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There are many symbols in Harper Lee's book *To Kill a Mockingbird*. A symbol is something that represents something else. Symbols are often objects representing an abstraction. This analysis speaks of 3 major symbols in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. One example of a symbol is the mad dog. Another is the gun. A third example is the treehouse. All of these examples symbolize things. The first example is explained below.

The first symbol in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the mad dog, symbolizes society that has gone mad. Society, in the time period set in the book, had many racial prejudices. People did everything they could, even forming mobs, to get rid of other races. As Jem states in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, "Let anything get in front of them and he'll come straight at it" (95). In this quote, Jem spoke of the dog, but the symbol can be used to represent society. Society will come straight at whoever or whatever seems to be opposing them and will try to eliminate them. Atticus, one of the few members of society who try to do the right thing no matter what, got rid of this dog through a weapon he was reluctant to use: a gun.

The second symbol in *To Kill a Mockingbird* is the gun. The gun can be seen as an abuse or misuse of power and authority. Scout and Jem's dad, Atticus, used the gun to shoot and kill the mad dog. A judge and jury can abuse their power, as they did in the Tom Robinson case. They voted against Tom, even though their job was to apply justice and to be fair to both sides. Atticus was reluctant and did not want to take or use the gun. On page 96 of *To Kill a*

*Mockingbird* he exclaims, “I haven’t shot a gun in thirty years...”. He does not like to use guns, even for the good of the community.

The third and final symbol in *To Kill a Mockingbird* is the treehouse. Jem and Scout use the treehouse as a retreat from the world’s chaos and disorder. The treehouse symbolizes innocence, security, and fun. As Scout explains in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, “Routine contentment was: improving our treehouse that rested between giant chinaberry trees in the back yard...” (8). Dill also enjoys the treehouse. It is a shelter away from mobs and discrimination, and it takes their minds off Atticus’ unfortunate Tom Robinson case. All three of the above mentioned three symbols are important.

The treehouse and the other symbols are representative of real-life situations and problems. The mad dog represents a society gone mad. The gun represents an abuse of power. Finally, the treehouse represents innocence, security, and fun. These symbols and many others can all be found in Harper Lee’s book *To Kill a Mockingbird*.