

To Kill A Mockingbird: Symbolism – Part 2

METAPHOR

“A metaphor is a means of communication whereby something that was unknown is made known by drawing upon something already familiar.” 1

Students may also wish to analyze these other scenes in the film for the uses of metaphors. In the first scene, ask students what the mockingbird represents. In the second scene, what is the significance of the rabid dog.

DVD Chapter 13 The Dinner Guest

After an altercation at school between Scout and Walter Cunningham Jr., Jem invites the boy over to their house for dinner. In this scene, Atticus explains to the children why it is a sin to kill a mockingbird.

Atticus: I remember when my daddy gave me that gun. He told me that I should never point it at anything in the house. And that he'd rather I'd shoot at tin cans in the backyard, but he said that sooner or later he supposed the temptation to go after birds would be too much, and that I could shoot all the blue jays I wanted, if I could hit 'em, but to remember it was a sin to kill a mockingbird.

Jem: Why?

Atticus: Well, I reckon because mockingbirds don't do anything but make music for us to enjoy. They don't eat people's gardens, don't nest in the corncribs, they don't do one thing but just sing their hearts out for us.



DVD Chapter 15 The Best Shot In This County

In this scene, Calpurnia has called Atticus home to take care of a wild dog that is approaching their home.

Description: In the next memorable sequence, Atticus proves his Lincoln-esque stature to his children. Although Scout is disbelieving and yells out “He can’t shoot” when Sheriff Heck Tate (Frank Overton) hands his rifle to her father, Atticus takes aim with a rifle at a rabid dog moving erratically down the street outside their home. He raises up his glasses a few times on his forehead to see better, and then removes them altogether by dropping them on the street. Jem and Scout are both dumbfounded and stunned when the rifle cracks and the dog flops over dead. The Sheriff tells Jem about the hidden abilities of his modest father who hasn’t shot a gun in twenty years: “Didn’t you know your daddy’s the best shot in this county?” 2

