

**From *To Kill a Mockingbird* to *Go Set a Watchman*:
Harper Lee and Triumph of Pragmatism**

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Abstract:

For any polished reader of Harper Lee, the release of her latest novel *Go Set a Watchman* in July 2015 has thoroughly been a shock to both readership and critics as well, especially when it comes to the virtues of equality, love and racial justice maintained in Lee's first and still most cherished classic novel ever, *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960), which are epitomised more particularly through attorney Atticus Finch. The article right here tries to show that though *Watchman* has often been represented in the media as a sequel to *Mockingbird*, the characters and incidents are entirely different, especially when it comes to the portrayal of Atticus. The objective of the present article is to strike a comparison between the character(s) of Atticus in both *Mockingbird* and *Watchman*. A thorough, critical reading of the texts shows a considerable difference between the two 'Atticuses'. In *Mockingbird*, he is simply portrayed as a moral exemplar for many— simply, an idealist. No wonder, he accepts to defend a black labourer falsely convicted of raping a white woman in Jem Crow-era Alabama. Though he is sure that such an action may turn his life upside down, he pays next to no attention to all that and defends the innocent black man, thereby jeopardising his own life, reputation and family members. The Atticus of *Watchman* is no longer the liberal-minded man wholeheartedly fighting for racial justice in his segregated society; rather, he is a rabid racist and a white supremacist who takes the innate superiority of the white race over the black race for granted—something that makes the reviews given so far about the novel, unlike its predecessor, so negative. Nevertheless, whatever the opinions of Lee's readership and critics who still identify her as the author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning masterpiece *Mockingbird*, the ideals of her first novel have notably eclipsed, not perceived as admirable, and, furthermore, given way to the politics of pragmatism or matter-of-factness in her second and last novel – *Watchman*.

Keywords:

Atticus Finch, the Deep South, equality, racial justice, segregation

Discussion:

To Kill a Mockingbird (1960) has been universally acclaimed as one of the best books ever written in the history of the United States second after the Bible. Joseph Crespino writes, "In the twentieth century, *To Kill a Mockingbird* is probably the most widely read book dealing with race in America, and its protagonist, Atticus Finch, *the most enduring fictional image of racial heroism*" (italics added; 10). The novel has been translated into more than

forty languages, enjoyed record-breaking sales as it sold more than thirty million copies so far and has been adapted into an award-winning film starring Gregory Peck as early as 1962. Furthermore, it has been awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1961, the Presidential Medal of Freedom and numerous other honours and literary awards. No wonder, this book is still a compulsory reading at high school curricula in the United States. Unfortunately, despite this immense popularity, the literary analysis on it is insufficiently sparse. This makes it one of the most unexamined books. One of the notable characters that received favourable reviews is lionised attorney Atticus Finch, who is still taken by many readers and critics as an appropriate role model for lawyers.

Although Tim Dare, an eminent lawyer and professor of law at Auckland University, describes lawyers as “widely thought to be callous, self-serving, devious, and indifferent to justice, truth and the public good” (127), others still look upon Atticus Finch of *Mockingbird* as much different and urge lawyers to adopt him as a role model or a paragon of virtue. Michiko Kakutani, a literary critic and former chief book critic for *The New York Times*, describes him as “the perfect man — the ideal father and a principled idealist, an enlightened, almost saintly believer in justice and fairness. In real life, people named their children after Atticus. People went to law school and became lawyers because of Atticus” (Kakutani). Thomas L. Shaffer, a law professor at Notre Dame University and a renowned legal scholar, describes Atticus Finch as “a hero who is an American, a Southerner, and a lawyer—all of these and a Christian as well” (188) and an exemplar of the good lawyer. Likewise, Steven Lubet, a professor of law at Northwestern University and a legal scholar, writes, “No real-life lawyer has done more for the self-image or public perception of the legal profession than the hero of Harper Lee’s novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*... In the unreconstructed Maycomb, Alabama of the 1930s, Atticus was willing to risk his social standing, professional reputation, and even his physical safety in order to defend a poor, black labourer falsely accused of raping a white woman” (1339). In her essay “*To Kill a Mockingbird*: Fifty Years of Influence on the Legal Profession”, Ann Engar indicates that the character of Atticus Finch in both *Mockingbird* and the 1962 film based on it has inspired a great number of people into the legal profession:

For at least the past two generations, the book and film have attracted numerous individuals to the legal profession through their depiction of a gallant, eloquent, and

courageous attorney defending an innocent man. Voted the number one movie hero of the past one hundred years by the American Film Institute, Atticus Finch bestows respectability and honour upon the legal profession. (66)

Nevertheless, Shaffer goes further to say that the Maycomb court appointed Atticus to defend Tom Robinson simply because it did not expect Atticus to defend him vigorously, and that there were limits imposed then for defending black people: “It is not clear, however, that Judge Taylor expected Atticus to defend his client as vigorously as he did, and it is unlikely that the judge expected a defence which would make the remarkable charge that a white woman had tried to seduce a black man and then had lied about it. There were conventions for – limits on – defences of black people” (183-184). Also, Shaffer describes Atticus as a person who insisted on telling the truth in a segregated society that knew the truth but did not acknowledge it (191). Atticus told the truth and did stand the heavy price it entailed: He and his children suffered so much. To set an example, Atticus’ good treatment of the black people in the county wins him the name “a nigger-lover” (*Mockingbird* 144). Scout and Jem are taunted at school and in the vicinity as the children of a nigger-lover. Scout asks her father about the meaning of the term, and her father says that it is a term that means nothing and that only “ignorant, trashy people use it when they think somebody’s favouring Negroes” (*Mockingbird* 144). Scout asks him: “You aren’t really a nigger-lover, then, are you?”, and he replies: “I certainly am. I do my best to love everybody...I’m hard put, sometimes—baby, it’s never an insult to be called what somebody thinks is a bad name” (*Mockingbird* 144-145).

The story in *Mockingbird* is narrated by the six-year-old Jean Louise Finch, nicknamed Scout. Everything is seen through her eyes. She is the only witness to Atticus, whom she introduces as an epitome of everything that is good and perfect—simply, a *demigod*. Tim Dare writes, Atticus is represented as “a voice of decency, wisdom, and reason, courageously speaking out against bigotry, ignorance, and prejudice” (129). Though he lives in a segregated society and at a time of increasing civil rights unrest, he does believe in such ideals as equality and fraternity amongst people regardless of their colour, gender or class. Likewise, he believes in the integrity of the courts and that such virtues as equality and

racial justice should be guarded by the courts, which he describes as “the great levellers”. To quote his very words:

But there is one way in this country in which all men are created equal—there is one human institution that makes a pauper the equal of a Rockefeller, the stupid man the equal of an Einstein, and the ignorant man the equal of any college president. That institution, gentlemen, is a court. It can be the Supreme Court of the United States or the humblest J. P. court in the land, or this honorable court which you serve. Our courts have their faults, as does any human institution, but in this country our courts are the great levellers, and in our courts all men are created equal. (*Mockingbird* 274)

This is the very reason why he accepts to defend Tom Robinson, a poor black labourer falsely accused of raping a white woman, Mayella Ewell by name. Nevertheless, in this respect his daughter Scout is more pragmatic than him, especially when she finds out that segregation in the Deep South of the United States then has made its way into everything; even the courts are segregated. Therefore, she is sure enough that outwardly Tom Robinson and his ilk is given a fair trial in public attended by both the whites and blacks, but behind the closed doors of men’s hearts, he is dead the very moment a white woman has opened her mouth and sued him: “Atticus had used every tool available to free men to save Tom Robinson, but in the secret courts of men’s hearts Atticus had no case. Tom was a dead man the minute Mayella Ewell opened her mouth and screamed” (*Mockingbird* 323). What Atticus cannot understand is that racial segregation has been ubiquitous everywhere in the South. Even the judicial system has been affected by it—a bitter lesson he comes to realise later on as the book progresses.

As a man of ethics, Atticus defends the poor and oppressed, both whites and blacks. In so doing, he does not seek money or personal glory. He tells both Jem and Scout why he has decided to defend Robinson. Even though he is somewhat unsure if he will win the case, he has accepted it because he values equality and justice. Throughout the trial, he tries to prove that the plaintiff’s description of the rape does go inconsistent with the defendant’s crippled left hand as Robinson has lost the use of his left hand in a cotton-gin accident. Likewise, Atticus’ cross examination of Mayella and her father proves to the jury that the bruises and injuries in Mayella’s body are caused by a person who can use both

his arms perfectly well, not by a person who had no use of his left arm: “[T]here is circumstantial evidence to indicate that Mayella Ewell was beaten savagely by someone who led almost exclusively with his left” (*Mockingbird* 272). Then, he goes further to demonstrate evidently to the jury that the one who has done such bruises and injuries to Mayella is her father himself, not the poor client, Tom Robinson: “We do know in part what Mr. Ewell did: he did what any God-fearing, persevering, respectable white man would do under the circumstances—he swore out a warrant, no doubt signing it with his left hand, and Tom Robinson now sits before you, having taken the oath with the only good hand he possesses—his right hand” (*Mockingbird* 272-273).

At the trial, Atticus demonstrates to the court that his client, Robinson, should be thanked for his good feelings towards the white plaintiff as he has simply felt sorry for her deplorable conditions and her being lonely and, consequently, did his best many a time to help her with her household chores for free. Nevertheless, the white jury do not take Robinson’s testimony as true against the testimony of two white people simply because they do believe erroneously that all blacks are liars and are not to be trusted: “The jury couldn’t possibly be expected to take Tom Robinson’s word against the Ewells” (*Mockingbird* 117). Courageously enough, Atticus digresses that black people are part and parcel of the human race. Some humans are immoral and cannot be trusted. But this applies to both blacks and whites, not to a particular race of people. He goes on to say that all the attendants in the courthouse, both blacks and whites, are fallible: “There is not a person in this courtroom who has never told a lie, who has never done an immoral thing, and there is no man living who has never looked upon a woman without desire” (*Mockingbird* 273). He reminds the jury of a statement uttered by Thomas Jefferson, one of the American founding fathers and the principal author of the Declaration of Independence, that runs “all men are created equal” (*Mockingbird* 273). “Equal rights for all, special privileges for none” (*Watchman* 108) turns out to be Atticus’ slogan throughout *Mockingbird*.

Atticus’ strong defence of his client drives some of those attending the trial, including the Finch children, into believing that Tom Robinson will be acquitted of the charge brought against him. Nevertheless, the black people are quite sure that though Atticus has done his best and has demonstrated to the jury that a crime like

this cannot be committed by a man who has no use of his left hand, the jury will not side with a black man against a white man. Reverend Sykes, a black clergyman, tells Jem: “Now don’t you be so confident Mr Jem, I ain’t ever seen any jury decide in favour of a coloured man over a white man” (*Mockingbird* 279). This is also reiterated by Atticus himself who, pragmatically enough, tells Jem: “In our courts, when it’s a white man’s word against a black man’s, the white man always wins. They’re ugly, but those are the facts of life” (*Mockingbird* 295). Afterwards, he goes further to tell his son that white men wronging and cheating blacks are nothing but trash: “[B]ut let me tell you something and don’t you forget it—whenever a white man does that to 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” (*Mockingbird* 295)—“trash” being the Finches’ epithet to describe unpleasant, corrupt people.

The verdict of the jury in Robinson’s case is simply ‘guilty’, a decision taken unanimously by all the twelve members of a bigoted jury. On his part, Atticus is not surprised by the verdict; rather, he accepts it as if nothing has happened. Though he mentioned at the trial that all people are born equal regardless of their race and gender and that the courthouses have to be the “great levellers”, he is sure enough that equality is out of place in Alabama, where racial prejudice is enrooted to the core. Jem asks him: “How could they do it, how could they?” and he replies: “I don’t know, but they did it. They’ve done it before and they did it tonight and they’ll do it again and when they do it—seems that only children weep” (*Mockingbird* 285).

Atticus pays dear for his defence of Tom Robinson as this case draws upon him and upon his children the slurs and contempt of neighbours and friends as well. One of the neighbours contends that Judge Taylor has nominated Atticus for this mission simply because he knows perfectly well that he is a friend of the black people— “a nigger-lover” once again. She asks Jem, “Did it ever strike you that Judge Taylor naming Atticus to defend that boy was no accident? That Judge Taylor might have had his reasons for naming him?” (*Mockingbird* 289). Bob Ewell meets Atticus somewhere and, according to Miss Stephanie Crawford, “cursed him, spat on him, and threatened to kill him”. Then, Ewell goes further to stigmatise Atticus as a “nigger-lovin’ bastard” (*Mockingbird* 292). Similarly, Atticus risks himself by staying outside the place in which Robinson is imprisoned to guard him

against a white lynch mob who want to lynch Robinson. His children, Scout and Jem, are threatened by the villainous Bob Ewell who seeks revenge on Atticus by attacking his children on a Halloween night. Fortunately for the little Finches, Boo Radley, the reclusive neighbour, is there to save them from Ewell, who is killed in the scuffle.

Tim Dare attributes the moral development of the Finch children to Atticus, “who guides them to virtue while respecting them as individuals capable of judgement and decision” (129). It is he who treats all people regardless of race, colour and gender with respect and as equal. At the trial, he talks to the Ewells with deep respect, addressing Mayella Ewell “ma’am” and “Miss Mayella” (*Mockingbird* 243) — something that is inevitably misunderstood and mistaken for an insult or an act of mockery by Mayella as nobody else has talked to her respectfully as Atticus does. But Judge Taylor defends Atticus saying: “That’s just Mr Finch’s way... We’ve done business in this court for years and years, and Mr Finch is always courteous to everybody. He’s not trying to mock you, he’s trying to be polite. That’s just his way” (*Mockingbird* 243). It is Atticus who tells his children that it does hurt him when he sees a white man making advantage of a black man and that the nation is going to pay the cost of this segregation: “There’s nothing more sickening to me than a low-grade white man who will take advantage of a Negro’s ignorance. Don’t fool yourselves—it’s all adding up and one of these days we’re going to pay the bill for it. I hope it’s not in your children’s time” (*Mockingbird* 296).

One of the lessons Atticus teaches his children is tolerance for all, even for the Ewells who are racists and regarded as the “trash” of Maycomb: “You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view,” he tells Scout, “until you climb into his skin and walk in it” (*Mockingbird* 39). He tells Scout not to hate anyone or get intolerant of anyone unless she understands their background and the situations they get into in their life. Scout innocently asks: “But it’s okay to hate Hitler?”, and he replies: “It’s not okay to hate anybody” (*Mockingbird* 330). Though Atticus is a liberal-minded man, his statement about Hitler the Nazi is reminiscent of Jesus’ words which extol the virtue of love: “Love your enemies, treat well the ones hating you, bless the ones cursing you, pray for the ones insulting you” (Luke 6:27-28). This makes of him a paragon of virtue, which is illustrated on

different occasions in the novel. When Walter Cunningham alongside some men wants to lynch Tom Robinson, Atticus tells his daughter that though Mr Cunningham is a member of a lynch mob, he is still a good man. On another occasion, he gives his children air-rifles for Christmas, but warns them it is a sin to shoot at mockingbirds simply because they do not harm anyone: “Shoot all the bluejays you want if you can hit ’em”, he tells Jem, “but remember it’s a sin to kill a mockingbird” (*Mockingbird* 119). Mockingbirds are metaphorically used right here as a symbol standing for the poor and marginalised regardless of their race, such as Tom Robinson and Boo Radley.

Mockingbird abounds in a set of other examples that show Atticus’ decency and good manners, too. Once Tom Robinson is shot dead while trying to run away from prison with no less than seventeen bullets, Atticus insists on going to Robinson’s family to tell them the bad news and to offer condolence. His sister, Alexandra, tells Miss Maudie that the murder of Robinson affects her brother: “It tears him to pieces. He doesn’t show it much, but it tears him to pieces” (*Mockingbird* 316). When he leaves to Robinson’s house, Atticus comes across some children playing certain games. Politely enough, he asks them to go on with their game. Then, a young black girl comes closer to him, and Atticus compassionately enough takes off his hat and stretches his hand to the little girl who grabs hold of it. Similarly, Atticus defends the poor and downtrodden white families who are unable to pay his fees. He defends the Cunninghams, a poor white family who give him stove wood, nuts and other products they have instead of money. Walter Cunningham asks: “I don’t know when I’ll ever be able to pay you?”, and Atticus replies, “Let that be the least of your worries, Walter” (*Mockingbird* 27).

Nevertheless, since the release of *Go Set a Watchman* (2015), the myth of Atticus’ heroism is questioned, if not entirely shattered. Contrary to *Mockingbird*, the overall attitude taken against the black people throughout *Watchman* is not that friendly, if not segregationist, which is illustrated through different characters, more particularly Atticus Finch himself who is seventy-two now and suffers from rheumatoid arthritis. A point to be stressed right here is that the heroism of Atticus has also been questioned as early as *Mockingbird* itself. Monroe Freedman, a professor of law at Harvard University, looks upon him as a passive participant in a segregated society and goes further to argue that Atticus has been

simply “appointed counsel to an unpopular defendant” (qtd. in Dare 127). It is Atticus himself who says: “I’d hoped to get through life without a case of this kind, but John Taylor pointed at me and said, ‘You’re It’” (*Mockingbird* 117). Other critics still look upon Atticus of *Mockingbird* as a passive participant in the political affairs of his nation. They argue that his concerns are exclusively limited to both the members of his household and the courtroom:

Atticus’s concern for justice and fair play does not extend into the social realm, but instead remains rooted firmly in two places: his household and the courtroom. We hear not a single argument from him in the novel about the injustices of the segregated system; he doesn’t want blacks beaten or taken advantage of by unscrupulous whites, and he wants them to have the right to a fair trial. He wants the family helper, Calpurnia, to be treated politely by his children. But that’s about it. He wants, in other words, separate but equal—and maybe not even equal. (Brinkmeyer 218).

Jean Louise Finch, better known as Scout in *Mockingbird*, is now twenty-six and lives in New York City. She is now visiting her hometown Maycomb, Alabama, where she intends to spend a two-week vacation with her old father. Like its predecessor, *Watchman* delves into the racial tensions in the Deep South of the United States, but this time in the 1950s. Contrary to Atticus of *Mockingbird*, Atticus of *Watchman* “becomes the source of grievous pain and disillusionment for the 26-year-old Scout” (Kakutani). Scout is much appalled as she finds out that Atticus has turned his back on his life-long beliefs and ideals of equality, love and racial justice, and turned into a bigoted person. To her dismay, Atticus is now affiliated with anti-integration and anti-black people and organisations. She comes across a racist pamphlet titled *The Black Plague* with “a drawing of an anthropophagous Negro” (*Watchman* 101) on it. Disgusted as well as stunned enough, she starts reading it. Then, she takes the pamphlet by one of its corners and throws it into the nearest dustbin. She is also surprised once she knows that her aunt, Alexandra, has read the pamphlet, too. Audaciously enough, she tells Alexandra that “the stuff in that thing makes Dr Goebbels [one of Hitler’s staunchest assistants] look like a naïve little country boy (*Watchman* 102). She is much shocked once Alexandra tells her that the pamphlet belongs to her father and that “There are a lot of truths in that book” (*Watchman* 102). She can hardly believe her ears. What aggravates the matter is that Alexandra goes further to tell her that there is an anti-black

council in Maycomb, Maycomb's County Citizens' Council, and that Atticus is its leader.

The Black Negro disgusts Scout to the point that she feels herself physically ill, especially the part of the book that speaks of the blacks as sub-human and genetically inferior to the whites. Sarcastically enough, she tells Alexandra,

Yes indeedy... I especially liked the part where the Negroes, bless their hearts, couldn't help being inferior to the white race because their skulls are thicker and their brain-pans shallower—whatever that means—so we must all be very kind to them and not let them do anything to hurt themselves and keep them in their places. Good God, Aunty—.
(*Watchman* 102)

Scout does not care much about Alexandra's opinions about the black people, but she can hardly believe what Alexandra says about Atticus and his being on the board of directors of the Maycomb's County Citizens' Council. She rushes towards the courtroom where she is initially shocked once she finds her father attending a segregationist meeting attended by bigoted people. To her dismay, Henry Clinton, Atticus' business associate and Scout's soul mate, is one of the attendants and the staunchest members. It is then that she comes to the conclusion that Atticus, the upholder of racial justice and equality, has turned against his old beliefs. As Brinkmeyer puts it, she feels he has betrayed his ideals as if we were talking about another person: "She believes that Atticus has betrayed his ideals of justice and equal rights and that he has betrayed her as well, since she has patterned her beliefs after what she understood were his" (219).

The county's council meeting held at the courtroom nauseates Scout to the point that she throws up. While the meeting is in progress, Scout conjures up one of her father's past slogans "equal rights for all, special privileges for none" (*Watchman* 108). She could remember Atticus standing in the same courtroom defending Tom Robinson years ago (as cited earlier in *Mockingbird*). She could remember to what extent he was too distressed over his poor client's murder. Also, she still remembers her father standing in the same courtroom defending another innocent black man falsely accused of raping a white girl and, against all expectations, winning him an acquittal. She is really stunned to see her father sitting now with such malevolent people as William Willoughby, "the political symbol of everything her father and men like him despised" (*Watchman* 105). Among the other attendants is a man

named Grady O’Hanlon, a racist with the thorough sense of the word, whom Scout stigmatises as “a man who spewed filth from his mouth” (*Watchman* 111).

The next day Calpurnia’s grandson runs over a white man and Atticus is nominated by the county’s sheriff to defend him. Henry Clinton tells the sheriff that Atticus will never defend a black man. On his part, Atticus accepts the case, something that delights Scout who erroneously thinks that Atticus will never turn his back on Calpurnia and her family and that he is still grateful to his former black cook. But it turns out that her father has accepted to defend the black man simply because he does not want Calpurnia’s grandson to “fall into the wrong hands” (*Watchman* 148). When Scout asks her father: “What wrong hands?”, Atticus replies: “Scout, you probably don’t know it, but the NAACP-paid lawyers are standing around like buzzards down here waiting for things like this to happen—” (*Watchman* 148-149). It turns out that Atticus has accepted to defend that black man only to prevent any of the coloured NAACP (i.e., The National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People) lawyers to step into the matter and defend him. All that he cares about now is to ostracise the black lawyers from Maycomb. It is then that Scout’s delight evaporates and gives way to despair and sadness. She could discern the drastic change in the once doting and kind-hearted Atticus, something that drives her into thinking that she is now estranged from him: “I’ll never forgive you for what you did to me. You cheated me, you’ve driven me out of my home and now I’m in a no-man’s-land but good—there’s no place for me any more in Maycomb, and I’ll never be entirely at home anywhere else” (*Watchman* 248). Disillusioned enough, she starts to ask herself about the drastic change that has befallen those people close to her, especially her father, her aunt and childhood beau. Her distress gives way to virulent hatred: She cannot stand her father, aunt and soul mate anymore. Hence, when Atticus calls her by her nickname, she wishes he had not said that as Atticus the one she knows perfectly well has died long before: “His use of her childhood name crashed on her ears. Don’t you ever call me that again. You who called me Scout are dead and in your grave” (*Watchman* 151).

The racial tension is also demonstrated through Scout’s visit to Calpurnia. To her dismay, Calpurnia, who brought her up alongside her father, has changed, too, as she has grown intolerant of all the white people. Even the Finches are no exception. When Scout yells

at her, “Cal, Cal, Cal, what are you doing to me? What’s the matter? I’m your baby, have you forgotten me? Why are you shutting me out? What are you doing to me?” (*Watchman* 159), Calpurnia bitterly replies: “What are you all [i.e. the white people] doing to us?” (*Watchman* 160)—something that startles Scout and fosters her estrangement. Scout’s visit to Calpurnia is much criticised by Alexandra who reprimands her severely. Alexandra tells her niece that a white lady is not supposed to visit the blacks who, she claims, have grown ungrateful to the whites who have been helping them for a long time:

Jean Louise, nobody in Maycomb goes to see Negroes any more, not after what they have been doing to us. Besides being shiftless now they look at you sometimes with open insolence... That NAACP’s come down here and filled ’em with poison till it runs out of their ears... We’ve been good to ’em, we’ve bailed ’em out of jail and out of debt since the beginning of time, we’ve made work for ’em, we’ve encouraged ’em to better themselves, they’ve gotten civilised, but my dear—that veneer of civilisation’s so thin that a bunch of uppity Yankee Negroes can shatter a hundred years’ progress in five... . (*Watchman* 166)

Alexandra’s racial rant against the black people conjures up in Scout the segregationist speech given by Grady O’Hanlon, the man “who left his job to devote his full time to the preservation of segregation” (*Watchman* 167). Scout takes drastic steps towards both Atticus and Henry Clinton. She severs her relationship with Henry, stigmatising him a hypocrite: “Hank, we are poles apart. I don’t know much but I know one thing. I know I can’t live with you. I cannot live with a hypocrite” (*Watchman* 234). Then, she turns to her father, describing him “a snob” (*Watchman* 244). She asks Atticus why he has fixed in her some ideals which he rejects now:

Then why didn’t you show me things as they are when I sat on your lap? Why didn’t you show me, why weren’t you careful when you read me history and the things that I thought meant something to you that there was a fence around everything marked ‘White Only’? (*Watchman* 243)

Atticus defends himself against such accusations, saying that barriers must be set between the whites and blacks otherwise the black people will step into everything held by the white people and corrupt it: “Then let’s put this on a practical basis right now. Do you want Negroes by carload in our schools and churches and

theatres? Do you want them in our world” (*Watchman* 245). Furiously enough, Scout retorts: “They’re people, aren’t they?” (*Watchman* 246). Atticus goes further to digress that civil rights organisations, such as the NAACP, do not care about the development of the black people as they claim; rather, they are concerned with the vote of the black man. All that they care about is to interfere in the local affairs of the American society: “The NAACP doesn’t care whether a Negro man owns or rents his land, how well he can farm, or whether or not he tries to learn a trade and stand on his own two feet—oh no, all the NAACP cares about is that man’s vote” (*Watchman* 247). Therefore, the Maycomb’s County Citizens’ Council is simply an endeavour by some Maycomb citizens to defend their county against what he stigmatises as the “invasion” of such black organisations (*Watchman* 247).

As the debate between father and daughter goes bellicose, Atticus says that the black people want to destroy the whites: “[T]hey’re trying to wreck us” (*Watchman* 247). Aggressively enough, Scout describes him as “a coward as well as a snob and a tyrant” (*Watchman* 247), saying that it was he who fixed such ideals in her and now he turns his back on all that. Scout does believe that black people should have equal rights. Atticus argues that the whites should not give the black people the same rights they have simply because the blacks are irresponsible people. He says that the black people are not qualified to hold high ranking positions and that they are not proficient at running governmental institutions. He asks her if she wants people like the improvident and irresponsible Zeebo, son of Calpurnia, to hold a high ranking position in Maycomb:

Now think about this. What would happen if all the Negroes in the South were suddenly given full civil rights? I’ll tell you. There’d be another Reconstruction. Would you want your state governments run by people who don’t know how to run ’em? Do you want this town run by—now wait a minute—Willoughby’s a crook, we know that, but do you know of any Negro who knows as much as Willoughby? Zeebo’s probably be Mayor of Maycomb. Would you want someone of Zeebo’s capability to handle the town’s money? We’re outnumbered, you know (*Watchman* 246).

In her confrontation with Atticus, Scout argues that Atticus has instilled in her such ideals as equality and love and that he has taught her at an early age that all people are created equal. She asks

sarcastically why he never taught her that God preferred one race to the other:

God! And speaking of God, why didn't you make it very plain to me that God made the races and put the black folks in Africa with the intention of keeping them there so the missionaries could go and tell them that Jesus loved 'em but meant for 'em to stay in Africa? That us bringing 'em over here was all a bad mistake, so they're to blame? That Jesus loved all mankind, but there are different kinds of men with separate fences around 'em, that Jesus meant that any man can go as far as he wants within that fence—. (*Watchman* 249)

Scout calls him a hypocrite because though he treats the black people politely, he considers them subhuman and “for teaching her a moral code that applies to whites only” (Cluckey 713). She goes hard on him as she compares him to “Hitler” (*Watchman* 251). She tells him derisively:

We've agreed that they're backward, that they're illiterate, that they're dirty and comical and shiftless and no good, they're infants and they're stupid, some of them, but we haven't agreed on one thing and we never will. You deny that they're human. (*Watchman* 251)

Towards the end of the novel, Uncle Jack interferes to solve the mystifying puzzle of Atticus' character to Scout and the reader as well. He reprimands Scout for insulting her father, telling her that she has misunderstood her father from the very outset (as early as *Mockingbird*), and that she is the one to be entirely blamed for this misunderstanding. He says Scout is mistaken because she has looked up at Atticus, considering him an infallible, perfect and god-like person who is not supposed to err: “As you grew up, when you were grown, totally unknown to yourself, you confused your father with God. You never saw him as a man with a man's heart, and a man's failings—I'll grant you it may have been hard to see, he makes so few mistakes, but he makes 'em like all of us” (*Watchman* 265). Allen Mendenhall, a critic, says that the ones addressed in the aforementioned quotation are both Scout and the readers of *Mockingbird* as well who *deify* Atticus or deal with him as somebody enjoying superhuman capacities. To quote his very words, “These words are aimed at adoring readers as much as at Jean Louise. They're not just about the Atticus of *Mockingbird*; they are about any Atticuses we might have known and loved in our lives: our fathers, grandfathers, teachers, coaches, and mentors”

(8). Likewise, Mendenhall claims that we have two different Atticuses, young Atticus and old Atticus, and that it is ridiculous to look at the two characters as one or to try to reconcile them:

It's foolish to try reconciling the two Atticuses because there's nothing to reconcile: Although there are two accounts of Atticus and questions remain as to whether we should read *Mockingbird* and *Watchman* as mutually exclusive stories or *in pari materia*, so to speak, there's only one Atticus, an open-ended personality without fixed traits and determined behaviours. Of course, in a work of fiction, Lee could have given us two Atticuses—a young Atticus and an old Atticus, the Atticus of *Mockingbird* and the Atticus of *Watchman*.

Conclusion

To Kill a Mockingbird is a triumph of the professional ethics of the law profession, which has suffered and drawn through long decades piles of slurs and insults. The legal ethics has been represented through attorney Atticus Finch, who courageously jeopardises his life and that of his children and risks his social standing to defend a poor and downtrodden black labourer falsely accused of raping a white woman. Nevertheless, the Atticus of *Go Set a Watchman* is unexpectedly seen championing the enrooted racial prejudice and adhering blindly to the racial attitudes of his time. It turns out that he is the leader of an anti-black council and a former member of the Ku Klux Klan. This transformation from a hero to a segregationist does baffle the reader and makes of Atticus a bundle of contradictions. Nevertheless, though *Watchman* seems tough in scope, it seems to southern literature scholars more pragmatic than *Mockingbird* with its white liberalism.

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