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Christian Allegories and Social Change in Southern Literature: A Comparative Study of Mason Tarwater and Atticus Finch in Flannery O'Connor's The Violent Bear It Away and Harper Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird

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CHRISTIAN ALLEGORIES AND SOCIAL CHANGE

IN SOUTHERN LITERATURE:

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MASON TARWATER AND ATTICUS FINCH

IN FLANNERY O'CONNOR'S *THE VIOLENT BEAR IT AWAY*

AND HARPER LEE'S *TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD*

By Marlee Ruark

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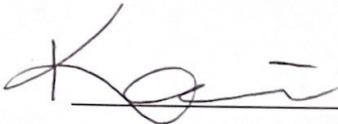Christian Allegories and Social Change in Southern Literature:

A Comparative Study of Mason Tarwater and Atticus Finch in Flannery O'Connor's *The Violent*

Bear It Away and Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*

by

Marlee Jean Ruark
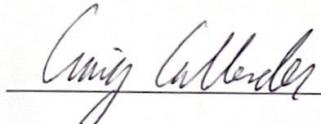
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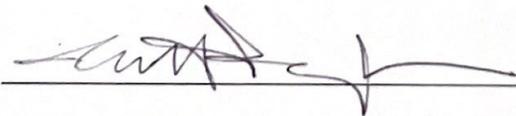
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INTRODUCTION

The year 1960 was a monumental time in America as there were many historical, political, religious, and literary movements and changes in this post-war period. Before the turn of the decade, America had endured its second World War, and everyone was facing its repercussions. As 1960 approached, the civil rights movement was emerging. In 1955, Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat to a white passenger, and shortly after, Martin Luther King Jr. was elected president of the Montgomery Improvement Association to begin the efforts toward changing society. Activists attempted to desegregate schools and staged nonviolent boycotts, sit-ins, protests, and marches for their cause. King launched the Birmingham campaign in 1963, and he even wrote a letter from jail in an effort to negotiate more rights for African Americans (Ware 1088-1090). These events were occurring nationwide, but the movement was based primarily in the American South.

In addition to developments regarding civil rights, religion was also transforming across the country. The discussion of religion is often overlooked, however, because of the importance of the Civil Rights Movement. Jon Butler, author of "Jack-in-the-Box Faith: The Religion Problem in Modern American History" highlights the idea that religion and civil rights were actually intertwined. According to Butler, textbooks say "surprisingly little about explicitly religious motivations for the civil rights activities of major figures, and they only occasionally describe the importance of religious organizations, congregations, and individuals in carrying on the movement, south or north" (1359). This is an important point because Martin Luther King Jr. was actually a Baptist minister, and many of his ideals come from and align with biblical principles. However, there is some debate on the religious condition of America during this time; one scholar argues that there was a religious revival directly after World War II, that authors

created post-war religious literature, that popular evangelists emerged, and that there was a "triple-melting pot" of Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish individuals during this time period (Fisher 44-49). Fisher notes that church attendance grew rapidly in the 1950s, and "more than 80 percent of American adults described the Bible as 'the revealed word of God' rather than simply a 'great piece of literature'" (45). Even though there is evidence for a strong Christian presence in America, Stanley Hauerwas and Ralph Wood claim that during this time, "Catholic and Protestant alike, have made the gospel of Jesus Christ seem all too much like the gospel of the United States" (62), which implies that the Christian gospel might have not been extremely clear. Fisher, Hauerwas, and Wood display the different perceptions of Christianity during this time in history, and readers, too, can find this debate when comparing literature created in this time period.

These historical, political, and religious currents affected American authors and influenced their writing. Authors were trying to understand, but also go against, cultural conformity and tradition in America (Klinkowitz and Wallace 2254- 2271). Two authors in particular who wrote during this time were Flannery O'Connor and Harper Lee. These two women had a great impact on American literature. O'Connor and Lee published novels in the same year and geographical location and during the same historical and religious situation, yet their novels are extremely different. Hauerwas and Wood argue that the church became invisible within American literary tradition during this era, and they claim that only a few writers, one being Flannery O'Connor, can be called "distinctively Christian" (61-62). While scholars do recognize the Christian elements in the works of O'Connor, the church is far from being invisible in the works of both O'Connor and Lee. This thesis will argue that Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* is distinctively Christian as well. *The Violent Bear It Away* by Flannery O'Connor and *To Kill a*

Mockingbird by Harper Lee both make statements about Christianity and about the social condition of the time period.

As other scholars have noted, Lee's novel is widely acclaimed for its inclusion of civil rights, but Christianity is the undercurrent of the social movement within this novel. Using Lee's work as a contrast to O'Connor's, this thesis aims to revise previous understandings of Christianity within both texts. *To Kill a Mockingbird* promotes Christian values of good Samaritanism, nonviolence, and inclusion through the character of Atticus Finch, while *The Violent Bear It Away* promotes a problematic Christian message because of the paradoxical and violent prophet figure, Mason Tarwater.

Chapter 1 will focus on the comparison of the male protagonists of O'Connor and Lee's novels. I present background on religious allegory within literature, and then I describe Mason Tarwater from *The Violent Bear It Away* as a prophet type and explain how he is an allegory of Elijah from the biblical chapter, 1 Kings. I then argue that although Mason Tarwater is a parallel of the prophet Elijah, Mason proves to be a problematic prophet with a complicated story because he is manipulative and harmful, which is contrary to his prophetic calling. After establishing Mason as a prophet type, I explain how Atticus Finch from *To Kill a Mockingbird* is an allegory of the parable of the Good Samaritan from the biblical chapter, Luke. I argue that through being a Good Samaritan type rather than a prophet type, Atticus presents Christianity in a much more loving way as opposed to Mason Tarwater.

After describing Mason and Atticus as types that attempt to promote Christian values, in Chapter 2, I continue to compare the ideals that the authors seem to be endorsing in their novels. I explain how O'Connor's paradoxical prophet, Mason Tarwater, and Lee's straightforward leader, Atticus Finch, display both sides of the 1960's debates violence, nonviolence, division,

and inclusivity. I highlight how Mason Tarwater uses violence and division to evoke change, while Atticus Finch uses nonviolence and inclusion to impact others in his society; I argue that the comparison of these two novels and opposing protagonists suggests that nonviolence and inclusion are more successful in evoking change, and society is more receptive to those approaches as opposed to tactics of violence and division. In *The Violent Bear It Away,* the characters attempt to flee from Mason, who uses violence and seclusion, but the characters within *To Kill a Mockingbird* respect and admire Atticus for his peaceful and inclusive nature.

Through this research, analysis, and comparison, I hope to display how authors, such as O'Connor and Lee, clearly show that differing modes of Christianity can exist simultaneously within reality and within fiction. Individuals representative of the characters of Mason Tarwater and Atticus Finch were present during O'Connor's and Lee's lifetimes, and people with varying levels of religious beliefs and motivations, even those who believe in the same God, continue to coexist today on an even larger scale. Some believe that those with different beliefs cannot live in harmony together, but readers can choose how they want their personal beliefs to define their actions and thereby impact others. I hope that readers can take away from this thesis the idea that beliefs do influence actions, just as Mason's and Atticus's beliefs motivated their actions in their stories.

CHAPTER 1

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SUBTLETY: COMPARING MASON TARWATER AND

ATTICUS FINCH AS PROMOTERS OF CHRISTIAN VALUES

Over time, many significant authors have emerged from the American South. Writers

have crafted multiple novels, poems, short stories, and essays that are set in the Southern states,

and these works comment on the period and region from which these stories originated. Two

remarkable female authors, Flannery O'Connor and Harper Lee, both lived during the same time

period and in the same region; however, their works are not typically compared.[1] This project is

the first sustained comparison of their works. Flannery O'Connor was born in Savannah, Georgia

and later moved to Milledgeville, Georgia, where she remained until her death. She authored

countless short stories and essays, but she only published two novels, *Wiseblood* in 1952 and *The*

Violent Bear It Away in 1960. Her short stories are far more popular, and thus, more often

discussed than her novels, although there is a good bit of scholarship on her novels as well.

Harper Lee, who is from Monroeville, Alabama, began drafting *To Kill a Mockingbird,* her most

well-known novel, in the 1950s; the novel was officially published in 1960 after tedious editing

and reshaping (Johnson xi-ii). In 1961, *To Kill a Mockingbird* won the Pulitzer Prize and was in

the works to become a film, eventually released in the cinemas a year later—clearly displaying

the success of the novel (Burling 59). In a book published thirty years after *To Kill a*

Mockingbird, Claudia Durst Johnson notes that *To Kill a Mockingbird* "steadfastly maintains its

position in the contemporary canon as an American masterpiece— one of the most frequently

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[1] After months of research, I have not been successful in finding an essay, article, or book that directly relates these
two novels. There are some non-scholarly blog posts that state that O'Connor and Lee are great authors worth
looking into, but I have yet to find an academic piece comparing these works. However, I did find a blog post that
explains O'Connor wrote about Lee in one of her letters, saying that *To Kill a Mockingbird* reads like a children's
novel: Marchand, Philip. "The Harper Lee, Flannery O'Connor smackdown". *PressReader,* 18 July 2015,
https://www.pressreader.com/canada/national-post-national-edition/20150718/281496454969952

published and read books in the last 30 years… one of those texts that 'makes a difference'"

(20); this is arguably still the case twenty years after this statement was made.

At the time of authorship and publication for both novels, there was racial and economic

tension and struggle within the United States as the US had just endured an economic depression

and was in the dawn of the civil rights era. Even though the female authors created their works

during the same time and in the same region, their stories contrast greatly, amassing varying

levels of praise and popularity; although the novels have major differences, they are comparable

stories.

O'Connor's *The Violent Bear It Away* and Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* both use stock

characters; each protagonist within each of these novels is representative of a stereotype of the

American South at the original time of authorship. O'Connor uses extreme stereotypes, while

Lee's character types are more representative of realistic ideals. The main male protagonists of

each novel, Mason Tarwater of *The Violent Bear It Away* and Atticus Finch of *To Kill a*

Mockingbird, allegorize biblical stories. Mason Tarwater's story is an example of a prophet type,

Elijah from the Old Testament of the Bible, while Atticus Finch's story is an example of a good

Samaritan type as portrayed in the New Testament parable. Even though Lee incorporates the

Samaritan type with more subtlety than O'Connor's prophet type, the Samaritan type is more

effective in displaying Christian ideals. While O'Connor explicitly displays a novel full of

religious elements and highlights the life of a prophetic character, Lee presents a novel where

Christianity is the undercurrent. Atticus Finch, a character on the continuum of the secular and

sacred, is a more straightforward and admirable leader than Mason Tarwater, who is a complex,

paradoxical prophet character. Comparing these two male protagonists demonstrates that a more

simplistic and realistic secular figure can promote Christian values almost more so than an

overtly religious figure, and readers learn they can use their beliefs and actions to promote good in all areas of their lives— both secular and sacred— without doing so in a forceful, extreme manner.

Religious Allegory

Authors have utilized allegory all throughout history as it is very useful in portraying underlying messages. Julia Fisher provides an explanation of allegory in her article "Hawthorne's Allegory." She states that Samuel Taylor Coleridge "understands allegory to be more or less a one-to-one correspondence between nonsensory ideas and concrete figures that stand for them" (113), and that this is the most accepted definition of allegory. Fisher additionally comments that "allegory had long been a primary mechanism for the propagation of Christian orthodoxy" (113). Allegory is representative of something already in place; in this case, the characters of Mason Tarwater and Atticus Finch stand for previously existing biblical figures. Shawn Normandin, author of the article "Symbol, Allegory, and Jane Austen's Mansfield Park," gives another explanation of the term as described by Graham Allen; he says, "'traditional allegory can usefully be understood in terms of re-presentation, a presenting of something which existed prior to the existence of the allegorical work itself'" (592). Indeed, Mason Tarwater is a re-presentation of a biblical prophet expressing the teachings of Christianity with evangelical flourish, and Atticus Finch of *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a subtle re-presentation of a biblical Good Samaritan type who stops to help someone in need when all others have turned away; each serve as an allegory of biblical texts.

Mason Tarwater as a Prophet Type

  O'Connor's second and final novel, *The Violent Bear It Away*, is a complex story with complicated character types. The novel highlights fourteen-year-old Francis (young) Tarwater and his uncles, Mason (Old) Tarwater and Rayber, as they go on physical and spiritual journeys. The characters within this intriguing novel all struggle with their own personal faith— some even being complete foils of the other by being extremely religious to rejecting any type of religion at all costs. Mason Tarwater appears as an extreme, evangelical, fundamentalist Christian, while his eldest nephew, Rayber, appears as a scientific, secular rationalist; Francis Tarwater is caught in their crossfire. O'Connor herself comments that she views these men as character types. Robert J. Baker, author of "Flannery O'Connor's Four-Fold Method of Allegory," highlights the religious allegory within *The Violent Bear It Away.* After quoting O'Connor, Baker analyzes:

  O'Connor recognized the allegorical dimension of her characters. Old Tarwater is a
  crazed prophet and backwoods moonshiner and a proto- Christian and crypto-Catholic;
  Rayber is a schoolteacher and social scientist as well as a secular evangelist and a
  quintessentially modern person. Old Tarwater and Rayber are individuals and,
  simultaneously, types. (Baker 85)

This distinction— that readers can view Old Tarwater and Rayber as character archetypes— brings further meaning to the text. Mason Tarwater and Rayber operate as literal characters in the novel, but they also convey other messages. Coleridge says, "both facts and persons must of necessity have a twofold significance, a past and a future, a temporary and a perpetual, a particular and a universal application. They must be at once portraits and ideals" (30). With the

explanation that characters can have a particular and a universal application, one can take a

closer look at the characters, especially Mason Tarwater, and tie their story to a biblical text.

The plot of *The Violent Bear It Away* allegorizes the story of the prophet, Elijah,

preparing Elisha to take his place as the next prophet. Baker even mentions this possibility in his

article; he explains "the allegorical mode is intrinsic to *The Violent Bear It Away*. O'Connor

employs characters—obsessed and driven, more types and personifications than personalities…

the plot shows the literal consequences of Tarwater's struggle between the positions represented

by his two uncles, as well as the typological pattern of prophetic succession, of Elisha taking up

Elijah's mantle" (85). Jordan Cofer additionally notes that Mason and young Francis Tarwater

exemplify the Elijah-Elisha relationship (9) within the novel. Elijah and Elisha's story is worth

observing to analyze its connection to the plot of *The Violent Bear It Away.*

In the biblical text 1 Kings 19, the prophet Elijah receives a prophetic call from God.

Like Mason Tarwater, he "live[s] outside of civilization" where 'ravens brought him bread and

meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening' (1 Kings 17:6)" (Cofer 79). After a

defeating day for Elijah, he wants to die, but the Lord visits Elijah in a great and mighty wind.

The Lord instructs Elijah, "'you [Elijah] are to anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel and

Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel-meholah as prophet in your place. Then Jehu will put to death

whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death whoever escapes the sword of

Jehu" (1 Kings 19:16-17 CSB). Directly after, Elijah leaves, and he finds Elisha plowing. Elijah

throws his mantle over Elisha (1 Kings 19:19 CSB). The text reads that "Elisha left the oxen, ran

to follow Elijah, and said 'Please let me kiss my father and mother, and then I will follow you'…

Then he left, followed Elijah, and served him" (1 Kings 19:20-21 CSB). Within this text, the

prophet Elijah has a clear and distinct calling from God that readers can witness. In *The Violent*

Bear It Away, readers do not have access to the precise moment that God anointed Mason

Tarwater as a prophet, but both Elijah and Mason believe they are prophets for the Lord. Elijah

goes to get Elisha, who Elijah believes should be the prophet after him, and Mason Tarwater

does the same as he attempts to raise Rayber as a prophet and then Francis Tarwater as one.

However, in the biblical text, there seems to be no signs of force or manipulation of their

successor; Elijah's actions in this passage are straightforward, and Elisha seems willing to go

serve Elijah. This is very different from the prophetic story readers see within *The Violent Bear*

It Away as Rayber and Tarwater try to flee from Mason Tarwater's grasp after Mason's death.

Although Mason Tarwater is a parallel of the prophet Elijah, Mason proves to be a

problematic prophet with a complicated story. At the start of *The Violent Bear It Away*, the

narrator describes what Mason Tarwater believes his prophetic calling to be and explains that

Mason thinks it is his duty to instill his knowledge and beliefs upon his family members. The

narrator explains "the old man, who said he was a prophet, had raised the boy [Francis Tarwater]

to expect the Lord's call himself and to be prepared for the day he would hear it… He [Mason]

had been called in his early youth and had set out for the city to proclaim the destruction

awaiting a world that had abandoned its Saviour" (O'Connor 332). Through this description,

readers see the impact Mason's alleged calling from God has on him; this prophetic calling is the

driving force behind the majority of Mason Tarwater's actions, and it is what leads him to

actually act in ways contrary to a traditional Christian prophet.

For the purpose of this argument, a prophet is an individual that is committed to the

beliefs of their religion and who upholds them in an honorable way to successfully try to display

their religion so others will respect it and want to be a part of it as well. Christian prophets,

which is the type of prophet that Mason Tarwater declares himself to be, should therefore be

honest, caring, loving, and peaceful because these are traits that the Bible promotes. This idea of

a typical Christian prophet is not to disregard Old Testament prophets who tend to be more

violent and harmful in nature; this understanding of a Christian prophet operates under the

teachings of the New Testament. Although, this is also not to argue that readers should discredit

Old Testament prophets. Prophets within the Old Testament have their usefulness and are very

important in the biblical narrative.

However, Cofer writes extensively about O'Connor's use of prophet types and how they

differ from the typical traditional prophet. Cofer explains that "for O'Connor, the prophet is the

imperfect messenger who brings a divine message… they are able to make the word of God

clear, visible, and striking… O'Connor's prophets often mix the comedic with the deadly, often

bringing a terrifying, yet cleansing, message of grace" (11). This is an important distinction to

make because O'Connor creates Mason Tarwater to be a paradoxical prophet as he is violent and

manipulative while declaring himself as a prophet. Cofer notes that this is typical of O'Connor as

her prophets "destroy property, court violence, and live on the fringes of society… her prophet

archetypes are often peculiar, strange, and always out of the ordinary" (12). Based on this

criterion, O'Connor says that Mason Tarwater is a great example of a prophetic character. She

authored multiple letters where she addresses questions about *The Violent Bear It Away,* and she

gives her opinion and original intentions when crafting the characters within the novel. Typical

of O'Connor, she commends the characters that seem to be the most far gone for their possibility

of redemption and for their realistic and relatable struggles. In a letter to John Hawkes written on

September 13, 1959, O'Connor touches on characters within *The Violent Bear It Away*.

O'Connor says "the great-uncle [Mason Tarwater] is not a puritan here, as you saw. He is a

prophet" (1107) and that "it is the old man who speaks for [her]" (1108). She explains in a letter

that she writes one year later to William Sessions that Mason Tarwater is "a prophet in the true

sense... A character has to be true to his own nature and I think the old man is that" (1131).

Clearly, O'Connor believes that Mason Tarwater is a genuine prophet who follows his alleged

calling from God, no matter his actions.

The claim that Mason Tarwater is a true Christian prophet can be problematic; this comes

as no surprise, as most of O'Connor's protagonists and antagonists raise questions and debate.

Some scholars agree that Mason Tarwater is a great example of evangelical Christianity and that

he is a strong prophetic type, while others disagree. Scholar Richard Giannone, for example,

states in his article that Mason Tarwater is a "meddlesome, cranky madman" (25), while critics

like Mary Buzan argue that Mason is a wise and deep character when readers analyze

conversations closely (35), and that he is nurturing as he cares for Francis Tarwater's physical

wellbeing (37). Farrell O'Gorman even claims in his essay that Mason Tarwater is a "forthrightly

prophetic character" (157) who is "a mother as well as a father figure" (157) to Francis Tarwater.

Although some readers praise Mason Tarwater for his caring nature and commitment to God, he

vainly uses God to commit sin. Mason is manipulative, judgmental, hypocritical, and unstable;

these are qualities that can push both characters and readers away from the Christian faith, and

they are characteristics that make readers wonder: what is the effect of making such a

problematic character a prophetic type? It is apparent that O'Connor does create her prophets to

be imperfect, but this can be dangerous for a reader who is not aware of her ways of inversion.

Traditional Christian prophets under the new covenant are typically understood to be kind,

honest, and peaceful, and Mason Tarwater does not seem to adhere to this mold.

One of Mason's most apparent qualities that misaligns with a typical prophet type is the

blatant manipulation and kidnapping of his nephews Rayber and Francis Tarwater. Mason

Tarwater chooses to kidnap his eldest nephew, Rayber, and later take his great-nephew, Francis Tarwater, and he attempts to control their lives and beliefs; Old Mason Tarwater sees this as his prophetic duty, when in reality, he is forcing his beliefs on his younger and impressionable family members. Mason's kidnapping of Rayber depicts his role as a problematic prophet because he does so with force and manipulation. The narrator states "he [Mason] had kidnapped him [Rayber] when the child was seven and had taken him to the backwoods and baptized him and instructed him in the facts of his Redemption, but the instruction had lasted only for a few years" (O'Connor 333). Mason influences Rayber for a short amount of time, and Rayber is able to physically flee from his grasp; however, even though Rayber's time with Mason is short, Mason Tarwater's manipulation has a lasting impact on him.

Mason's treatment of Rayber and how he attempts to be a father figure to him instills bitterness within Rayber. The narrator of *The Violent Bear It Away* and other scholars discuss Rayber's relationship with Mason Tarwater and his struggle with his faith at length. Scholar Jon Lance Bacon pulls evidence from the novel that describes Rayber's bitterness and his disappointment by religion, which is most likely due to the influence of Mason Tarwater. Bacon explains "at age 14, [Rayber] delivers the first of many rants against religious belief and believers. The target of his 'adolescent fury' is Old Tarwater: 'You're crazy, you're crazy,' Rayber shrills, with clenched fists; 'you're a liar, you have a head full of crap, you belong in a nuthouse!' (186)" (28). Bacon uses quotes from the text itself to depict Rayber's frustration as he converses with Mason. Within *The Violent Bear It Away*, Rayber himself even describes when and how he encountered Mason Tarwater and how Mason's teachings affected him. In a conversation with Francis Tarwater, Rayber says that he first saw Mason when he was seven years old, and that Mason told him of his need for redemption. Rayber adds, "'where was the

calamity? The calamity was I believed him. For five or six years. I had nothing else but that... It was the eyes that got me,' Rayber said. 'Children may be attracted to mad eyes. A grown person could have resisted. A child couldn't. Children are cursed with believing" (O'Connor 436). Rayber's description clearly shows that Mason Tarwater manipulates him and takes advantage of him in his adolescent mindset; Rayber is able to break free from Mason and form his own worldview, even if Mason's teachings skew Rayber's beliefs as an adult. It seems unlike an admirable prophet type to manipulate others in this manner. Mason does appear to be trying to live out his prophetic calling, but he is doing so in a way that does not align with the beliefs of the religion to which he is trying to win Rayber and the young Francis Tarwater.

Mason continues to manipulate and act in ways contrary to his prophetic role as he kidnaps Francis Tarwater. After Rayber escapes from Mason Tarwater, Mason takes Francis under his wing, and no one stops him from stealing Francis at the time. The narrator explains, "the Lord had assured [Mason Tarwater] a long life and he had snatched the baby [Francis Tarwater] from under the schoolteacher's [Rayber's] nose and taken him to live in the clearing, Powderhead, that he had a title to for his lifetime" (O'Connor 332). Mason's manipulation is most evident through his relationship with Francis Tarwater as he controls his life for an extended period of time. Rayber and Francis struggle with internal conflict and suffer from a skewed view of society because Mason attempts to indoctrinate them. Even though Mason dies at the opening of the novel, Mason's impact is lasting even after death and is present throughout the entirety of the novel as his influence haunts both Rayber and Francis. The reader learns more about Mason Tarwater through flashbacks that the narrator provides, and Mason is a consistent topic of conversation between Rayber and Francis. Giannone states in his article that Rayber and Francis "continue their habitual shadowboxing with the old man's ghost" (28) and that "the dead

Mason also can serve as the catalyst for their self-hatred" (28). Christian prophets are meant to instill love and influence others in a positive way— not in the opposite manner. Rayber comments to Francis Tarwater on the lasting effect Mason Tarwater has on Francis; he says, "'He's warped your whole life,' he [Rayber] said hoarsely. 'You're going to grow up to be a freak if you don't let yourself be helped. You still believe all that crap he taught you. You're eaten up with false guilt. I can read you like a book!'" (O'Connor 438). It is apparent that Mason's manipulation brainwashes Tarwater. Giannone expounds upon this idea, stating "Rayber diagnoses Tarwater's vehement denial as a symptom of the prophet's disease picked up from Mason who bore the contagion" (28). Mason Tarwater pushes Rayber, Francis Tarwater, and readers away from understanding the inviting and freeing love of Christ with his negative behavior. Because Mason acts in a manipulative and violent way under his prophetic calling, it could lead others to have the wrong impression of who God is and how Christians are called to act.

In fact, Mason's manipulation is the catalyst of the sinful actions of other characters. Thinking he can successfully rebel against the prophetic calling that Mason Tarwater instills within him, Francis Tarwater accidentally "baptizes" and ultimately drowns Rayber's son, a little boy named Bishop, his own cousin, making Francis a murderer. Francis is young, impressionable, and naïve; he is unaware of the weight and severity of his actions. He does not feel like he has done anything wrong. Francis even believes it is better that he intended to drown Bishop rather than meaning to baptize him. Within the novel, Francis Tarwater explains to the truck driver that he had to drown Bishop to prove that he was not a prophet, which is what Mason Tarwater attempted to raise him as. Francis says that "I shouldn't never have left it except I had to prove I wasn't no prophet and I've proved it… I proved it by drowning him. Even if I

did baptize him that was only an accident. Now all I have to do is mind my own bidnis until I die. I don't have to baptize or prophesy" (O'Connor 458). Readers can clearly see from Francis' explanation that he is trying to flee from the hold Mason had on him his whole life; in trying to rebel from his instruction, he commits a murder, displaying one way that Mason Tarwater's manipulation leads another to sin. By doing this action to spite Mason, Francis is still under Mason's influence even though he is trying to distance himself from Mason's teachings. Francis still "loses" as his rebellion is still a result of Mason's teachings. Ciuba explains that "although Tarwater's training to be a prophet should dispose him, according to John Desmond, to proclaim the good news of nonviolence (143-44), the cult of honor demands that the youth make a sacrificial offering... The victim is Bishop" (77). Tarwater rebelling from Mason is not honorable in itself, but it is clear that Mason Tarwater's influence is what leads him to sin; had Mason not kidnapped Tarwater and attempted to raise him up as a prophet, Francis Tarwater would not have been inclined to drown Bishop in the first place. This type of negative impact is counter to the biblical story of the prophet Elijah, leaving readers to theorize that O'Connor is using this antithetical approach to reinforce the dangers of being overly zealous in attempting to recruit believers.

Mason Tarwater also leads Rayber to sin, although in a different way than Francis, which further supports the idea that Mason is a paradoxical prophet character. Buzan comments, "the underlying motive of Rayber's life has been revenge on Mason, and this motive, contributing to his limited perceptions and sustained by them, damns him" (40). Mason Tarwater's influence encourages Rayber to deny Christ and accept rationalism instead. Bacon explains "Rayber, the school teacher, is the rationalist character, the one choosing 'to lurch toward emptiness' by rejecting fundamentalist religion" (27-28). The Holy Bible warns against the sin of denying or

rejecting God. Jesus explains this concept to a group of both believers and nonbelievers in John 12 as he says "'if anyone hears my [Jesus'] words and doesn't keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. The one who rejects me and doesn't receive my sayings has this as his judge: The word I have spoken will judge him on the last day" (John 12:47-48 CSB). Even though Mason was trying to win Rayber to Christ, he pushes him away from believing. In addition to this rejection of Christianity, Rayber chooses not to save Bishop as Tarwater drowns him; Rayber simply becomes a bystander to his own child's death. O'Connor herself states in one of her letters to Alfred Corn that "the point where Tarwater is drowning Bishop is the point where he [Rayber] has to choose. He makes the Satanic choice, and the inability to feel the pain of his loss is the immediate result" (1170). Mason Tarwater's teachings of baptism scar Rayber so much that he does not know how to react, and he loses his child as a result. It is obvious that Mason has done more harm than good in Rayber's life, which is problematic because of Mason's purported prophetic calling.

The Bible explains on multiple occasions that Christians are called to strive to not be a "stumbling block" to fellow Christians and to nonbelievers. Although no Christian will or can be perfect at doing so, they are to strive to act in a way that leads others to the love of Christ rather than turn them away from it and influence them to sin. 1 Corinthians 8:9 states, "But be careful that this right of yours in no way becomes a stumbling block to the weak" (1 Corinthians 8:9 CSB). Mason's treatment of Rayber and Tarwater leads them further away from righteousness, which opposes the definition of an honorable prophet. This is significant because Mason's actions can additionally push readers away from Christianity, perhaps even causing them to reassess their own "virtuous" Christian actions and their opinions of Christians who have hurt them and caused them to stumble.

Mason Tarwater is not entirely bad, however. He is obviously very dedicated to his prophetic calling and wants to raise his nephews up in the same way. The narrator of *The Violent Bear It Away* displays what they believe Mason's motivations are for kidnapping Tarwater, and they explain Mason "had known what he was saving the boy from and it was saving and not destruction he was seeking" (O'Connor 333). By these details, Mason appears to have good intentions when he kidnaps Francis Tarwater. O'Gorman attests to this description, and he believes that "what old Tarwater wants most insistently, of course, is to make sure that all children are not only physically mothered but also baptized into Holy Mother Church" (157). With this explanation, it is apparent some scholars truly believe that Mason Tarwater cared deeply about Tarwater's physical and spiritual wellbeing, implying that he was not simply some backwoods freak— his role as a caregiver and prophet should be taken seriously. O'Connor would agree with this statement; in an essay of O'Connor's titled "The Catholic Novelist in the Protestant South," she explains "when you write about backwoods prophets, it is very difficult to get across to the modern reader that you take these people seriously, that you are not making fun of them, but that their concerns are your own and, in your judgment, central to human life" (204). So, it is appropriate for readers and scholars to not completely dismiss characters like Mason Tarwater when first reading.

But what readers cannot dismiss is Mason Tarwater's methods of trying to convert others under his prophetic calling. O'Connor creates a character who manipulates and harms other characters, and readers witness that. Readers also associate Mason Tarwater with prophecy, since he declares within the text that he is a prophet for God, and O'Connor herself states that he is a prophet and an example of a fundamentalist character. She seems to be critiquing religion while simultaneously promoting it. One explanation for this could be that O'Connor was projecting her

view of fundamentalist Christianity into the text. Cofer notes in his novel that "O'Connor considered her depictions of backwoods prophets a tribute to the tangible belief she experienced living in the Protestant South" (12). O'Connor is a Catholic writer, so creating such a problematic Christian character seems strange, but she could have done this as a warning and lesson for the reader since she ties her "backwoods prophet" to the Protestant South rather than to Catholicism. Perhaps she experienced Protestant individuals attempting to force their values over her Catholic beliefs. It is admirable to be passionate about one's beliefs, but such strong religious beliefs can also create trauma for others if individuals put such an emphasis on their calling rather than on how they treat others. Readers can take note of this and try to treat others with respect and kindness rather than harm when trying to get others to understand their thoughts and beliefs. Mason Tarwater serves as a problematic character type in a complicated story and presents a complex message.

Atticus Finch as a Good Samaritan Type

In a comparable but contrasting way, readers could regard Atticus Finch of *To Kill a Mockingbird* as a character type from religious allegory. Like Mason, Atticus is a character who touches multiple lives throughout the story. He is the dominant male protagonist, and readers see his influence as they observe his interactions with his family members and community. Lee creates this character type in a much different way; her prophet is not so extreme. Atticus is more of a realistic character and realistic example of a prophet; Christianity is more of an undercurrent in Atticus' life since he does not constantly speak of his "prophetic calling" as Mason Tarwater does, although his actions are tied to Christian beliefs. Even though Lee does not state that she wrote Atticus' story as a biblical allegory, there are strong parallels between Atticus' story and a parable Jesus tells within the New Testament of the Holy Bible.

Instead of being an allegory of an Old Testament story like O'Connor's work, readers can speculate that Atticus Finch is an allegory of the parable of the Good Samaritan. This is a more well-known Bible story as it is in the New Testament, and Jesus himself gives the story as a parable to teach others about love and mercy. In common, everyday speech, people have even coined a "good Samaritan" to be an individual who stops to help someone in need. In the same way, Atticus Finch is the good Samaritan who helps the individual in need— Tom Robinson.

Jesus tells of the parable of the good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37. In this parable, a Samaritan man helps a man of a different ethnicity than himself, which is one element to keep in mind, as Atticus does the same in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. In the passage, Jesus explains that a man was walking, and robbers "stripped him, beat him up, and fled, leaving him half dead" (Luke 10:30 CSB). After this occurs, a priest and a Levite both pass the helpless individual and do not provide any type of aid; when the Samaritan man passes, "he had compassion. He went over to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on olive oil and wine. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him" (Luke 10:34 CSB). The Samaritan goes above and beyond to help the individual that others disregarded, and Atticus replicates this as he represents Tom Robinson in court, who is helpless on his own. Because of Tom's race, he does not have a good chance of not being convicted. Like the good Samaritan, the narrator explains, "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" (Lee 275-276). Atticus does everything he can to help Tom Robinson, and he does make a difference by standing up for him and his case, yet Tom is still wrongfully found as guilty.

While scholars attest to Atticus' selflessness and willingness to help, the majority do not tie his compassion and morality to the parable in Luke. In a biography of Harper Lee, Burling labels him as "Noble Atticus" and describes Atticus as "one of the most honorable characters in literature, not only as a role model and father figure to his children, but also as a respectable citizen. In his defense of Tom Robinson, he risks his life and career to stand up for truth, justice, and the equality of all humankind regardless of race or skin color" (10). Quite a few scholars agree with this description of Atticus. Maureen Markey states in her essay "Atticus represents transcendent moral values, traditionally recognized as a natural law view of the world, and respect for the rule of law reflected in good positive law. But Atticus also presents a compelling depiction of the moral courage required of an ethical person when confronted with deeply flawed social norms that conflict with natural law or positive law" (162-163). What these scholars seem to agree upon is that Atticus utilizes secular institutions (the law and court systems) to achieve justice and promote moral progress, and he is a moral individual himself. Scholar Andrew B. Ayers summarizes this in an excellent way:

> One of the reasons Atticus is able to avoid tension between his identities is that the rule of law is sacred to all of them. It is not the only value he holds dear, but it is central to who he is. As a lawyer, he defends the rule of law; as a father, he teaches his children about it; and in his private identity as a Christian (or moral person) he believes in the rule of law just as deeply. His wholehearted commitment to the rule of law leads him to an act of great heroism: he risks his life to ensure that Tom Robinson survives the lynch mob and gets his day in court." (35)

Ayers explains that Atticus abides by the law in his social life, work life, and family life; he is a committed individual. Ayers also notes that Atticus is a Christian, which further ties Atticus to

biblical ideals in addition to his allegorical representation as the Good Samaritan. Scholar Lance

McMillian also believes Atticus Finch is an authentic Christian. McMillian states, "to understand

Atticus, one must first understand Jesus' teachings… Far from enabling racism, Finch's

character and courage provide an example that shames the citizens of Maycomb County for their

sins. From a Christian perspective, this conviction is the path to repentance and moral change"

(703). Here, McMillian explains that viewing Atticus' actions through the lens of Christianity

allows readers to understand him more as a character, and Atticus' underlying Christian values

are what make a difference in the story.

Within *To Kill a Mockingbird,* Atticus even ties himself to Christianity on multiple

occasions, which seems to give readers permission to view him through this lens. In a

conversation with Scout, Atticus says that he could not go and worship God if he did not defend

Tom Robinson in court. Atticus explains that "'Tom Robinson's case, is something that goes to

the essence of a man's conscience- Scout, I couldn't go to church and worship God if I didn't try

to help that man… before I can live with other folks I've got to live with myself'" (Lee 120).

Here, Atticus implies that it would go against his belief system if he did not attempt to defend

Tom Robinson, and he identifies that he worships God. So, in a similar (but different) way to

Mason Tarwater, Atticus proclaims his belief in God and expresses that he feels led to do

something drastic in the context of the societal norms of the time. This is similar to what

motivates Mason Tarwater, for he feels as if he has a prophetic call from God to take drastic

actions to spread the Word. Atticus knows that defending Tom Robinson will be difficult, but he

does so anyway— just as the Samaritan man knows that it is taboo to assist the beaten man, yet

offers his help anyway after others have passed by him. Atticus explains that he must defend

Tom Robinson, because if he does not, he would not be able to stand for himself or for the

legislature, and he would not ever be able to expect Jem and Scout to honor his authority and instruction ever again (Lee 86). He would not be able to respect himself or ask for respect from anyone if he did not take the case, which displays his strong beliefs.

Atticus leads by example and gains the respect of many. Instead of manipulating his children to believe and act in the manner that he does, Scout and Jem respect who Atticus is as a person, and in turn, they obey him. His children highly regard him as they listen to his reprimanding when they do something wrong. One time, after Jem destroys an older lady's flowers because he thinks the lady had disrespected Atticus, Atticus says "'son, I have no doubt that you've been annoyed by your contemporaries about me lawing for n*ggers, as you say, but to do something like this to a sick old lady is inexcusable. I strongly advise you to go down and have a talk with Mrs. Dubose'" (Lee 119). When Scout tries to follow Jem outside, Scout explains that Atticus told her to come back, and she obeys Atticus as soon as he told her to (Lee 119). In this scene, it is apparent that Atticus wants his children to do what is right and honorable as he corrects Jem's poor behavior, and Atticus' children respect him enough to obey him right then. This is done in a more calm, less manipulative manner than Mason Tarwater, making Atticus more aligned with Christian ideals than Mason, and it especially aligns him with the Good Samaritan type as he tries to do what is honorable.

Throughout *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Atticus strives to teach Jem and Scout valuable life lessons—ones of courage, fairness, and understanding; these lessons are also the ideals embedded in the Good Samaritan parable. For example: Atticus tells Scout that in order for her to live in harmony with more people, she must try to see things from their perspective. Atticus states "'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'" (Lee 33). This is one of the main lessons of

the novel, and it is a quotation many readers continue to discuss because it highlights that individuals should always place themselves in someone else's position before judging them and their situation. This shows that Atticus tries to be a considerate person, and he tries to raise his children up in the same way. He also attempts to teach Jem and Scout a lesson of courage. Atticus requires Jem to read to an elderly lady, who is dying and struggling with a morphine addiction in her later days, but Jem does not fully understand his reasoning. Atticus explains to Jem: "'I wanted you to see something about her- I wanted you to see what real courage is, instead of getting the idea that courage is a man with a gun in his hand. It's when you know you're licked before you begin but you begin anyway and you see it through no matter what. You rarely win, but sometimes you do'" (Lee 128). Jem and Scout were both present for this lesson of bravery and understanding, and it resonates with them.

Readers see Atticus practice what he preaches as he defends Tom Robinson. Based on the definition of courage he presents, he acts with this same courage. Atticus knows that his odds to win Tom Robinson's case are poor; he explains to Scout that they will most likely not win, and Scout asks why her father is even going to try, Atticus says "'simply because we [they] were licked a hundred years before we started is no reason for us not to try to win'" (Lee 86). Atticus believes he should still attempt to represent Tom Robinson and fight for what is right, even if there is a small chance of success, because it is the courageous thing to do. He lives out his beliefs; Atticus fights for equality and is compassionate towards individuals in his community. He helps neighbors in need, especially Tom Robinson, and Atticus himself says that he "'do[es] [his] best to love everybody'" (Lee 124), which is a Christian concept.

Through being a good Samaritan type rather than a prophet type, Atticus presents Christianity in a much more loving way that is in direct contrast to Mason Tarwater's approach.

This is not to argue that Atticus is a perfect example of a Christian— he is still a flawed character with faults, but his imperfections craft him even further as a realistic archetype as opposed to being an extreme type. Since Atticus proclaims himself as a Christian, it is important to view his actions as a result of his faith, just as Mason Tarwater's actions are an example of his Christian faith as well. Atticus is a character who possesses integrity and compassion, and he fights for equality; these are qualities that readers can admire and learn from, as many readers over the years have.

Within these two novels are comparable yet differing types of allegorical characters. The novels are both written by female authors, written in the American South, and published in the same year, yet their male protagonists are opposing images. These characters comment on how the authors viewed religious individuals during this time period. O'Connor presents a prophet who stands firm in his calling, yet he is problematic, implying that she views Christian fundamentalists in a similar way. Lee, on the other hand, recognizes that individuals can incorporate their beliefs into their daily lives without having to go to extremes. The presence of these two characters in the same time period illustrates these two differing types of religious followers existed simultaneously. The characters are relatable to readers as they can see themselves in the two male protagonists, or they can even see themselves as a daughter, son, or nephew who has been influenced by a problematic individual or one who attempts to live in harmony. Readers are able to view the stereotypes and implications of those stereotypes. Some types, like Mason Tarwater, serve as a warning to readers to not be forcefully overzealous with their religion.

With the character Mason Tarwater, O'Connor critiques Protestant fundamentalists by presenting a paradoxical prophet type. Even though the prophet Mason Tarwater is very devoted

to his beliefs, he harms other characters along the way, creating a poor example of Protestant Christianity to his nephews and to readers. However, Lee, who subtly mentions Christian elements throughout her novel, promotes Protestant Christianity by presenting Atticus Finch as an honorable Good Samaritan character type who integrates Christianity into his sacred and secular life. The comparison of these two male protagonists depicts the idea that for a Protestant Christian to be a successful and admirable example, they should let their beliefs inform their everyday interactions and be in the world, but not of the world, rather than taking extreme measures to forcibly convert others to their religion. Just as there were these types of people in society during and in O'Connor and Lee's time and place of authorship, these individuals still exist in society today; readers can heed the lesson from these religious allegorical character types.

CHAPTER 2

MASON TARWATER AND ATTICUS FINCH: OPPOSING APPROACHES

TO IMPARTING BELIEFS AND EVOKING CHANGE

In addition to being religious allegorical character types, Flannery O'Connor's paradoxical prophet, Mason Tarwater, and Harper Lee's straightforward leader, Atticus Finch, display both sides of the 1960's debates of violence, nonviolence, division, and inclusivity. O'Connor's *The Violent Bear It Away* and Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* include differing, yet comparable male protagonists, and these novels present two opposing pictures of belief, family, and community. Mason Tarwater and Atticus Finch want to influence their family members and their communities based on their personal beliefs; however, they both go about creating this impact in contrasting ways. Readers can witness the differences in characterization within the stories as Mason Tarwater uses violence and division to evoke change, while Atticus Finch uses nonviolence and inclusion to impact others in his society. Mason stands firm in his prophetic beliefs and secludes himself and his nephew, young Francis Tarwater, from society, and he physically harms those who attempt to have him assimilate into the rest of the world. Atticus also stands firm in his beliefs, but instead of enacting his beliefs as Mason Tarwater does, Atticus integrates his beliefs into his everyday life and immerses himself into society in a nonviolent way. O'Connor and Lee published these two novels in the same year and in the same geographical location, yet *To Kill a Mockingbird* was much more popular and widely praised than *The Violent Bear It Away*. The comparison of these two novels and opposing protagonists suggests that nonviolence and inclusion are more successful in evoking change, and society is more receptive to those approaches instead of violence and division. In *The Violent Bear It Away,* the characters attempt to flee from Mason, who uses violence and seclusion, but the

characters in *To Kill a Mockingbird* respect and admire Atticus for his peaceful and inclusive nature.

Violence versus Nonviolence

Both *The Violent Bear It Away* and *To Kill a Mockingbird* appear to be commenting on violence in opposing ways. There are nonviolent and violent moments within both texts, but the main focuses for violent and nonviolent tendencies are related to the main male protagonists. Mason Tarwater, who believes he is a prophet for God, attempts to raise his nephews up with the same prophetic calling; he does so in a violent way, and his actions greatly affect his nephew, Rayber, and his great nephew, young Francis Tarwater. Mason kidnaps, neglects, and abuses Francis, and Mason fires guns and becomes hysterical when he is opposed. In *To Kill a Mockingbird,* Atticus Finch does not believe he is a prophet for God, but he does believe that he should treat others with kindness and respect. Atticus is a father and a lawyer who represents Tom Robinson in court, and no matter how many people taunt Atticus, he never responds with violence. Atticus remains calm when approached by an angry mob of men, he promotes nonviolence to his children, and he peacefully avoids conflict.

Violence within 'The Violent Bear It Away'

Throughout *The Violent Bear It Away,* readers can see that Mason Tarwater is a violent and problematic character. He leaves a negative, lasting impact on Rayber and Francis Tarwater; Mason Tarwater appears to be a Christian fundamentalist, and he believes it is his prophetic duty to indoctrinate his nephews and mold them into prophet figures as well. His actions as he attempts to convert his nephews cannot simply be brushed under the rug; he kidnaps people,

physically harms people, and isolates Francis from society, which is detrimental to Francis'

mental and physical development. Mason Tarwater's Christian faith and prophetic calling

ironically influence him to hurt and control others, and he seems to ignore the effects of his own

harmful actions. As the previous chapter similarly argues, this violent behavior is not an effective

method of change and suggests that being too forceful in one's efforts can have negative results.

Mason Tarwater is neglectful throughout the text. Richard Giannone states in his article

that "the old prophet is the essential antagonist" (28) of the novel. However, some scholars do

find reasons to praise Mason Tarwater and attempt to argue that he is nurturing and caring, but

the novel actually provides its own evidence for refutation for those claims. The narrator of *The*

Violent Bear It Away states that "[Mason Tarwater] would wander into the woods and leave

Tarwater alone in the clearing, occasionally for days, while he thrashed out his peace with the

Lord, and when he returned, bedraggled and hungry" (O'Connor 334). Clearly, if Mason

Tarwater returned dirty and needing food, Francis Tarwater would be in similar conditions

because he had no other primary caregiver and had to fend for himself after being left all alone;

those actions are not any indication of a nurturing and caring father figure, which some critics

claim that Mason Tarwater is or could be. While this is not necessarily "violent" in nature, it

does signify neglect and abuse. These actions are harmful to Francis and could lead to violence.

In addition to being neglectful, Mason Tarwater is physically abusive. Scholar Gary M.

Ciuba highlights that Mason consistently uses force when dealing with Francis. He states, "the

fierce Mason shouts, hisses, roars, and hollers; he slams his hand for emphasis, kicks a door, and

grabs Tarwater by his overalls. The great-uncle gained custody of the boy by just such violence"

(Ciuba 69). These acts of violence are evidence throughout the text. He is seen shouting

(O'Connor 333), hissing (338), and roaring (339) as he talks to Francis. Ciuba later states, in an

encapsulating and straightforward manner, that "Mason sometimes seems like the remote and menacing forefather who holds Tarwater in thralldom rather than the harbinger of God's tender closeness to those who are sons and daughters of the Spirit. Mason would be a better prophet and parent if he understood the implications of fatherhood for God and of God for fatherhood" (71). Clearly, Mason Tarwater does not treat Francis with the love of the God for whom he professes to be a prophet, which opposes the very nature of prophetic calling. Instead of being a kind and nurturing parent, Mason harms Francis; violence is an effective method to kidnap Francis, but doing so in such a forceful manner is an ineffective method of converting Francis to become a Christian prophet.

Not only does Mason act violently towards Francis Tarwater, but Mason also defends himself in a violent manner when he feels threatened that Rayber will undermine his authority. When Rayber attempts to retrieve Francis from Mason after Rayber has been separated from both of them for quite some time, Mason becomes enraged and shoots at Rayber with a gun two times— once in the leg and once in his right ear— after Rayber angers him (O'Connor 333). Rayber tries to save Francis from Mason's manipulative grasp in a nonviolent way, and Mason retaliates with violence. Rayber comes unarmed and defenseless, which forces him to leave without Francis. Rayber had to "leave his car on the dirt road and walk a mile through the woods on a path that appeared and disappeared before he came to the corn patch with the gaunt two-story shack standing in the middle of it… as the nephew came out of [the corn patch], the old man shouted he would shoot any foot that touched his step" (O'Connor 333). Rayber attempts to retrieve Francis in a peaceful manner along with a "welfare-woman" (O'Connor 333), but violence unfortunately wins as Rayber is unsuccessful in retrieving the child. Rayber and Francis are not able to reunite until Mason dies. Here, Mason's use of violence enables him to keep

Francis secluded from society, but Mason's violent tendencies continue to seem contrary to a prophetic calling.

Mason can be volatile and intense at times, and his actions can become violent when he is hysterical. The narrator provides examples of ways that Mason loses control from time to time; they explain Mason Tarwater "might have been shouting to the silent woods" in a "frenzy" (O'Connor 368) and that as Francis Tarwater's "uncle grew more and more wild, [Tarwater] would lift his face from the gun for a moment with a look of uneasy alertness" (O'Connor 369). Clearly, Mason Tarwater's temper worries Francis, and other characters recognize the instability within the old man. Mason's sister even has him committed to an asylum, and when the two men and doctor arrive to take him, he "raged through her house like a blinded bull, everything crashing behind him, and it had taken two of them and the doctor and two neighbors to get him down. The doctor had said he was not only crazy but dangerous and they had taken him to the asylum in a straitjacket" (O'Connor 369). Raging through his sister's home like a wild animal and causing destruction when individuals are attempting to get him help is dangerous and destructive.

Mason Tarwater's harmful ways do not seem to be a successful method of change in the grand scheme of things. His violent outbursts are successful momentarily in getting his way, but because of his violent manner, he pushes Rayber and Francis Tarwater away from God and from joining the prophetic calling. Rayber becomes a more rational, secular character as opposed to being a fundamentalist Christian like Mason Tarwater, and Francis Tarwater is left a jaded, confused teenager because of Mason's violent tactics. Mason's actions might also push readers away from wanting to follow and worship the God he claims to be a prophet for. While some scholars do point out Mason's actions are nurturing, the negativity of his constant violence far

outweighs the glimmers of care he occasionally demonstrates, which is once again problematic for a prophet figure.

Nonviolence within 'To Kill a Mockingbird'

To Kill a Mockingbird, on the other hand, portrays a much different story than *The Violent Bear It Away*. Rather than using violence to evoke change, Lee's protagonist, Atticus Finch, is committed to remaining nonviolent throughout *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Atticus is not trying to convert people to his religion and prophetic calling, but he is trying to persuade others that an individual he is representing is innocent of crime. As previously mentioned, Atticus, who is a white, middle-aged lawyer and father, represents Tom Robinson in court, and Tom Robinson is an African American, so individuals in their community are difficult to persuade because of racial and cultural differences during the time period of the story.

One of the most notable examples of Atticus' nonviolence is when he is approached by a mob of angry men. In Chapter 15, at nighttime, Atticus goes and sits in front of the jail where Tom Robinson is. Four cars pull up to the jail, and "in ones and twos, men got out of the cars" (Lee 172). It seems as if the men want to get to Tom Robinson, and they tell Atticus to move. Atticus replies, "'You can turn around and go home again, Walter' Atticus said pleasantly. 'Heck Tate's around here somewhere'" (Lee 172). The sheriff, Heck Tate, is not present because the men had sent him on a search to leave the jail basically unoccupied. Scout, his young daughter, runs up to Atticus, and she notes that "a flash of plain fear was going out of his eyes" and that his fingers "were trembling a little" (Lee 173). Jem is also there and does not listen when Atticus calmly tells him to go home, so a man "grabbed Jem roughly by the collar. He yanked Jem nearly off his feet" (Lee 174). Scout kicks the man in Jem's defense, and Atticus tells her that she should not kick people. Scout then talks to Mr. Cunningham, who is a family friend Atticus

has helped through some financial and legal problems. After Scout asks Mr. Cunningham about his son, all the men eventually leave.

This scene implies that the group of men were attempting to harm either Tom, Atticus, or both men. Atticus sits there as if he were expecting the men (Lee 172), and although he might be fearful, he does not intend to use violence to stop the men. Even when Scout tries to harm a man by kicking him, Atticus admonishes her for her actions, although his son is in danger. Later in the novel, Jem even tells Scout, "'you know [Atticus] wouldn't carry a gun, Scout. He ain't even got one-' said Jem. 'You know he didn't even have one down at the jail that night. He told me havin' a gun around's an invitation to somebody to shoot you'" (Lee 249). Atticus faces an entire group of men unarmed with no intentions of hurting them in return. Even though the men who targeted him and Tom Robinson clearly have different views on race than Atticus does because they do not support him representing Tom in court, Atticus does not respond with hate.

Later in the novel, a character disrespects Atticus once again, yet Atticus does not react in a violent manner. Atticus is at the post office, and members of the community witness his interaction with Bob Ewell, who is the man who accuses Tom Robinson of raping his daughter, Mayella. In Chapter 23 of *To Kill a Mockingbird,* Miss Stephanie Crawford tells Scout about what she saw. Scout, the narrator, says that Miss Stephanie explains:

> Atticus was leaving the post office when Mr. Ewell approached him, cursed him, spat on him, and threatened to kill him… Atticus didn't bat an eye, just took out his handkerchief and wiped his face and stood there and let Mr. Ewell call him names wild horses could not bring her to repeat. Mr. Ewell was a veteran of an obscure war; that plus Atticus's peaceful reaction probably prompted him to inquire, 'Too proud to fight, you n*gger lovin' bastard?' Miss Stephanie said Atticus said, 'No, too old,' put his hands in his pockets and strolled on. (Lee 249)

In public, once again, Atticus does not retaliate. Bob Ewell spits, yells, and threatens his life, and Atticus reacts peacefully; he appears to be unbothered as he simply walks away. Other characters and people might have a completely different reaction if they were in his situation. Throughout the entirety of the novel, Atticus tries to be loving, understanding, peaceful, and nonviolent, and his actions are effective in avoiding violent conflict.

Scholars note Atticus' nonviolent actions and tend to praise him for it. Marcus Jimison, author of the article "The Redemption of Atticus Finch," explains that Atticus is a great example of the non-violent resistance years before Martin Luther King Jr. was in action, and this is especially expressed in the moment "the racist Maycomb spat in his face" (2). Jimison says "Lee has drawn Atticus Finch as a symbol of quiet strength, devotion to the law, and devotion to the principle that all persons are equal before the law" (2). Atticus is a character of integrity, and he is devoted as a lawyer and a father. He stands up for Tom Robinson who is of a different race, and Atticus also does not discriminate or retaliate against people who are of the same race, but of a different class than him. Jimison connects Atticus' example to that of Martin Luther King Jr.'s because they both fight for equality in a nonviolent way.

In fact, Martin Luther King Jr. himself appears to know of Atticus Finch's example. In 1964, four years after *To Kill a Mockingbird* was published, King published a book titled *Why We Can't Wait* that discusses the need for racial equality in the United States. He touches on nonviolence and the strength of moral force in Chapter 2 of his book:

> We are a nation that worships the frontier tradition, and our heroes are those who champion justice through violent retaliation against injustice. It is not simple to adopt the credo that moral force has as much strength and virtue as the capacity to return a physical blow; or to refrain from hitting back requires more will and bravery than the automatic reflexes of defense. Yet there is something in the American ethos that responds to the

strength of moral force. I am reminded of the popular and widely respected novel and

film *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Atticus Finch, a white southern lawyer, confronts a group of

his neighbors who have become a lynch-crazy mob, seeking the life of his Negro client.

Finch, armed with nothing more lethal than a lawbook, disperses the mob with the force

of his moral courage, aided by his small daughter, who, innocently calling the would-be

lynchers by name, reminds them that they are individual men, not a pack of beasts. To the

Negro of 1963, as to Atticus Finch, it had become obvious that nonviolence could

symbolize the gold badge of heroism rather than the white feather of cowardice. (King

34-35)

This is a lengthy quotation, but each line is valuable. It is intriguing to see that King interacted

with *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and it seems as if the novel even inspired him. He highlights that

Atticus leads with moral courage and is only armed with his lawbook rather than a physical

weapon, and King clearly sees the value of nonviolence as opposed to the old ways of seeking

justice through violence. King points out that "nonviolence could symbolize the gold badge of

heroism," and in saying that, King marks Atticus Finch as a hero as well.

Nonviolence as a method of change within *To Kill a Mockingbird* is more loving and

influential in comparison to the violence in *The Violent Bear It Away*. However, the white jury

still finds Tom Robinson guilty of a crime he did not commit, and Tom dies in jail because he

attempts to escape; even so, Atticus does evoke change through representing Tom in court.

Atticus is a great example of nonviolence and equality for the community of Maycomb County,

and he is even more of an inspiration to readers as they observe his actions throughout the novel.

One of the most prominent figures in American history even notes his nonviolent heroism.

Violence turns characters and readers away in *The Violent Bear It Away*, while

nonviolence brings people together in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The comparison of these two

novels could be commentary on the 1950s and 60s in regards to the effectiveness of nonviolence as a method of change. Because of the popularity of *To Kill a Mockingbird* that has transcended decades, one can conclude that readers respect a more nonviolent approach, and that they would more likely look to Atticus Finch's example when navigating their own personal conflicts. After all— Martin Luther King Jr. himself saw fit to reference this powerful piece of writing.

Division versus Inclusion

In addition to Mason Tarwater and Atticus Finch utilizing violence and nonviolence in opposing ways as methods of change, they also choose to interact with others in their community differently. Mason Tarwater secludes himself and young Francis Tarwater from society, while Atticus Finch immerses himself and his family in a tight-knit community and in the law and government. The family and community dynamics within these two novels are the complete opposite, going from extreme seclusion to immersion. This is significant because humans are social creatures who need social connection and fulfillment to operate well. No socialization or human connection leads to negativity in life, whereas human and social connection nurtures positivity and care. Additionally, individuals being secluded from society due to the manipulation from an authority figure results in individuals having a skewed worldview and confused belief system because they are being sheltered from all other opinions, which restricts their freedom of deciding what they believe for themselves.

Division within 'The Violent Bear It Away'

As previously mentioned, Mason Tarwater kidnaps his great nephew with hopes of instilling his beliefs within him and of passing on his prophetic calling. He does so in a violent

way, and he also secludes him from all other individuals and communities, which is detrimental to Francis Tarwater's mental wellbeing and social capacity.

John Lance Bacon pulls evidence from *The Violent Bear It Away* and from history that attests to this type of withdrawal from society. Bacon states "before the 1980s, American evangelicals felt compelled to retreat from secular society, to safeguard the purity of their faith – just as Mason Tarwater feels called to take young Tarwater 'to the farthest part of the backwoods,' where God can 'preserve him from contamination' *(V* 4-5, 17)" (20). Mason's behavior is typical of a Christian fundamentalist during this time. He does not want to be immersed within society as he feels as everyone who believes differently from him would have a poor influence on him and Francis Tarwater. Although Mason might feel as if he is saving Francis from harm, he is negatively sheltering him and manipulating his thinking. By secluding Francis, Mason is not allowing him to think freely for himself and decide what he believes by being exposed to many different perspectives and interacting with other beliefs. Mason makes Francis a slave to his own ideals.

The opening of the novel makes it clear that Francis only knows what Mason teaches him. The narrator of *The Violent Bear It Away* says, "the old man had been Tarwater's great-uncle, or said he was, and they had always lived together so far as the child knew. His uncle had said he was seventy years of age at the time he had rescued and undertaken to bring him up... Tarwater figured this made his own age fourteen" (O'Connor 331). From this statement, it is clear that Francis Tarwater assumes facts about his own life based on what Mason tells him; Francis does not know the actual truth. This is partly because Francis is an orphan who only knows the life that Mason builds for him. Mason is successful in controlling the facts of Francis' life because he does not allow any outside contact from other individuals.

When people do not have freedom to make their own choices and inform their own beliefs, they want to rebel from the teachings, which is what Francis attempts to do throughout the entire novel. Mason sees Francis' isolation as a positive and protective reinforcement, but their seclusion actually does Francis more harm than good. Francis' isolation from society restricts him from consistent contact with others, and it is detrimental to his social skills and education. Mason Tarwater brainwashes Francis into thinking that he is "escaping school" (O'Connor 340); Mason also teaches Francis "Figures, Reading, Writing, and History beginning with Adam expelled from the Garden and going on down through the presidents to Herbert Hoover and on in speculation toward the Second Coming and the Day of Judgment" (O'Connor 331). Even though Mason does try to educate Francis by teaching him each of these topics, he does not provide a well-rounded education for his nephew. Instead of following a certain curriculum as a school would, Mason forms what he teaches Francis around his prophetic calling and around what he believes is important in life; he does not teach what is traditionally or modernly taught in a true academic setting, which is not ideal for Francis' emotional, mental, or spiritual development. Instead of allowing Francis to be a well-rounded individual with freedom to make his own decisions, Francis' understanding of the world is narrowed and controlled, leading him to believe in Mason's cause blindly.

To keep Francis Tarwater secluded from society and proper education, Mason Tarwater deceives the police officer when the police officer asks him if he has a boy that should be in school. Mason forces Francis to pretend to have a mental disability so the officer does not push Mason to place the child in school. The narrator explains that "old Tarwater had instructed the boy in his part against the day when, as the devil's emissary, the officer would appear… in a few minutes [Francis] Tarwater appeared from around the side of the house. His eyes were open but

not well-focused. His head rolled uncontrollably on his slack shoulders and his tongue lolled in

his open mouth" (O'Connor 340). This deception is selfish and problematic because it opposes

Mason's prophetic calling; the Bible clearly admonishes Christians against lying and deceiving

others for selfish reasons. 1 Peter states Christians must "rid [themselves] of all malice, all

deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all slander" (1 Peter 2:1 CSB), and Mason Tarwater is clearly being

deceitful. He convinces Francis Tarwater to act and lie to the police officer because he believes

the officer is acting as the "devil," when in reality the officer is doing his civic duty to ensure

Francis is receiving an education. If Mason's method of getting Francis to believe his doctrine is

by dividing him from society and manipulating his education, it is successful, but it seems to

contradict his prophetic calling. This suggests that O'Connor may believe that prophets do not

have to follow the law if they believe they are acting according to their calling. It also

demonstrates that Mason believes that the most effective method of change for Tarwater is

division from society.

Although Mason Tarwater secludes his great nephew from society in a violent way

through kidnapping, some scholars argue he acts out of love and protection for his nephews, and

that he nurtures Francis Tarwater by raising him away from society. Mary Buzan highlights in

her article that the novel provides evidence that undermines negative opinions by showing that

Mason feeds Francis well, cares for Francis' spiritual health, and works hard to ensure that

Francis matters and has the freedom to be his own self (37-38). Despite Mason providing a meal

for Francis Tarwater at times and caring for his spirituality, Mason only does so on his own

terms. He makes meals for Francis only whenever he is home, he only wants Francis to believe

in his prophetic calling, and he does not give Francis any freedom because Mason keeps him

confined to their house in the backwoods. Even though Mason does give Francis a place to live

and seems to want to protect him from the secular world, it is in a violent and divisive way. Mason is not loving or nurturing because he only does the bare minimum as a caretaker.

As a method of change within the novel, Mason uses the tactic of isolating Francis and dividing him from society. This isolation has many negative impacts on Francis and demonstrates that it is dangerous to force beliefs and manipulate someone's thinking in order to have them blindly support ideals. Ultimately, Francis' lack of interaction with others in society stunts his mental, social, and spiritual development. With this example, readers may also be turned away from Christianity because of Mason Tarwater's actions since he declares that this is for the Lord. In the Bible, Elijah, Mason's allegorical representation, also seeks division and isolation from society, but he does so out of fear (1 Kings 19:1-5 CSB). Elijah goes into the wilderness, where God visits him, and God advises Elijah to return to society to anoint new leaders; he does so and also names a successor, Elisha (1 Kings 19: 15- 20 CSB). Seclusion for Elijah is a means of repentance, not control. Mason's tactics of division and isolation were for the purpose of controlling the mind and external influences of his young protege. Through Mason's failed tactics, O'Connor speaks to the ineffectiveness of divisiveness when trying to affect a change of spirit and belief.

Inclusion within 'To Kill a Mockingbird'

Rather than choosing to seclude himself and his children from the harsh realities of the world, Atticus is very involved in his community and city; he and his family always seem to be in the public eye, and Atticus does not back away from a challenge. Immersing himself and his family in the secular world is significant because it displays that Atticus can stand firm in his character and beliefs amidst outside influences, which is more realistic and relatable to readers

and shows his unwavering attitude. Atticus enjoys teaching his children, Jem and Scout, the ways of the world, and this helps them to become more well-rounded individuals. Atticus is a father and a lawyer, and he does not separate these two identities. In fact, scholars praise Atticus for his "wholeness or unity of the personality" (Ayers 34). Andrew Ayers comments that "a person with this kind integrity is someone who experiences harmony between their various social roles and identities: a person who, like Atticus, is the same person in the public streets, in their own home, and wherever else they go" (Ayers 34). This idea of Atticus being authentically himself in all situations is even more evident when he makes the controversial decision to provide legal representation for Tom Robinson, the black man accused of rape. At a time in history when this decision is wildly unpopular, Atticus boldly takes a stand instead of hiding away and avoiding the unpleasantries that ensue. Atticus Finch is intentional in representing his beliefs in the face of a divisive society rather than having to retreat to the backwoods to avoid having his convictions challenged, as does Mason Tarwater.

Atticus and his family live on a street with many other families, and they constantly visit each other; their relationships and bonds are strong. Instead of being a widowed father that functions without a mother for his children, the children have a strong maternal figure named Calpurnia who is their housekeeper. In *The Violent Bear It Away,* young Francis Tarwater does not have a motherly figure at all since his mother passed away early in his life, which differs from the family unit within *To Kill a Mockingbird.* Calpurnia teaches Jem and Scout many different lessons, and she reprimands them when they are wrong. For example: in Chapter 3, Calpurnia provides Scout with a lesson of hospitality and understanding when they have Walter Cunningham over for dinner. After drowning his food in syrup, Scout asks him "what the sam hill he was doing" (Lee 26), and Atticus shakes his head at her, and Calpurnia "requested [her]

presence in the kitchen. She was furious" (Lee 26). Calpurnia explains that "'there's some folks who don't eat like [them]… but [Scout] ain't called on to contradict 'em at the table when they don't… Don't matter who they are… don't [Scout] let [Calpurnia] catch [her] remarkin' on their ways like [she] was so high and mighty'" (Lee 27). Here, Calpurnia wants Scout to learn not to judge others when they are different from her and to respect others who are different. Scout gets to see a perspective other than her father's, which is something that Francis Tarwater does not receive. This further illustrates that human socialization and inclusion are instrumental in developing individuals into being well-rounded and respectful people.

In addition to learning from Calpurnia, Jem and Scout interact and learn from other members of the community. They consistently interact with Miss Maudie, Aunt Alexandra, Mrs. Dubose, and The Radleys. In fact, Atticus pushes for them to talk to and respect these individuals all throughout the novel. Scout spends "most of the remaining twilights [one] summer sitting with Miss Maudie Atkinson on her front porch" (Lee 46), Aunt Alexandra explains that she and Atticus "'decided it was time [she] came to stay with [Scout] for a while… to have some feminine influence'" (Lee 145), and Atticus makes Jem and Scout visit Mrs. Dubose; Scout finds that "each day we had been staying a little longer at Mrs. Dubose's" (Lee 125). Instead of being secluded from society or other characters' influences, Scout and Jem are immersed in community; this is not a luxury that Francis Tarwater has due to Mason Tarwater's manipulative influence.

Rather than Atticus forcing his children to only receive an education from his specific teaching, both Jem and Scout go to a public school; they learn from Atticus at home, but they also learn from their teachers over the years. They are not sheltered as Francis is, so they are able to have a more well-rounded education. In fact, at the start of the novel, Scout says that she was

starting school in a week, and she has "never looked forward more to anything in [her] life" (Lee 17). Here, Scout is excited to learn and to get out of the house. After her first days, she gets in trouble for knowing how to read already since Atticus already taught her how to, and she tells Atticus that she "didn't feel very well and didn't think [she'd] go to school any more if it was alright with him" (Lee 32). Even though she asks politely and explains the misfortunes at school, he explains that "'they'd put [him] in jail if [he] kept [her] at home'" (Lee 32) because "'in [her] case, the law remains rigid. So to school [she] must go'" (Lee 33). Despite there being other children who slip by the law and are only made to attend school for a day, Atticus ensures that he and his family abide by the law and that Scout receives an education apart from his teachings at home. Atticus immerses himself and his family within society. Scout and Jem are able to receive a well-rounded education instead of receiving biased instruction from Atticus only, and Atticus teaches his children that it is honorable to respect the law and receive a public education. This further supports the idea that Lee is endorsing inclusion within her novel as the Finch family obeys the laws for education.

It is also apparent that Atticus works closely with the government. Although Atticus disagrees with many aspects of the system, he does not completely shun the government or believe that the police are "the devil's emissary" as Mason Tarwater does. In fact, he is a lawyer, and he tries his best to uphold the law. After Atticus is admitted to the bar, he returns to Maycomb to begin his practice, and he practices economy and criminal law (Lee 4). He tells Scout that she is "'the common folk. [She] must obey the law'" (Lee 34). Once again, Atticus teaches his children that they should obey the laws that the government has put in place.

Within *To Kill a Mockingbird,* inclusion is an effective method of change. Atticus remains constant throughout the novel, and as his children are exposed to the real world and

interact with others in their community, they become more well-rounded individuals who learn to respect others in a nonviolent way. Even though Atticus does influence his children with his ideals and actions, Scout and Jem are still able to think for themselves and form opinions without being violently manipulated. Readers can see the benefits of being more inclusive, especially regarding civil rights. Tom Robinson is unfortunately killed while trying to escape jail after he and Atticus lose the trial, but the lesson of nonviolence and inclusivity as admirable and effective methods of change still resonates with readers. Tom Robinson's death reminds readers of this lesson, as his death could have been avoided if other characters did not discriminate against him and isolate him. While Mason Tarwater's nephews spend the novel trying to flee from Mason's destructive teachings and violent, divisive ways, Atticus Finch's children, Jem and Scout, "found [their] father satisfactory: he played with [them], read to [them], and treated [them] with a courteous detachment" (Lee 5).

CONCLUSION

Through this comparative analysis, one can conclude that authors can use works of literature to make statements about religion, both overtly and implicitly. The analyzed works in this thesis provide extreme examples of a novel that can be identified as a statement on the dangers of religious fanaticism, as is the case with *The Violent Bear It Away* by Flannery O'Connor, and *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, which is recognized as an American classic, but is little recognized for its religious implications on the importance of demonstrating the ideals of Christianity. Readers can view the respective protagonists, Mason Tarwater and Atticus Finch, as religious allegorical types. Mason Tarwater is a paradoxical portrayal of the prophet Elijah from the Old Testament, and Atticus Finch is a straightforward parallel of the Good Samaritan in the New Testament. It is apparent that both characters want to impact their family members and society based on their beliefs.

While there is not extensive research comparing Mason Tarwater and Atticus Finch as promoters of Christianity, this study has taken measures to tie these two novels together as examples of the ways in which authors embed messages about religion in their writing. Scholars discuss O'Connor's work as being distinctly Christian, and while scholars do discuss the moral characteristics of Atticus Finch, few scholars claim that *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a novel that explicitly promotes Christian ideals. Using two seemingly unrelated novels, this thesis sought to illustrate the relationship between *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee and *The Violent Bear It Away* by Flannery O'Connor. Lee allegorically endorses Christian values of nonviolence, good Samaritanism, and inclusion through the character of Atticus Finch, and O'Connor overtly depicts a religious zealot whose tactics repel others from his intended message, rather than winning souls to Christ through her character, Mason Tarwater. Though Lee uses a more subtle

approach to convey messages about Christian virtue by creating a male protagonist that readers can champion and look to for inspiration, readers can analyze both novels for their teachings on Christian values. Neither text is explicit in its teachings, and readers may miss their intended messages at first glance. Once noted, however, one can draw profound conclusions from both of these literary works.

Interestingly, these works are also a commentary on the time period. In a quite unintended way, these two authors speak to the effectiveness, or lack thereof, of tactics used during that time period to affect change. One novel portrays the use of division and isolation, while the other offers an example of inclusion and forthrightness in representing one's beliefs. O'Connor displays a violent Protestant Christian fundamentalist, whose fanatical, sometimes even maniacal, approach to recruiting prophets for God tends to push followers away rather than winning them to Christ. Lee, on the other hand, presents a nonviolent protagonist, who quietly exemplifies Christian virtues in non confrontational ways. Though he is unsuccessful in securing his client's acquittal, Atticus Finch is most certainly effective in demonstrating how to deal with adversity and how to be true to the Christian beliefs to which he subscribes. Clearly, the tactics of O'Connor's protagonist, Mason Tarwater, are less effective in imparting his teachings and creating the next generation of prophets than those of Lee's protagonist, Atticus Finch, who more effectively imparts Christian values to others through his example of benevolence and sacrifice. As such, an analysis of the two literary works in this paper can lead one to conclude that nonviolence is a more effective measure of enacting change.

Through this comparison, readers can see that beliefs influence everyday actions. They can understand that their actions can greatly impact others. Readers can look to an overtly Christian text, such as *The Violent Bear It Away,* to find a message about Christianity, but they

can also learn not to discredit works of literature that are marked as secular pieces as is the case

with *To Kill a Mockingbird*, in which the covert Christian character more accurately represents

the ideals of the faith and impacts readers in unforgettable ways.

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