: a novel—or draft of a novel—centered around the rise of the Civil Rights movement and the exposure of the degree to which negativity surrounded that movement published during the same summer that the Black Lives Matter movement truly took root (Henninger 621). This movement became one of many “refrains that respond to the violence of the present by making visible black pain” in a manner reminiscent of the protests of the 1960s (Nash 212). A resurgence of activism to raise awareness of the plight of African Americans has primed young readers with the social context to read themselves and their communities into Lee’s 1950s manuscript.

Although youth can be an asset to educators in regards to how receptive their students are to a particular text, it can also factor into how appropriate other adults deem a text for young readers. Despite the praise and acceptance *To Kill a Mockingbird* has received by educators, many others have found fault in Lee’s work that makes it unsuitable for children and young adults, enough fault to ban the text for school libraries. One of the first major incidents of book banning was in 1966 by the Hanover County

School Board in Richmond, Virginia. The board considered the novel to be “immoral literature” due to the discussion of a woman’s rape in relation to Tom Robinson’s trial; W. C. Boshier, a local physician and father of a Hanover County student as well as a trustee on the Board of Education, raised concern that such subject matter was “improper for our children to read” (“Mr. Bumble” 12). The editor of the *Richmond News-Leader* rejected these claims in an editorial piece and even offered gratis copies of the book to “the first fifty students of the local high school who requested a copy” (Shields 254).

Lee’s response in a letter to the editor was equally dismissive and true to her character:

Surely it is plain to the simplest intelligence that “To Kill a Mockingbird” spells out in words of seldom more than two syllables a code of honor and conduct, Christian in its ethic, that is the heritage of all Southerners. To hear that the novel is ‘immoral’ has made me count the years between now and 1984, for I have yet to come across a better example of doublethink. (“Author Harper Lee” 10)

The book was eventually allowed back into Hanover County schools, but *Mockingbird* would continue to come under fire from school boards and eventually become one of the most banned books in America.

This is not to say that Lee’s novel stands alone in its censure. Young Adult literature in general receives many of the same criticisms as *To Kill a Mockingbird* has over its nearly sixty years of publication. One of the top complaints of contemporary Young Adult literature is “the use of vulgar language but [it has been] suggested that the majority of censorship cases against YAL revolved around fear that students would be exposed to worldviews different from their own” (Rybakova and Roccanti 33). This routine rejection of Young Adult texts for certain language without consideration for the context or the character who uses such language is uncommonly similar to the reservations expressed by the former students of Louise C. Gibbons. The reasons for

banning *To Kill a Mockingbird* have varied over the years, but the main common thread is along the lines of violations of moral decency. Gibbons recalls one student's hesitance to read *To Kill a Mockingbird* for class due to the racial slurs as well as her assistant principal's explanation in favor of reading it anyway: "the story focuses on the devastating and life-altering consequences that prejudice of any sort creates for both an individual and for the larger community" (Gibbons xi). Certainly it is true that *To Kill a Mockingbird* contains characters who hold reprehensible opinions and perpetuate the worst kind of prejudices—Bob Ewell being the most obvious example—but the power of the novel's impact would be diminished if these characters were not written by Lee as true to their real-life counterparts as possible. The setting of the novel may be in a bygone age before the changes enacted by the Civil Rights movement, but the text remains applicable and relatable despite any progress made. The same tensions that infect the community of Maycomb County persist today as the "remnants of an outdated social order" which fragment and divide society (Gibbons 2). Reading *To Kill a Mockingbird* in the classroom opens up a forum for discussion about those issues that are obvious in the text but which may be more hidden in students' perception of their own social climate. The conflicts Scout must navigate in the text allow for young readers to confront those same issues within the protective walls of the classroom. Students can look at the racial slurs and denigrating attitudes in the text as evidence which they can employ to analyze the characters who use them. For example, Atticus's respectful and educated language contrasts with Bob Ewell's harsh and bigoted language, revealing the stance each man has on the issues of race within the novel (Gibbons 74). Just as Gibbons explained how the use of racial slurs in *To Kill a Mockingbird* serves to characterize particular

individuals and signals the attitude of the time period, so also does the vulgar language found in other more contemporary Young Adult works of fiction communicate significant details about the characters who use that language and signals to the reader a particular attitude of those characters' society.

Keeping this in mind, it is of note that such methods of determining a character's moral stance are not so black and white in *Go Set a Watchman*. Atticus retains his cultured and respectful language in Lee's other work, but the logic that results from his language belies his *To Kill a Mockingbird* characterization. Beginning with her discovery of the pamphlet in Atticus's office detailing the racial inferiority of black people, Jean Louise must begin to fold her ideas of right and wrong into each other. Her conception of Atticus would never allow for the support of such rhetoric, and yet she finds him in the courthouse with "not only most of the trash in Maycomb County, but the county's most respectable men" as well (*Watchman* 105). He sits directly beside the same kind of men he frowns upon in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, but suddenly he is in agreement with them. Jean Louise wavers momentarily in her own convictions, considering that maybe she is not wrong in her faith in Atticus and that "her father's presence at the table with a man who spewed filth from his mouth—did that make it less filthy? No. It condoned" (*Watchman* 111). Jean Louise's horrified reaction to Atticus in particular embody the more complex and nuanced approach Lee takes toward racial justice in *Watchman*. As easy as it is to use the moral certainty of *To Kill a Mockingbird* to introduce young readers to the idea of racial politics, *Go Set a Watchman* seems to have the more realistic portrayal of the continuing state of American racism. The main point of contention between Atticus and Jean Louise comes down to a question of policy: his stubborn

refusal to deny states the right to determine their own laws and her stubborn refusal to deny individuals their due as human beings. Atticus, in Jean Louise's words, focuses on "[a]bstract justice" whereas Jean Louise will only accept justice as she can see it played out in front of her in a person's daily life (*Watchman* 248). If such disagreements sound familiar to contemporary readers, perhaps it is because these are the very lines that still divide American politics.

Early reviewers and critics saw *To Kill a Mockingbird* as a success in terms of its awareness of the political climate at the time. Edgar H. Schuster in a 1963 *English Journal* article suggested that "[t]he achievement of Harper Lee is not that she has written another novel about race prejudice, but rather that she has placed race prejudice in a perspective which allows us to see it as an aspect of a larger thing" (Schuster 511).

Schuster's assessment is fair in this regard; Lee clearly places the issue of racial injustice in a larger context than what can be corrected by the Fourteenth Amendment.

Overcoming racial prejudice requires resisting ignorance and fear of the unknown and instead gaining compassion and certainty through understanding once one can "finally see" someone as they are (*Mockingbird* 323). Reviewers over the years frequently have assumed that Lee based the Tom Robinson trial on the similar events of the Scottsboro Boys trials in the 1930s. In this case, nine African American teenagers were accused and initially found guilty of raping two white girls in boxcars as the train crossed the Alabama border. They were eventually pardoned or released on parole with one exception after a second trial meant to correct the racial injustice of the first trial— injustice that was amplified by the attention given to the trial by the media. Lee would later deny that she based her own dramatic courtroom scene on the Scottsboro Boys trial,

but remarked that “it will more than do as an example (albeit a lurid one) of deep-South attitudes on race vs. justice that prevailed at the time” (Rowley). It is far more likely that Lee based her rape case on an even more similar trial in Monroeville during her childhood. Both the accused, Walter Lett, a black man, and his accuser, Naomi Lowery, a white woman, were of low social standing and economic class (Shields 118). Lett was found guilty and given the death penalty despite his claims that he was working elsewhere at the time of the rape (*State of Alabama v. Walter Lett* 345). His execution was delayed after many members of the community wrote to the Governor and expressed doubts as to Lett’s guilt. Unfortunately, Lett did not receive a pardon even after the intervention and advocacy of the people of Monroeville; instead, Lett was spared execution and received a commuted sentence of life imprisonment. The constant threat of death by electrocution, though, taxed Lett greatly, and the prison physician deemed him insane, leading to Lett’s transfer to Searcy Hospital for the Insane until his death (Shields 120). The outcome of the Lett case most clearly resembles that of Tom Robinson’s, particularly in regards to the knowledge of the accused’s innocence in contrast with his ultimate death as punishment for his alleged crime. In this way, knowledge and the ability to “finally see” those who are suffering under the unjust prejudices of a society plagued by racism is not enough on their own to overcome those prejudices.

Whereas many teachers and readers have seen *To Kill a Mockingbird* as “an excellent segue into the American Civil Rights Movement,” it is *Go Set a Watchman* that truly begins to introduce the first stirrings of resistance and protest in the United States (Gibbons 72). Neither of the trials attributed to inspiring the events of Lee’s novel would sound familiar to the typical high school student. Likewise, Scout may be aware of the

underlying tension that would rise to a boiling point in situations such as the Scottsboro or Lett trials, but Jean Louise is marginally aware of the first steps taken to push that tension over the edge as it soon would. She reports to Atticus upon her return home how the NAACP's actions are treated by the New York newspapers:

Well, to hear the *Post* tell it, we lynch 'em for breakfast; the *Journal* doesn't care; and the *Times* is so wrapped up in its duty to posterity it bores you to death. I haven't paid any attention to it except for the bus strikes and that Mississippi business [. . .] I don't know anything about that bunch except that some misguided clerk sent me some NAACP Christmas seals last year, so I stuck 'em on all the cards I sent home.
(*Watchman* 24)

Jean Louise sees her own position in the world at a remove from the rising issues of the Civil Rights movement in the South. In a 1963 interview with Bob Ellison of *Rogue* magazine, Lee was asked about her opinion of the Freedom Riders. Her initial statement that she did not “think this business of getting on buses and flaunting state laws does much of anything. Except getting a lot of publicity, and violence” reads as the same degree of idle disinterest as Jean Louise displays (Ellison). However, Lee went on to say that she believed that “Rev. King and the NAACP are going about it in exactly the right way” (Ellison). A few questions further into the interview, Lee responded to one of Ellison's questions about *To Kill a Mockingbird* with phrasing that is strikingly similar to Jean Louise's speech in *Go Set a Watchman* yet indicates a far more serious and subdued approach to the unrest in the South:

[. . .] in the book I tried to give a sense of proportion to life in the South, that there isn't a lynching before every breakfast. I think that Southerners react with the same kind of horror as other people do about the injustice in their land. In Mississippi, people were so revolted by what happened, they were so stunned, I don't think it will happen again. (Ellison)

Although speaking about *To Kill a Mockingbird* at the time, Lee's statements about the book offering a depth to the politics of the South can be said for both of her texts. A deeper understanding of the intricate and sensitive issues of race in the South resist the oftentimes oversimplified summary presented within the high school classroom. Lee's texts, *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Go Set a Watchman* together, provide a narrative and pre-established language for young readers to interact with and appropriate into their own critical thought.

On its surface, *To Kill a Mockingbird* appears to be the simpler of the two texts in its treatment of racial injustice through the eyes of a child, but nothing is ever clear-cut for Scout in her childhood or in her adulthood as Jean Louise. Nestled between the results of the Tom Robinson trial and Scout's own brush with death appears a scene in which Scout questions the goodness of her teacher, Miss Gates, who can so clearly see the hateful prejudice in Hitler but was heard to say on the steps of the courthouse the very same "ugly [things] about folks right at home" (*Mockingbird* 284). The main threat of injustice in American society is not the risk of missing the obvious injustices but the subtle ones. From her address to a class of freshman cadets at West Point, Lee reminds her audience that Tom Robinson, Boo Radley, and others like them "were not set apart by evil men, or evil women, or evil thoughts. They were set apart by an evil past, which good people in the present were ill equipped to change" (*Honor and Duty* 147). Remembering the past and not allowing it to repeat is key to Lee's ideology as it is presented in *Go Set a Watchman*. Jean Louise sees herself "in terms of a recurring story as old as time: the chapter which concerned her began two hundred years ago and was played out in a proud society the bloodiest war and harshest peace in modern history

could not destroy” (*Watchman* 122). Contrary to her earlier flippancy regarding the Civil Rights movement, Jean Louise cannot help but see the revelation of her family and neighbors’ true beliefs as yet another chapter in the unfolding story of racial injustice in America.

Furthermore, Lee engages in a precarious balancing act between tying Jean Louise to her community’s history and allowing her the freedom as a young adult to exert her independence through her political opinions. The earlier setting of *To Kill a Mockingbird* in the 1930s prevents the text from explicitly aligning itself one way or the other in terms of the Civil Rights Movement; *Go Set a Watchman*, if taken as the true sequel to *To Kill a Mockingbird*, partially solidifies that alignment with an initial rejection of the protests that characterize the movement of the 1960s. But, if one remembers that *Go Set a Watchman* appeared as the earlier draft and *To Kill a Mockingbird* was released as the final product, there is room for far more ambiguity within the text than what is expressed by Jean Louise as her initial conception in *Go Set a Watchman*. Lee’s opinions may have remained the same—vaguely skeptical about protest demonstrations but on the whole supportive of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the NAACP—but *To Kill a Mockingbird* can be received by the reader without knowledge of her private beliefs and still provide the same opportunity for hope in the ability of the American people to change when they have denied a class of people their human rights. Kathryn Lee Seidel nearly predicted what would be revealed in the *Go Set a Watchman* text less than a decade later when she suggested that Scout’s “innocence is sharply defined by tendencies which if developed could lead her to becoming the worst type of southerner with the worst prejudices and behaviors—members of a mob, rather than a

member of the good” (Petry 81). Jean Louise, though persistent in her defense of the goodness of her hometown and the people in it, refuses to be tricked into accepting the viewpoint of other Maycomb residents. She stands her ground, which makes Atticus proud in a disorienting turn of events, and maintains an attitude of exhausted indignation to the bitter end. Atticus’s reaction, though thoroughly frustrating to both Jean Louise and the reader, imparts a type of permission for the younger generations to test the boundaries of older ideologies as long as they do so with conviction.

However, not all critics have praised Lee for her approach to the issue of white perspectives on racial injustice and would caution young readers not to look too closely at the text as a model for their own moral development. Katherine Henninger considers *To Kill a Mockingbird* as a total undercutting of the ethos of *Go Set a Watchman*. She believes the earlier form of the novel to be a “white female coming-of-age story where maturity is utterly contingent on recognizing and confronting whiteness as the source of racial injustice—not just individual whites but whiteness itself” (Henninger 601). Furthermore, she considers the editorial process that produced *To Kill a Mockingbird* in its place to have created “nearly its opposite: a story where the maturing loss of innocence locates racist injustice in individual ‘backward’ whites while powerfully preserving the innocence of whiteness for (and as) the future” (601). Atticus, whom many consider one of the most recognizable fictional advocates for racial justice and equality among readers and his fictional children alike, inspired doubt even before his character transformation as revealed by *Go Set a Watchman*. Law professor Steven Lubet proposes that because Atticus was appointed Tom Robinson’s defense by the court, he considered it “an obligation that he could not ethically decline or shirk. Atticus Finch was neither a

firebrand nor a reformer. He had spent his career hoping to avoid a case like Tom's, but having been given one, he was determined to do his best for his client" (1349). Lubet is skeptical of the glorification of Atticus, a skepticism he may well be justified in considering the *Go Set a Watchman* figure from which the *To Kill a Mockingbird* Atticus grew, but he does not wholly dismiss the significance of Atticus' dedication to Tom's case. He may not have been "a civil rights crusader, but he was able to look past race in structuring his defense. He was even optimistic that the jurors might see the light and agree with him" (Lubet 1360). Not only that, but there is a startlingly cynical truth to Henninger's claim that Atticus is a "primary force in the fight for civil rights" only insofar as he can defend Tom Robinson while preserving a sense of superiority in whiteness (Henninger 606). There is a major distinction between the right kind of whiteness in *To Kill a Mockingbird* and the wrong kind that divides along Atticus's same sense of a divide between general moral right and wrong.

For example, after the verdict has been reached, Atticus's attempts to explain the reasons why the jury voted as they did boil down to personal bias making its way into the courtroom. He believes whole-heartedly that "[t]he one place where a man ought to get a square deal is in a courtroom, be he any color of the rainbow" (*Mockingbird* 253). The following moments when Atticus declares "whenever a white man [cheats] a black man, no matter who he is, how rich he is, or how fine a family he comes from, that white man is trash" contain one of the rare instances in the text in which Atticus is clearly angry (253). However, his anger is not actually directed toward the injustice suffered by the black man in this hypothetical situation. Rather, Atticus is outraged by the actions of the white man who does not act as he should: in this context, who allows prejudice to drive

him to deny a man his due in court. Atticus, a lawyer through and through, seeks always to preserve the integrity of the court but not necessarily of the community in general. He chooses specifically to call such white men as those in the court for Tom's trial "trash" because it plays into his ideas of class, morality, and to a certain extent race being inextricable. Atticus's focus on the lower-class status of the Ewells "at once quarantines racist evil to poor whites and claims the moral high ground for his own class" (Heninger 606). He is of the good, middle-class whites and behaves accordingly, therefore he is in the right; whereas Bob Ewell is of the lesser, poor whites and behaves accordingly, explaining his misuse of Tom Robinson and later attack on the Finch children. This may not be of the highest significance in the text of *To Kill a Mockingbird* or even Atticus's primary moral reasoning, but traces of the imperfect Atticus in *Go Set a Watchman* linger in the more familiar Atticus of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, even if to a less obvious degree. Atticus, long read as the pinnacle of moral virtue, may no longer be a safe refuge to which young readers may turn for guidance.

One of the unfailing criticisms of Lee's work, however empathetic and radical it may have been for the time, remains that *To Kill a Mockingbird* is yet again another instance of a story centering on race that only relates "how white people thought [black people] felt or what white people thought they were or how badly some white people felt about their mistreatment" (Petry 98). Lee cannot help but fail to present a black perspective on the complicated issues of race as her contemporaries such as Richard Wright accomplished. This does not mean, though, that such stories are without value. Lee's novel and novels like *To Kill a Mockingbird* are essential to "understand the South as a construction of the white southern mind" (Petry 99). Gerald Early could not have

known this at the time he published his remembered experiences of reading *To Kill a Mockingbird* as both child and adult, but it is possible he would agree that *Go Set a Watchman* serves as a double reminder of that constructed nature. There is an unfortunate trend in Southern novels that directly address racism through the perspective of a white child, such as Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, in order to "encourage readers to 'feel right' about it through sympathetic identification with the child" (Henninger 602). Tom Robinson is the one who suffers the injustices of his community through a corrupt and prejudiced trial in court, yet the only chance he has to tell his own story is through his testimony in court—which is wholly dismissed by the jury because it contradicts the testimony of a white man. To accept Tom's testimony would mean to "so terribly alter what whites have come to believe about blacks and about themselves" (Petry 100). Having Tom's experience mediated through Scout "might be interpreted as a sign of the sheer powerlessness of blacks in the South in the 1930s" (Petry 100). As powerless as Scout is as a child, Tom is even more powerless as a black man in Maycomb County and can only achieve expression through her. While it might have been preferable to hear Tom's struggle and unique experience in his own words, Scout offers a safe and removed point of entry for readers of any age or background. It is perhaps vital to Lee's point of view that we receive the events of the novel through Scout because then we are forced to make the same transition toward awareness as she does at the same time that she does.

Similarly, the horrific experience of Tom Robinson at the hands of an unjust community exists at a remove from the audience but is nevertheless emphasized when posed against the comparatively innocent language of Lee's narrators and protagonists:

Scout and Jean Louise, two versions of the same character. Although Young Adult literature varies in its authors' choices of narrators and protagonists as in any other genre, more often than not the stories told center around one child or teenager of great significance or peculiarity. Child or teen narrators are "rarely normal or typical children" and are almost "always precocious" (Petry 97–98). Teaching young students works of Young Adult literature featuring young narrators "emphasizes the importance of student voices in constructing meaning and provides space for students to become active learners rather than passive receivers of information" (Rybakova and Roccanti 32). These clever and mildly unbelievable child narrators and main characters may seem extreme, but they are bold and expressive in a way that some young readers may not feel they have been allowed to be themselves. Children and teenagers read for many of the same reasons adults do—for entertainment, for understanding, for knowledge, for escape—and to present them with a character who is capable of expressing themselves in the most extreme of emotions or situations can be of vital importance to their own development. Children in fiction come under threats that are unlikely in the context of most children's reality, but such a narrative device "makes the book gripping for a youngster, although it may rightly seem to many adults [. . .] melodramatic, contrived, and sentimental" (Petry 98). This is not only true of literary children of the 20th century but of contemporary literature as well. Young Adult and Children's literature is frequently criticized for unbelievable or unrealistic protagonists, most significantly in the fantasy and science fiction genres known for their trope of the "chosen one." JK Rowling's Harry Potter and Rick Riordan's Percy Jackson as well as Suzanne Collins' Katniss Everdeen among countless others start out as unremarkable preteens or teenagers and over the course of a

few novels evolve to become the saviors of their worlds. These authors present their characters as completely normal (despite Harry's magical abilities and Percy's status as a modern-day demigod) who ostensibly could be substituted for any other child without dire consequences and yet are the only ones in their respective fictional universes capable of fulfilling their roles.

Scout, though younger than the typical narrator of a Young Adult novel, possesses this same boundless precocity so prevalent in the genre. On the other hand, Jean Louise is notably older than what most definitions would allow for in Young Adult literature, but the novel discloses numerous flashbacks to both her childhood as well as her never-before-seen teenage years. Despite the extreme humor of some of these flashbacks—most memorable of all being the episode in which Jean Louise loses her false breasts at a school dance only for them to reappear on the school billboard the next morning—Lee addresses the sensitive and sometimes awkward issues facing teenage girls with a “frank and nonpathologized treatment of female bodily maturation” (Henninger 612). Humor is perhaps Lee's greatest weapon in these passages because she is able to guide readers through the anxieties and uncertainties of female adolescence without making any deviations from the assumed normal of such an experience seem out-of-the-ordinary or something to be ridiculed mercilessly; the experience as a whole is somewhat ridiculous and acknowledging it up front makes way for a forthright appreciation of the bizarre and unique narrative experienced by all who approach womanhood. First and foremost, these texts trace the narrative of a girl reaching full maturation, whether physical or psychological or both. Even those scenes set in the furthest point in the future depicting the adult Jean Louise still retain an air of a young girl coming of age. As a young adult,

Jean Louis is not too far removed from her childhood and can slip into the perspective of a child with sympathy:

Have you ever been snubbed, Atticus? Do you know how it feels? No, don't tell me they're children and don't feel it: I was a child and felt it, so grown children must feel, too. A real good snub, Atticus, makes you feel like you're too nasty to associate with people. How they're good as they are now is a mystery to me, after a hundred years of systematic denial that they're human. I wonder what kind of miracle we could work with a week's decency. (*Watchman* 252)

Because Jean Louise can see herself as a child and still consider herself to be a full human being, she can apply that to the people who the adults in her life have repeatedly marginalized and infantilized and still see them as whole, complete humans as well. Again, the question arises of how to read the two texts: does *To Kill a Mockingbird* erase the philosophical journey of *Go Set a Watchman* and replace it with a more morally neutral and simplified bildungsroman or does *Go Set a Watchman* demonstrate the natural process of constant growth and change all humans experience? If the second is true, then *Go Set a Watchman* actually extends the trajectory of Scout's evolution from childhood racial innocence to awareness, inserting a step in the middle that requires the recognition that childhood racial innocence is merely racial ignorance and transforming the awareness into a state of being that acknowledges a need for something to come after it. Lee leaves us with a text that is uncertain on what that something is that come after awareness, but it is insistent that there is a something to come.

In contrast to this diminished and aimless hope, the optimism of Scout's youth and particularly her location in a small Alabama town greatly inform her journey through *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Lee may not agree with Henninger's assessment of the South as "backward, stagnant, and immature, even childlike"—she willingly returned to her home

in Monroeville after experiencing the more progressive and cosmopolitan lifestyle of New York—but it certainly seems fitting to tell the story of a region’s needed maturation through the lens of a child particularly if it is intended to be read by a child (Henninger 605). Atticus is not shocked or emotionally affected by the verdict itself, and Lee shows only the children displaying any surprise or strong emotions. Jem walks out of the courthouse in “angry tears” and Scout watches events unfold in a “dreamlike quality” (*Mockingbird* 243; 241). All of their belief in Atticus is brought back down to earth by twelve men on a jury giving a guilty verdict and ushering the Finch children into “their moment of coming into American double consciousness, a ruination often described as their ‘loss of innocence’” (Henninger 607). They are witnesses to what exactly people in their community—people like them—are capable of, but they do not have to feel the long-term effects of those prejudices as Tom does. They return home to a kitchen full of food and warm beds, something which feels unfair to Jem and leaves him feeling like “a caterpillar in a cocoon” untouched by the outside world (*Mockingbird* 246). By keeping the children removed from the reality of constant racial injustices, setting those aside to be experienced in the courtroom, Lee “creates in order to preserve [. . .] white Southern childhood as American childhood, a salvational space-time of awakening white double consciousness and coming into a childlike racial innocence that can put it safely back to bed” (Henninger 608). While the events of Tom Robinson’s trial were eye-opening for Scout and Jem both, eventually the details and the strength of their emotional reactions will fade from their minds. The realities of racial injustice are not required to be present in their consciousness at all times as white children; Atticus assures Scout that Jem was already “trying hard to forget something, but what he was really doing was storing it

away for a while, until enough time passed. Then he would be able to think about it and sort things out” (*Mockingbird* 284). For the Finch children, racial awareness is something that can be taken off the shelf when it is needed and put back neatly when it is no longer relevant. The convenience of racial ignorance is a luxury only available to white children, perhaps even white adults to some extent, but can never be afforded by those who suffer the injustices that innocence ignores.

This ignorance, though, does not go unrecognized nor is it seen as a benefit to Jean Louise in *Go Set a Watchman*. Once Jean Louise discovers Atticus and Henry at the Citizens’ Council, she must engage in heavy self-reflection to determine her place once more in Maycomb County and at what point her beliefs diverged so strongly from those around her. She comes to the conclusion that she “was born color blind,” a figurative label meant to convey that she had simply gone about her life without treating anyone any differently on account of their race (*Watchman* 122). The thought simply could not have even crossed her mind to have prejudice against someone. As Jean Louise continues to process throughout the novel her newly acquired knowledge of the true nature of the prevailing thought on race politics, it becomes clear that for her the matter is less a case of color-blindness than of “a ‘holy ignorance’ of whiteness and its power structures” (Henninger 609). The innocence of *To Kill a Mockingbird* and the idea that racial injustice could ever be overlooked or set aside is revealed to be naïve and solipsistic. The world and all of its issues do not stop their progression just because Jean Louise decides to pay them no mind.

With the discovery of *Go Set a Watchman* and in light of the altered approach to racial injustice that it demonstrates, it may now be prudent to revise Early’s statement

that *To Kill a Mockingbird* is “the great southern novel of the civil rights movement” (Petry 101). Not only is *Go Set a Watchman* primed for that title due to its setting in the mid to late 1950s when the first notable stirrings of the movement were taking place, but it is more capable of speaking for the experience of the era because it purposefully recognizes the intents and purposes of that movement. The term “great” may be allowable, but even *Go Set a Watchman* is by no means perfect since it still only records the white experience of the growing ideology of racial justice. One of the most significant moments in Jean Louise’s journey from ignorance toward awareness is the sudden reversal of victimhood she experiences when she visits Calpurnia’s home, asking her former housekeeper “What are you doing to me?” only to be asked in return “What are you all doing to us?” (*Watchman* 159–60). Immediately following this exchange appears a verbally one-sided pantomime of a confession:

She looked into the old woman’s face and she knew it was hopeless. Calpurnia was watching her, and in Calpurnia’s eyes was no hint of compassion.

Jean Louise rose to go. ‘Tell me one thing, Cal,’ she said, ‘just one thing before I go—please, I’ve got to know. Did you hate us?’

The old woman sat silent, bearing the burden of her years. Jean Louise waited.

Finally, Calpurnia shook her head. (*Watchman* 160)

Calpurnia—silent, serious, and resolute—sits in the judgment seat, and Jean Louise plays the part of the penitent waiting for a verdict. The fact that Jean Louise looks for compassion in Calpurnia before she asks her question, let alone that she asks the question itself, reveals Jean Louise’s desire for absolution. Calpurnia’s still, silent answer does not grant forgiveness, but it does acknowledge Jean Louise’s acceptance of the burden that her whiteness and her ignorance inadvertently placed on Calpurnia. Failing to fully reconcile with her most prominent maternal figure, Jean Louise reaches her most

vulnerable and childlike state in *Go Set a Watchman*. She experiences a repeat of her earlier loss of innocence in which the last remaining hope of an adult who could provide stability and guidance is denied her.

Now fully aware of her own guilt, conscious or not, in the injustices and prejudices against the black members of her community and her nation, Jean Louise seethes for the remainder of the novel in self-loathing and frustration with others. Particularly noticeable is her running inner-monologue in which she intersperses the inane chatter of the local ladies with bitter parodies of famous American speeches on freedom: Lincoln's Gettysburg Address is transformed from liberty and equality into "Conceived in mistrust, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created evil," and the sure statement of memorialization becomes a bitter hope that "the world will little note nor long remember what you are saying here," leaving unsaid the belief that what would remain forever are the actions more than the words (*Watchman* 176). The Declaration of Independence receives its own shrewd remodeling, revising Jefferson's words to read "When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another they are Communists" (*Watchman* 176). Jean Louise may tend toward the dramatic in these mental commentaries that rely on her memory of high school history classes, but the implication is clear: the America that she has always known no longer exists. The reawakening she undergoes extends her perspective beyond Maycomb and beyond the South in general to encompass American history as a whole. This racial ignorance is not her fault alone but all white American's. The long-sustained tradition of white supremacy, even with the least hostile of intentions, is solely responsible for the climate

of racial injustice that has endured well beyond its time. There no longer exists a viable reason to preserve such traditions, not even for nostalgia's sake. There can be no return to a childlike state of innocence once the truth has been revealed. Jean Louise has reached the final stages in her arc from childhood to full adult maturity and leaves readers on that precipice with her; young readers must also begin to ask themselves the same questions of "what comes next?" that Jean Louise is left to determine.

The lack of forward direction with which Jean Louise must reconcile herself at the end of *Go Set a Watchman* feels typical of a narrative in the post-modern era. When Jean Louise returns to her childhood home, now an ice cream shop, she is overcome by a wave of nausea brought on by her sudden induction "into American double consciousness, a new awareness of the duplicitous disconnect" between the "gentleman" she had always believed her father to be and the sudden betrayal by that same gentleman "publicly, grossly, and shamelessly" (Henninger 615; *Watchman* 113). This sudden reversal of perspectives on the world is one of the most common tropes of Young Adult literature, particularly in the dystopian fantasy and science fiction genres. Young protagonists suddenly find themselves seeing the realities of their world clearly for the first time, almost as if a veil has been lifted. Just as Orson Scott Card's Ender Wiggin discovered his years of training led to the mass genocide of his alien enemies without his knowledge in *Ender's Game* or Lois Lowry's Jonas learned precisely what is done with undesirable members of his idyllic Community in *The Giver*, Lee's Jean Louise reaches a point where she can no longer look past the plain truth of her community. Holding on to the past "when things were uncomplicated and people did not lie" and ignoring her painfully required knowledge would be nothing more than a useless attempt at nostalgia

(*Watchman* 241). Reading Jean Louise's story from *To Kill a Mockingbird* to *Go Set a Watchman* traces the philosophical progression from modernity to a more skeptical mindset of post-modernity despite the reversed order of their creation. *To Kill a Mockingbird* recognizes the need for a change in attitude toward racial injustice, but it still clings to the possibility that such change can be made while maintain the old order and values. *Go Set a Watchman* dismantles that possibility and demands that a new order take its place, although it does not know the shape of that order. Nothing could situate Lee's texts further into their place in the lists of Young Adult novels than this rapid and haphazard transition from innocence and ignorance to awareness with no clear vision for a future. The future in Young Adult literature is always a wide open field of possibilities, but it is equally and maddeningly uncertain.

CHAPTER FOUR

Harper Lee and Isaiah 21: a Watchman for the Other in Maycomb, AL

Following the announcement by HarperCollins on February 3, 2015 that Harper Lee would finally be publishing a second novel to follow her acclaimed American classic, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, intrigue and suspicion flooded the media. Beloved by readers of American literature, Atticus Finch has been held in high esteem for his stance on racial equality and social progression for fifty-five years. Unfortunately, one unforeseen result of the July-published *Go Set a Watchman* was how it affected readers' perceptions of Atticus in retrospect. The so-called sequel revealed to readers an Atticus set twenty years after the events of the Tom Robinson trial and who is surprisingly sympathetic to the ideas of Southern segregationists and even the Klan. Told through the eyes of Jean Louise "Scout" Finch, the novel unravels the experiences of a daughter's horror and outrage upon discovering how drastically time can change one's perception of home and family. Scout Finch has been a vehicle for exploring the oppression of the Other for over half a century, but *Go Set a Watchman* offers a different insight into how the adult Jean Louise must reconcile herself as an Other among her own people. The title of *Watchman*, pulled from the King James Version of Isaiah 21:6, a chapter which details Isaiah's vision of the fall of Babylon, establishes Jean Louise as a type of watchman who must observe and report her own world crashing around her and reconcile her various roles in that fall.

Harper Lee's first novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, functions well as a coming-of-age novel because it does not shy away from the complex and sensitive issues of life in the Southern states. Rebecca H. Best surmises that the central theme of the novel "is the quest to understand the relationships among people and groups of people" (Best 541). *To Kill a Mockingbird* puts its young main characters in conversation with institutionalized racism, mental illness, sexual abuse by family members, and economic elitism. Regarding each of these, Scout and her brother Jem find themselves struggling to understand a group of people with vastly different backgrounds and experiences. The story of *To Kill a Mockingbird* is the story of Jem and Scout coming to "understand the community around them and the Others within it" in order to understand themselves (Best 541). Others in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, such as Boo Radley, Tom Robinson, Dolphus Raymond, and Mrs. Henry Lafayette Dubose, "demarcate, by his or her very strangeness the boundaries of the familiar and (in that sense) of the real" for Jem and Scout (Gurevitch 1180).

The Finch children achieve their understanding of these Others by overcoming their strangeness through familiarity. With the seemingly endless amount of free time only known to children, Jem and Scout "try to define themselves through an understanding of that which they are not, the ways in which they and their family are different" through the best method available to them: playing pretend (Best 543). Together with their friend Dill, they spend summers imagining themselves as Boo Radley himself, acting out what they envision as the events of his life that resulted in his reclusive habits. Boo, observing them from the safety of his home, develops an affection for these children that then prompts him to save their lives from a vengeful Robert Ewell

at the conclusion of the novel. On his own, Jem has a significant moment of emotional growth after the death of Mrs. Dubose because of the time he spent with her, begrudgingly suffering Atticus's punishment by reading aloud to her daily. Mrs. Dubose's tactless and shrewd comments are not forgotten by Jem, but by witnessing her own suffering at the hands of a morphine addiction, he gains an understanding of her motivations. These practices in empathy make it far more possible for Jem and Scout to understand how their father is so willing to take up what many would consider an impossible case: defending a black man accused of raping a white woman.

The Tom Robinson case brings the perceived Otherness of different races and different social strata to the forefront of both the Finch family and the Maycomb community in general, while the Ewells themselves are considered Other due to their low class and uncivilized lifestyles. When one of the Ewell sons disrupts the schoolroom, the other children refer to his family as "folks like that" to distinguish him from the well-behaved children of the more proper families in town; even Atticus tells Scout that "the Ewells were members of an exclusive society made up of Ewells" (*Mockingbird* 31; 34). They are still more familiar to the middle-to-lower-class white families of the community than Tom Robinson is. All Scout and Jem have to do is look around at the people of Maycomb to "learn that black people are of a different and lower class from themselves—that they are Other" (Best 543). Atticus explains to Scout after taking the defense attorney appointment that "This time we aren't fighting the Yankees, we're fighting our friends. But remember this, no matter how bitter things get, they're still our friends and this is still our home" (*Mockingbird* 87). Even this phrasing is troubling to Scout as she daily shoulders the harassment of her white classmates, mocking her and her

father for aligning themselves with the black community. White people, people who are supposed to be her friends, in her subset of the familiar, have turned against her family for doing what she knows is the morally right thing.

Prejudice against Tom Robinson is an assumed fact even before his trial begins. Scout overhears Atticus and her Uncle Jack speaking about the case one night, and learns that even Atticus has little hope for a successful outcome:

It couldn't be worse, Jack. The only thing we've got is a black man's word against the Ewells'. The evidence boils down to you-did—I-didn't. The jury couldn't possibly be expected to take Tom Robinson's word against the Ewells' [...] You know what's going to happen as well as I do, Jack, and I hope and pray I can get Jem and Scout through it without bitterness, and most of all, without catching Maycomb's usual disease. (*Mockingbird* 100)

Even though Atticus does not view this case as some grand opportunity to enact social reform and eradicate racism from the South, he sees a much smaller, more manageable battle in the works here. Atticus recognizes a chance to teach his children how to view the world properly. As the trial progresses, Atticus resists allowing the Otherness of Tom Robinson's race to dictate his fate at the hands of a white jury. Even after “the secret courts of men's hearts” declare Tom's conviction and practically sentence his death, Atticus's actions set off a minor shift in perception for others in the community (*Mockingbird* 276). Miss Maudie, the Finches' contentious neighbor, reprimands Aunt Alexandra for her criticisms of Atticus, telling her that “We trust him to do right [...] the handful of people with enough humility to think, when they look at a Negro, there but for the Lord's kindness am I” (*Mockingbird* 271). There is still a layer of distinction between the self and the Other of the black community in these thoughts, but it is tempered by a newfound empathy for the Other's struggle.

This empathy on the part of the privileged for the oppressed is the most integral part of what Scout and Jem learn from their father's participation in Tom Robinson's case. Beyond the simple actions of imagining themselves into the lives of those only vaguely Other than themselves, Scout and Jem had to surmount their community's prejudices to even begin to approach a place where they are capable of understanding the Otherness of a group of people who systematically experience oppression. Scout and Jem reach the realization that "there's just one kind of folks. Folks," but they are equally aware that this truth is not understood by all (*Mockingbird* 260). For Scout especially, "empathy can move her beyond stereotypes to change her relationships with other people. Through empathy, her sense of justice is united to fidelity such that 'the other' is drawn into her circle of concern" and is no longer classified in some other area of her communal understanding (Osheim 213). What is nothing more than a malicious piece of gossip to other ladies of the community instead "hung over [Scout and Jem] like smoke in a closed room" (*Mockingbird* 280).

Scout's empathy not only allows her to relate to the people around her, but she also learns to apply it to people in drastically different situations than herself. This is highlighted best by the ironic lesson on Hitler she is forced to sit through when her teacher assures the class that "Over here we don't believe in persecuting anybody. Persecution comes from people who are prejudiced" (*Mockingbird* 282). One classmate, shocked that a group of white people would be the target of hatred, prompts Miss Gates to inform the class that "the Jews have been persecuted since the beginning of history, even driven out of their own country. It's one of the most terrible stories in history" (*Mockingbird* 282). Scout, now aware of how prejudice appears, recognizes immediately

that these statements directly contradict Miss Gates's reaction to Tom's conviction, and she learns one more lesson: even nice people can be prejudiced hypocrites.

While the Scout of *To Kill a Mockingbird* learns how to understand the Other, the Jean Louise of *Go Set a Watchman* undergoes the traumatic experience of discovering that she is her own kind of Other. While her feelings of not belonging start out as simple as losing touch "with everyone she grew up with," they steadily progress in severity (*Watchman* 32-33). Her years spent living in New York have changed her more than she anticipated, leaving her with the feeling that "every time [she has] come home for the past five years—before that, even. From college—something's changed a little more" (*Watchman* 75). Jean Louise feels the differences in the small things such as her unconventional views on marriage, her conviction that she would never make a good housewife or mother, a conviction which grew out of her long-held belief that the "world of femininity, [was] a world she despised, could not comprehend nor defend herself against, a world that did not want her," and her flaunting of what Aunt Alexandra considers lady-like behavior (*Watchman* 116). However, it is the larger distinctions between herself and the members of her community that preoccupy Jean Louise's mind most.

The events of *Go Set a Watchman* are set following the Supreme Court case of *Brown v. the Board of Education* in 1954. Racial tensions are high not only in the South, but across the whole country. Jean Louise finds the subject of the rising unrest as unavoidable on a newspaper page in Maycomb as it was in New York City. She arrives in Maycomb secure in her knowledge that there are two types of white people involved in the issue: people like her and the "same people who were the Invisible Empire, who hated

Catholics; ignorant, fear-ridden, red-faced, boorish, law-abiding, one hundred per cent red-blooded Anglo-Saxons, her fellow Americans—trash” (*Watchman* 104). This assurance is quickly shaken, though, when she learns that Atticus, the instructor of moral truths from her childhood, and her boyfriend Henry Clinton are active members in the Maycomb County Citizen’s Council. The dissonance of thought Jean Louise experiences at the council meeting listening to the guest speaker’s claims of “God made the races . . . nobody knows why but He intended for ‘em to stay apart” bumping up against the echoing memories of her own father standing in the court room calling for “equal rights for all, special privileges for none” cracks the mold of Jean Louise’s identity and sets her on the path of questioning for the rest of the novel (*Watchman* 108). In her emotional crisis, Jean Louise experiences the sensation of her hometown rejecting her, even going so far as to anthropomorphize it with the thought “there is no place for you here” (*Watchman* 111). The loss of Atticus as her moral foundation creates a domino effect in Jean Louise, causing her to call into question everything she thought she loved about Maycomb.

The singular characteristic of Jean Louise that puts the nail in the coffin on her Otherness in Maycomb is the idea that she is color blind. It is not a literal color-blindness, but the figurative kind that is tossed around in the rhetoric of those who feel the need to explain their own lack of prejudice. Before Jean Louise takes her newly discomfoting thoughts to anyone else to discuss, the narrator points out the cause of her various sufferings:

Had she insight, could she have pierced the barriers of her highly selective, insular world, she may have discovered that all her life she had been with a visual defect which had gone unnoticed and neglected by

herself and by those closest to her: she was born color blind. (*Watchman* 122)

Uncle Jack later echoes this observation, proving that it did not go unnoticed but merely unacknowledged, when he tells Jean Louise that “The only differences you see between one human and another are differences in looks and intelligence and character and the like. [...] You see only people” (*Watchman* 270). This color-blindness itself would not be enough to secure Jean Louise’s Otherness were it not for the personal application of it to Calpurnia. Calpurnia, Jean Louise’s childhood nanny and housekeeper, treats Jean Louise with a cold civility, or her “company manners” instead of the warmth of family that Jean Louise expected to receive when she visited Cal (*Watchman* 161). It isn’t until Calpurnia looks at Jean Louise and “didn’t see [her], she saw white folks” that Jean Louise understands the divides between the races in her community (*Watchman* 161). Even then, she needs time for the realization to set in before she fully distinguishes herself from her own race:

How can they devoutly believe everything they hear in church and then say the things they do and listen to the things they hear without throwing up? I thought I was a Christian but I’m not. I’m something else and I don’t know what. Everything I have ever taken for right and wrong these people have taught me—these same, these very people. So it’s me, it’s not them. Something has happened to me. (*Watchman* 167)

The reality of the situation, however, is not that either side has changed. In fact, the status quo of 1954 has remained intact from what it was twenty years before as has Jean Louise. It is only that when two trajectories set at different targets begin to follow the paths laid before them, at a far enough point in the future there will inevitably come a moment when those paths are no longer in sight of each other. For Jean Louise, the starting point of her path and the starting point of her father as she once knew him were close together,

but twenty years have proven that their end points are miles apart. Jean Louise is not an oppressed Other in the sense of the African Americans in her own community, or the Jewish people she learned about in class as a child and who are represented in the text of Isaiah, but she is a person without a place who cannot bridge the mental gap between the accepted thought of the majority and the beliefs she knows to be right. This oppression of the mind places Jean Louise in the ideal position to act as a conduit for analyzing the text of *Go Set a Watchman* in light of its titular reference.

Isaiah 21, the source of *Go Set a Watchman*'s title, poses a distinct difficulty in its interpretation. Walter Brueggemann describes the chapter as “extraordinarily enigmatic and elusive and, given our present understandings, almost completely beyond comprehension” (Brueggemann 169). Otto Kaiser attributes the passage's difficulty to the fault of the author, claiming:

Whereas on the one hand [the reader] is impressed by the mysterious and gloomy atmosphere of the first five verses, and the quite different dream-like scene of the second five verses, he is also faced by a whole series of obscurities and tensions which ultimately arouse the suspicion that he has perhaps failed to understand the prophecy properly. (Kaiser 120-121)

There are key insights within this chapter that need exploring, as resistant to understanding as it may be, because it was chosen to be the title and foundation of *Go Set a Watchman*'s text. Chapter 21 depicts Isaiah's vision of the future fall of Babylon with poetic verse that is “tilted toward apocalyptic rhetoric[...and] concerns a vast disorder and an ending of power arrangements dominated by Babylon, an ending that is welcome but causes a response of enormous confusion and dismay” (Brueggemann 169). The futurity of the events depicted in the verses points to a future downfall of an unnamed nation, but appeals to the poet's current situation of oppression at the hands of Babylon.

While the destroyer and the betrayer “may refer to a historical enemy, [...] there is enough of an apocalyptic hint here to suggest that they refer to ‘the ultimate enemy’ who will terminate everything” (Brueggemann 169-170). Although the references to Elam and Media do not seem to fit with this suggestion—since “at that period the Medes and the Babylonians were allied—the likely conclusion here is that Elam and Medea are paraphrases for the Persian kingdom” (Kaiser 124). The implied prediction of the Persians conquering Babylon “employs venturesome rhetoric for this pivotal historical turn that comes to dominate the tradition of Isaiah” (Brueggemann 170). There is a sense, and mostly a grand hope, within the text that Babylon will soon reap the punishment for the oppression of Israel. The accusation of verse 2 that “the treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously, and the spoiler spoileth” could merely be a declaration against Babylon, but it is possible that this verse is meant to broaden the potential identity of the fallen nation. Kaiser proposes that “the poet held a complicated eschatological conception in which the fall of Babylon was the signal for world-wide revolt and conspiracy on the part of the nations,” not the liberation of Israel from Babylon alone (Kaiser 123). This open-ended identification of who exactly the vision points to for destruction, as well as “the strange obscurity which envelops this poem, the artificiality, in our view of its prophetic features, the transitions which can be observed in the use of traditional themes and its deliberate but by no means naïve dramatic construction,” allows the text to easily be taken and applied to other groups undergoing similar struggles. It does not just exist as a foretelling of the fall to come at the hands of Cyrus in 539 BC.

As a part of Israel, the poet of course hopes for the destruction of his oppressors, but still there is a surprisingly emotional response to the prophet’s revelation from God.

The deeply physical anguish expressed in verses 3-4 of “loins filled with pain: pangs have taken hold upon me, as the pangs of a woman that travaileth” and “my heart panted, fearfulness affrighted me: the night of my pleasure hath he turned into fear unto me” are not what one would expect to come from someone on the side of God’s people (Is. 21:3-4 KJV). The amount of sympathy expressed in these two verses for Babylon is practically unrivaled in the text of the Bible: “no other biblical passage portrays an observer of a visionary event so affected by what is seen” in verses 3-4 (Broyles 106). It is difficult to understand why the poet chooses to express this level of emotional connection with his oppressors, although “[w]e would understand his horror much better if it had been the consequence of his participation, in his ecstasy, in the catastrophe which was being prepared for Babylon” (Kaiser 122). But this is not the case; all that is known about the actual fall is that the watchman announces the arrival of the army and suddenly there is a victory. Perhaps the most likely answer is that, although the poet wishes for the end of Babylon’s reign, he is also fearful of it “because it means the end of the known world” (Brueggemann 170). Babylon, for the Israelite who has only ever known life under its rule, is “a fixed point of reference” that when taken away introduces a new kind of chaos (Brueggemann 171). He must depend on God’s plan for the future and trust that whatever comes with Persia’s conquest is not worse than what he suffered under Babylon.

The Babylon of this chapter is characterized by its laziness and inattention. The poet and reader know the attack is coming, but Babylon sits at a table eating and drinking in “an imagined scene from complacent, opulent Babylon” (Brueggemann 171). At verse 6, however, a shift occurs, and “there is no ease or complacency, but the agitation and alarm that belong to invasion” (Brueggemann 171). Here is where we are introduced to

the watchman set at his watchtower who is called to “declare what he seeth” (Is. 21:6 KJV). The term “watcher” as used in reference to a prophet “evolves from a literal historical term to become a metaphor for the prophet’s spiritual duty and obligation on behalf of the Israelite community” (Greenspoon 29). When used in the historical sense as a term for one who patrols a city, a watcher was “responsible for passing on the information gleaned while on his post that was vital to the city’s security” (Greenspoon 29). References to watchers in earlier texts such as Joshua 2:15, Second Samuel 18:24-27, and Second Kings 9:18 “suggest with a fair amount of confidence that the nature of the watcher’s role and duty was universally understood in ancient Israel” and the connection between watchman and prophet in this text would have been clear (Greenspoon 30). In Psalms, we are told that “except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain” (Ps. 127:1KJV). The watchman and the Lord together are essential for protection, and the watchman prophet needs the Lord’s revealed word to give credence to his declarations, just as the Lord needs the watchman prophet to voice the words.

In a text that combines the spiritual and military within the downfall of Babylon, it is fitting that the poet of Isaiah would use a metaphor that also chooses to mix the spiritual purposes of the prophet with the military purposes of the watchman. The fall of Babylon depicted in Isaiah 21 “becomes in Israel’s imagination a pivotal example of Yahweh’s Capacity to override the power of evil,” represented here by Babylon itself (Brueggemann 172). The efficient if not vague attack depicted in verses 7-9 and culminated in the depiction of “all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground” is then followed by a strong appeal to the brokenness of the people of Israel (Is.

21:9 KJV). The idols of the Babylonians lie broken on the ground just as the “vulnerable, exposed, taken advantage of, abused” people of God’s nation are compared to his “threshing, and the corn of [his] floor” (Brueggemann 172; Is. 21:10 KJV). The end of the empire has arrived, but the damage is lasting on the people who were affected, much as Jean Louis is permanently affected by the fall of her own world as she perceived it.

Jean Louise’s emotional journey through *Go Set a Watchman* closely mirrors that of the poet in Isaiah 21. Overall, the narration of Isaiah is intentionally distant such that “Isaiah does not insert himself into the poem in order to express his own reactions; he is much more objective than subjective” (Schökel 166). In the same way, there is always a level of distance in the narration of both *Go Set a Watchman* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The story of young Scout is told by a mostly unseen and unobtrusive adult Jean Louise. It is only in *Go Set a Watchman* that we see the full influence of this Jean Louise and the progression from Scout to her adult counterpart. Jean Louise “Scout” Finch is in narrative control of both works, but she tells the story in different ways due to her age. According to Jennifer Murray:

The narrative voice in *To Kill a Mockingbird* is not uniform in its perspective on the past. Lee uses the possibilities of the remembering adult narrator, who has the distance of both time and maturity from the events, but at strategic moments she limits the insight of the narrator to what she, as a child, might have understood. (Murray 78)

Amanda Osheim also comments on Scout’s childhood understanding, noting that “it is through her eyes that we come to understand Mayella Ewell’s dismal life, her attempted seduction of Tom, and her treatment at the hands of her alcoholic and sexually abusive father” (Osheim 204).

From the first page, we are met with a Jean Louise Finch who is capable of looking at the broad span of events within *To Kill a Mockingbird* with perception and understanding, yet the narrator within the text frequently takes on the innocence of a young Scout. The voice of the narrator has the tone of young Scout, but we are given such insights of adult Jean Louise as “When enough years had gone by to enable us to look back on them, we sometimes discussed the events leading to his accident” (*Mockingbird* 3). The sweeping scope of Scout’s narrative authority in *To Kill a Mockingbird* lures the reader in with the simplistic curiosity of the child then shocks with the profound philosophies of the adult.

This duality does not appear in the same way in *Go Set a Watchman*, the entirety of the story being told through the perspective of an adult Jean Louise. However, distance is provided between an immediate understanding of Jean Louise through the use of a third-person narrator. This is still Jean Louise’s story to tell, but we do not get to hear her words exactly. For the novel as a whole, it is Jean Louise’s spoken words that draw in the reader with their relatability, but the subtext of the third-person perspective causes the reader to look deeper than what is actually said. Of course, there is always the exception that proves the rule. In Jean Louise’s most vulnerable moments, the narrative of *Go Set a Watchman* slips from third person to first person. At the climax of a scene in which Jean Louise is listening to the other women in Maycomb who have come to her house for a welcome home coffee, Lee makes this shift painfully clear. While eavesdropping and pausing between polite bouts of conversation, Jean Louise slips into first person to relieve her need to make snarky comments and instead offers the reader an outburst of all her

pent-up emotions from the casual racism of her peers to the realization that her father was attending council meetings with the most racist members of her community:

Blind, that's what I am. I never opened my eyes. I never thought to look into people's hearts, I looked only in their faces. Stone blind . . . Mr. Stone. Mr. Stone set a watchman in church yesterday. He should have provided me with one. I need a watchman to lead me around and declare what he seeth every hour on the hour. I need a watchman to tell me this is what a man says but this is what he means, to draw a line down the middle and say here is this justice and there is that justice and make me understand the difference. I need a watchman to go forth and proclaim to them all that twenty-six years is too long to play a joke on anybody, no matter how funny it is. (*Watchman* 181-182)

Lee decides to break the rules of fiction writing by switching her narrator's perspectives within single sections, sometimes even within single paragraphs. This is a narrative trick that can intrigue or alienate the reader depending on how well it is executed. *Go Set a Watchman* shows Lee playing with the relationship between third-person and first-person, flinging the reader across the levels of psychic distance. The disorienting effect she creates fits with Jean Louise's own disorientation, but the familiarity she builds up with her character's voice in the small instances of first-person in *Go Set a Watchman* eventually overwhelm the text of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The constant of the first-person becomes an assured foundation the reader is then able to build his or her own self-reflection off of, using Jean Louise's voice as she reimagines herself as young Scout to gain a more intimate access to her experience. Between the two texts, Lee learns how to close the gaps and draw the reader in as near as possible.

Chapter 21 in *Isaiah* is also an anomaly in terms of narration. According to Edgar W. Conrad, "Isaiah speaks only briefly in a narrative first person singular voice," much as the narration of *Go Set a Watchman* is only presented through Jean Louise's first person voice in times of great emotion (Conrad 35). The prophet Isaiah receives his

authority by being the recipient of God's word and the vehicle to voice that word to the people; Jean Louise's authority to interrupt the narrative with her internal thoughts comes from herself as the person closest to the events and the only one, therefore, who can fully interpret its meaning. The Jean Louise of *Go Set a Watchman* most closely resembles Isaiah's actual watchman, but there is a part of her that also plays the role of Babylon. In verses 8 and 9, "The sentinel is alert and at his post continually day and night to report on the incessant arrival of more attackers" (Brueggemann 171). From the moment that Jean Louise's suspicions are aroused concerning Atticus's true nature, she is on high alert. She watches him and all the others in her community, taking note of what is out of order in the world she thought she knew, preparing for the moment of attack when she finally sits down with her father and hashes out the devastating truth. She begins more in line with the prophet, feeling with great strength the horror that is imminent. Isaiah claims, "I was dismayed at the seeing of it," but he must observe and communicate his observations anyway (Is. 21:3). Jean Louise must also transform from "Blind, that's what I am. I never opened my eyes" to "I'm trying to make you see something" (*Watchman* 181; 251). To be a watchman, Jean Louise must first gain her sight back.

The problem for Jean Louise is that she must play both prophet and audience. Throughout the novel, she learns that it was allowing others to be her watchmen that resulted in her blindness to Atticus's flaws. Toward the end of the novel, Uncle Jack tells Jean Louise that "every man's watchman, is his conscience" but that "somewhere along the line [she] fastened it like a barnacle onto [her] father's," and that was the source of her discomfort (*Watchman* 265):

When you happened along and saw him doing something that seemed to you to be the very antithesis of his conscience—your conscience—you

literally could not stand it. It made you physically ill. Life became hell on earth for you. You had to kill yourself, or he had to kill you to get you functioning as a separate entity. (*Watchman* 265)

This is where Jean Louise's identity begins to merge the watchman and the watched. She first comes to the realization that her perspective has always been dependent on her father's. Atticus is her god, and Uncle Jack reminds her that "Our gods are remote from us, Jean Louise. They must never descend to human level" (*Watchman* 266). Atticus's refusal to engage with Jean Louise's anger during their argument is revealed to be him "letting [her] break [her] icons one by one," much as Isaiah tells us of "all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground" (*Watchman* 266; Is. 21:10 KJV). Brueggemann describes the fall of Babylon as "a datable, identifiable happening [...which] is more than historical. It is a cosmic happening that signifies a revolutionary redefinition of the world" (Brueggemann 170). *Brown v. the Board of Education* is a real, datable historical event, too, and although it instigates many of the conflicts in *Go Set a Watchman*, it is the destruction of Jean Louise's belief in her father that indicates her own fall of Babylon. The final attempt to reconcile the two images of Atticus Finch within her mind, the man who stood for justice and equality and the man who now equivocates on that stand, fails and Jean Louise's world suffers a similar "revolutionary redefinition of the world." The Otherness that Jean Louise defies as an adult, and learned how to understand as a child, overtakes her, and the "us vs. them" mentality forces her onto the opposite side of the man whom she never dreamed would be an Other to her. Atticus is the reference point that disappears when Babylon falls, but Jean Louise cannot survive in a world where his reference remains. In another instance of her internal monologue leaking onto the page she says, "I did not want my world disturbed, but I wanted to crush

the man who's trying to preserve it for me" (*Watchman* 277). Jean Louise survives the emotional battle, but she is left in the aftermath with the wounds of the threshing. She has been broken just as fully as her figurative graven image of Atticus has.

Not only is Jean Louise her own prophet watchman, she is also the refugees who appear after Isaiah's vision. During the final argument with her father, Jean Louise tells Atticus that "Any man in this world, Atticus any man who has a head and arms and legs, was born with hope in his heart," and the real crime that Atticus commits is denying that hope to the black community (*Watchman* 251). In Isaiah, "the sentinel does not doubt that good news is coming soon," but for Jean Louise, her watch gives her no reason for such hope (Brueggemann 173). She flees Maycomb into "a no-man's-land" out of mourning for the loss of innocence she did not even know she still possessed (*Watchman* 248). She initially believes that "there's no place for me any more in Maycomb, and I'll never be entirely at home anywhere else" taking on the identity of the displaced war victims as her own (*Watchman* 248). Jean Louise has lost her place in the world, and even though she decides to stay in Maycomb to try to live despite that displacement, her world is different. No one else around is the cause of this, but because her perceptions have altered regarding her relationship to the others around her—placing her as the Other even within her own family—she must rebuild her world from the bottom up.

Jean Louise "Scout" Finch acts as one of the first introductions to understanding the Other that many receive in studying American literature. *To Kill a Mockingbird* is presented as required reading in high school classrooms across the United States, and for many, it is the basis for some of the first real conversations regarding racial equality. While the Scout Finch of *To Kill a Mockingbird* is suitable for a reader who may be

discovering the nuances of race relations for the first time or for the more experienced who are looking back at what they already know. However, the Jean Louise of *Go Set a Watchman* possesses a highly complex relationship with the history of race relations in the South. She at once is a product of Southern culture and one who subverts the prejudiced norms of that culture. Taking into account the complex interweaving of sympathy and justice seen in Isaiah 21, Jean Louise marks her struggle with identity and morality as one that is timeless. It is easy to draw lines and distinguish that the wicked on *that* side—whether it be Babylon or those of any opposing political opinion—are deserving of divine punishment, but those on *this* side deserve liberation. Yet, Jean Louise straddles those distinctions, at once belonging to the privileged majority and yet resisting its values. She becomes the face of internal struggle, playing prophet, watchman, Babylon, and refugee all at once. These roles are each a part of her in equal measure and she would not be the same Jean Louise without any one of them.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

For decades Harper Lee has been a point of safety and familiarity in American literature. *To Kill a Mockingbird* presents a portrait of American life that is distinctly Southern while also speaking to the national narrative of rising up in the face of adversity. The discovery of *Go Set a Watchman* has challenged that perception of Lee's work, and for some it has permanently destroyed it. While this collection of essays is by no means comprehensive, what I have hoped to achieve here is the initial steps toward recognizing that the existence of *Watchman* does not necessarily mean the erasure of *Mockingbird*. Lee's work has endured for over half a century and it will continue to do so despite this new and yet outdated perspective on her beloved characters. In fact, *Go Set a Watchman* has provided readers with a wealth of new material with which to analyze *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Nothing has been lost in its publication except maybe an idealized purity of Lee's control over her literary exposure. Readers and scholars have much to gain by embracing the opportunity provided by this found manuscript.

Although I have not approached the texts through these lenses, a wealth of material exists within both *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Go Set a Watchman* that could prove incredibly fascinating in terms of feminist, psychoanalytic, and ecocritical analysis. What I have aimed to prove is that the most fruitful way to engage with Lee's works is to read them both separately and together, allowing the overlaps and contradictions to open up space for discussion. Whether you treat *Watchman* purely as a draft that expands and

transforms into *Mockingbird*'s ideology or prefer to maintain the integrity of Jean Louise's fictional timeline, there is something to be said for the world that Nelle Harper Lee has created within the two texts. You can read them forwards or you can read them backwards, but as long as you read them, *Mockingbird* and *Watchman* will continue to offer new ground for insight.

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