

To Kill a Mockingbird

Harper Lee

Quote	Technique	Effect
“Maycomb was an old town, but it was a tired old town when I first knew it. In rainy weather the streets turned to red slop; grass grew on the sidewalks, the court-house sagged in the square”	Imagery and personification	This shows how the town is old and ‘typical’ in ‘Southern-country’ nature (rarely changing). We also later learn that this reflects the people within the town too.
“Mockingbirds don’t do one thing except make music for us to enjoy. They don’t eat up people’s gardens, don’t nest in corn cribs, they don’t do one thing but sing their hearts out for us. That’s why it’s a sin to kill a mockingbird”	Repetition (don’t), symbolism and biblical imagery	Mockingbirds are symbols of the innocent and those who ‘do no wrong’ to those around them. It has also been argued that Tom Robinson is also a ‘mockingbird’ within the novel.
“You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view.. Until you climb into his skin and walk around in it”	Absolute language, mixed use of 2nd and 3rd person language	Prompts the reader to consider the statement and in turn, provides valuable commentary on not judging others until they have deeply considered what it would be like, to experience their life.
“The remainder of my school days were no more auspicious than the first”	Formal tone and language (ironically used by a child)	Demonstrates the precocious nature of the protagonist ‘Scout’ and how her educated upbringing.
“I just hope that Jem and Scout come to me for their answers instead of listening to the town. I hope they trust me enough... Jean Louise?”	Questioning and ellipsis	Reveals how Atticus’ wants his children to learn from his motives and attitude opposed to being influenced by the gossip & ill-informed opinions of the town.
“There’s four kinds of folks in the world. There’s the ordinary folks like us and the neighbours, there’s the kind like the Ewells down at the dump and the Negroes”	Contrast	Explains the deeply rooted segregation that exists within Maycomb; also an allusion to the context in which this was written (a deeply divided USA during the 1950s)
(Quote about Mayella Ewell), “White people wouldn’t have anything to do with her because she lived among the pigs; Negroes wouldn’t have anything to do with her because she was white”	Repetition and contrast	Reiterates the lonely, isolated young woman that Mayella is and it also reflects how her family’s reputation has influenced her social standing within society.

<p>(Bob Ewell referring to Tom Robinson), “He stood and pointed his finger at Tom Robinson. - I seen that black n*gger yonder ruttin’ on my Mayella!”</p>	<p>Zoomorphism, possessive pronoun and exclamatory</p>	<p>The zoomorphism within “ruttin’” (referring to animal behaviour) reveals how Bob Ewell sees Tom Robinson as inferior and subhuman; he is dehumanising him and merely referring to him as a wild animal. The possessive pronoun of “my Mayella” similarly indicates his possession of Mayella and his strong sense of control over her. Finally, the use of exclamatory in “!”, is reflective of how passionate and ‘fired up’ he is about this accusation.</p>
<p>“You live in a Christian home with Christian folks in a Christian town. Out there in J. Grimes Everett’s land there’s nothing but sin and squalor”</p>	<p>Repetition of “Christian”, contrast and alliteration within “sin and squalor”</p>	<p>Reflects the contrast of status and “the moral people” within Maycomb. This also highlights how it is a town that is deeply interested in the social standings and ‘reputation’ of other citizens.</p>
<p>“I’ll tell you there are some good but misguided people in this town. Good, but misguided”</p>	<p>Oxymoron and repetition</p>	<p>Highlights the types of characters within the town who have often been lead astray and lost their initial goodwill.</p>
<p>“Tom was a dead man the minute Mayella Ewell opened her mouth and screamed”</p>	<p>Absolute language</p>	<p>Elucidates the racial injustice and racism that permeates Maycomb. Essentially this quote is saying that, it doesn’t matter if Tom Robinson was innocent or guilty; whatever a white citizen said was to be taken as entirely the truth.</p>
<p>(Miss Gates to the class) “We are a democracy... Over here we don’t believe in persecuting anybody. Persecution comes from people who are prejudice”</p>	<p>Irony</p>	<p>This quote is ironic because as much as Miss Gates tries to convince the class that America is a ‘free and democratic society’, there are still great divides both racially and in relation to class, in addition to rampant segregation existing.</p>
<p>“Atticus was right. One time he said you never really know a man until you stand in his shoes and walk around in them”</p>	<p>Absolute language</p>	<p>Reiterates the didactic lesson at the start of the novel, regarding the fact that society shouldn’t judge individuals without actually considering their perspective and personal experiences.</p>
<p>“Let the dead bury the dead this time, Mr Finch. Let the dead bury the dead”</p>	<p>Repetition and symbolism</p>	<p>Sheriff Tate’s quote is reflective of how he believes that Bob Ewell deserved his sudden, deliberate death due to the fact that Bob Ewell unjustly took Tom Robinson’s life away</p>

<p>“Most people are [nice], Scout, when you finally see them”</p>	<p>Symbolism</p>	<p>This quote is again repeating the novel’s didactic lesson to not judge people for what you <i>think</i> they might be. Instead the novel teaches the importance of taking the time to get to know someone before making assumptions.</p>
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