

The Significance of Learning Empathy for Democratic Education in Carson McCullers's *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* and Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*

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I . Introduction

Carson McCullers's *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* and Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* include the theme of education as a cultural construction in conflict with human creativity and individual identity. These novels use the term "education" to explore the issue of schooling in the social and political context of them, as well as cultural education occurring within the South of the 1930s and 1940s. These works show how education is closely related in the development of the heroines Mick Kelly and Scout Finch. The education within institutions and culture works in tutelage to prepare individuals, such as these girls, for the hierarchy of the work place. It also relates with the system of commerce, the nuclear family, and other

fixtures relative to the larger American culture.

While *McCullers* explores indoctrinating institutions and cultural education through the life of Mick and four other individuals in a small working class town, Lee offers means through which emancipation education may be possible even within a community full of racism, classism, and sexism. In both novels institutional and cultural education contribute to the construction of self-identity and the identity projected by other individuals in the community. These constructs foster social, economic, and ideological boundaries through which Mick and Scout negotiate and interpret their experiences. *McCullers* depicts how class restraints interfere with the transcendence of these boundaries. The characters experience extreme alienation and *McCullers* presents us with the conditions that produce this experience. Lee suggests that transcendence of the social and educational stratification can be possible by teaching children how to question and recognizing difference called as 'empathy.' Empathy is the capacity to recognize and, to some extent, share feelings that are being experienced by the other or the oppressed. Someone may need to have a certain amount of empathy before they are able to feel compassion. Through their works, gesture of empathy is an act of faith and the imagination that can be a tool for justice and change.

As Henry Giroux argues, the two writers emphasize through their works that learning empathy is "to empower students to intervene in their own self-formation and to transform the oppressive features of the wider society that make such an intervention necessary" (xi).

Through comparison of two novels, this study explores correspondent historical contexts, similarities in structure and themes, and, most importantly, a dialogic relationship between the two novels. As Collin Nicholson mentioned, this dialogic relationship centers on learning and unlearning ideological "lessons" concerning class, race, and gender, particular to the Southern culture of the era.¹⁾

As a reply to the conflict between cultural expectation and the expressive learning process of the imagination that McCullers depicts, Lee offers alternate paradigms, such as "learning" empathy as a tool for positive social and moral agency. Often learned through the arts, through mentorship, through having personal space for processing and autonomy, and through encouragement fostering the imagination, expressive communication emerges as the key to learning and knowing toward emancipation. For Mick expressive communication which Paulo Freire defines as "true dialogue" in the same context manifests through the deeply sensory experience of making and hearing music. For Scout play-acting, reading, and earnest questioning stimulate her imagination toward more complex human understanding.

In this vein, this study will deeply address the contents that *To Kill a Mockingbird*²⁾ responds to the questions of education and identity raised in *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter*³⁾.

II. Learning Empathy for Democratic Education

Beverly Tatum argues that "stereotypes, omission, and distortions all contribute to the development of prejudice" (79). Prejudice is a preconceived judgment or opinion. It is complicated when society is burdened with national economic depression and racial segregation,

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- 1) Nicholson focuses on the central theme of racial hostility towards blacks by Southern whites. In these two novels, he points out "repeated image-patterns and themes which provide a context and a sense of depth for this central concern of racial prejudice" (65).
 - 2) Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird* (New York: Time Warner, 1960). The citation from the same book thereafter will be marked as *KM*.
 - 3) Carson McCullers, *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* (New York: Bantam, 1940). The citation from the same book thereafter will be marked as *LH*.

breeding cynicism and fear. In this climate formal education does not serve as a forum for exploring questions of identity, self, and others, but perpetuates class stratification through generic curriculums. As James Beane and Michael Apple mention, the result in *LH* and many characters in *KM* show that economic status determines the options available to individuals in regards to schooling, as well as experience and opportunity outside of institutional walls.⁴⁾ Since racial segregation and hostility is so pervasive, it creates increased class tiers and cultural 'othering.' Many scenes in *LH* and *KM* show that Mick, Scout, and their brothers, Bubber and Jem, turn inwards in confused and angry contemplation.

As a result, the communities experience an education of separatism and distrust reinforced in schools and political/societal establishments. In the two novels prison and the law have particularly complicity in perpetuating a cultural education of racism and hate. Willie's torture in *LH* and the murder of Tom Robinson in *KM* are the direct result of a power/hate ideology manifesting in practice behind prison walls and fences. Citizens in the communities also keep a racist belief system by cultivating an education of sorting and naming. In *LH* the dialog between key characters in Mick's community emphasizes a discourse of 'othering' and earmarking. Persons are labeled "Jew," "nigger," "Communist," "girl," "Irish," and "mute." Similarly, when Atticus Finch becomes the lawyer for Tom Robinson. Scout is called "nigger-lover" by her cousin and classmates at school" (*KM* 83). The Finch's perverse elderly neighbor, Mrs. Dubose, complains about Jem when he passes: "Your father's no better than the niggers and trash that he works for!" (*KM* 102). Therefore, considering its constant reinforcement in the community, "learning" racism and experiencing isolation from difference seems almost inevitable.

4) Beane and Apple argue that democracy is no exception. Irrespective of economic status, it is "the basis for how we govern ourselves, the concept by which we measure the wisdom and worth of social policies and shifts"(5).

Historical perceptions of gender, specifically the role of young women in the South, result in additional identity conflict for Mick and Scout. Although the place of women in the larger economy of the United States was beginning to shift during the war, due to a want of labor to meet the perceived need of increased defense, the ideal of the 'Southern belle' – submissive, conventionally 'beautiful' and 'feminine' – was still coveted by many in the South. It is a social ideal that is projected onto the girls not only by Southern culture but by Mick's sisters and Scout's Aunt Alexandra. Mick and Scout are criticized for dressing like boys and engaging in physical activities, such as sport and playing outdoors, activities associated with the male gender. They interpret this with discomfort and confusion.

They are labeled as 'tomboys,' a name often attached to girls who are outwardly individualistic, and curious. Resistance to expectations associated with gender is not mere rebellion for Mick and Scout. The nucleus of their resistance is a sense of self and a sense of the world being more meaningful than cultural boundaries delineate. It is worth noting that McCullers' and Lee choose non-gendered nicknames for their heroines and resistance to confining gender roles.

Framed by these historical designs, ideology and difference play out in Maycomb County, Alabama and the nameless Georgia town that McCullers's characters inhabit. That McCullers and Lee frame the educational experiences and influences of Mick and Scout within a web of characters from their larger communities emphasizes the powerful influence of social/communal relations and expectations that daily confront the girls. The relationship between the individual and community is complex and plays out through attempts at personal connections. In *LH*, McCullers illustrates how community and culture are internalized and how Mick and the other protagonists attempt to express themselves in their environment, one that often leads to isolation. In *KM*, Lee makes an even more intimate portrait. We become familiar with relatives, neighbors, town

gossips, persons in institutional power, farmers, extended families, and groups of all creeds within the community: the hierarchies, the friendships, and the boundaries within and between these. The depiction of complex webs of characters highlights the influence of the culture, and the ways individuals operate within it, forming their ways of 'knowing.'

Given these conditions, Mick and Scout seek agency, attempting to negotiate individual voice within community parameters. The negotiation of agency is a dangerous journey given the many boundaries in the worlds of the novels. As Pritchly Smith writes, American at that time was "a compassionless society in which only the elite have power and privilege and in which we judge people not by the content of their character, but by their race, their culture, their exceptionality, or their sexual orientation" (151).

In communities so marked by boundaries, Mick and Scout seek to see through the "ideological fog" that makes it so difficult to see what is "real" or "constructed." They seek to separate "imaginary" cultural assumptions regarding gender, race and class with their real conditions of existence. They seek means for expression, means for emancipation from the confines of the dominant ideology through which they are taught. As social critique, *LH* suggests that the fruition of Mick's creativity is defeated, despite her exceptional talent and openness to formal education. In contrast, Scout finds her formal schooling to be ineffective, yet she still manages to achieve a larger education of emancipation. Scout embraces an ability to take action in the world, reaching outward. She has conquered superstitious fears and has learned that racism is akin to these; she has even taken the feared Boo Radley's hand, and stood in, as Atticus would say, "his shoes." Mick, however, becomes insular, as doors of possibility are shut. Her everyday reality will likely never co-exist with the depth of her creativity, her potential of begetting beauty and connecting unabashed with others in this world.

As Carole Edelsky (2006) points out, formal education in these novels serve to indoctrinate persons into the hierarchical system, securing a position of power for some by limiting possibilities for others, like many of the working class people depicted.⁵⁾ Even if the intention of individuals working within a framework of class-sorting through schools is unconscious, educators not resisting their potential role in social indoctrination participate in a colonization of the mind. The formal educations represented in *LH* and *KM* perpetuate a linear system of learning that serves the class hierarchy better than it does the processes of individual human beings. The methods, curriculum, and objectives of the schools are ultimately remote from the natural learning processes of Mick and Scout.

Mick Kelly is hungry for life; hungry to learn and experience. In her young mind she perceives no limits, for it is through her creativity that she can find the meaning she finds absent in the larger community, where she spends much time alone, restlessly wandering in her neighborhood at night. She is planning and envisioning a future where she can cross gender and educational boundaries, where she can become an inventor: "She would invent little tiny radios the size of a pea that people could carry around and stick in their ears. Also flying machines that people could fasten on their backs like knapsacks and go zipping all over the world" (*LH* 29).

While McCullers represents Mick as having a range of intellectual curiosities, her natural mode of experiencing emotions and learning is expressed through music. Music is an organic way of feeling and interpreting experience; it is one of the most ancient and essential. In contrast, words alone are less fluid and limit the intonations of expressive understanding. Mick's gift is innate, and she may be a genius for "no

5) Edelsky points out "the policies to benefit the elite few while starving programs to benefit the many" (4). He argues that education must play a role in the larger political economy.

matter what she was doing — there was music... There were all kinds of music in her thoughts. Some she heard over radios, and some was in her mind already without her ever having heard it anywhere" (*LH* 83). Some of Mick's response to music is emotive, but without any training she is able to teach herself, to take it apart and see it whole:

Music boiled inside her. Which? To hang on to certain wonderful parts and think them over so that later she would not forget — or would she let go and listen to each part that came without thinking or trying to remember? Golly! The whole world was this music and she could not listen hard enough. Then at the last opening music came again, with all the different instruments bunched together for each note like a hard, tight fist that socked her heart. (*LH* 100)

Because of her natural gift, she expects and hopes that society is open for her, that it will be receptive and recognize her talents. Mick is able to dream of accomplishing the art and skill she can perceive. Mick is excited to study at the Vocational School, even though it is preparing her for a low income trade, not music. Self-determined, Mick successfully breaks the gender barrier as the only girl who studies mechanics because she "wouldn't have liked it so well if she had had to take a stenographic course" like her sisters. At the same time she is startled by her intelligent English teacher who expects the students to memorize lines of literature; she thinks "Shop and Algebra and Spanish" are "grand" (*LH* 88). Although they do not replace the expressive province of music, putting things together, working with her hands, and using her analytical mind are stimulating for Mick. However, there is no place to teach Mick music, to foster her individual gift, her deepest means of learning and expressing. Yet Mick does not recoil because of this lack of opportunity; instead she

locates the piano in the gym. Remaining at school an extra hour each day, Mick practices. Even under these conditions Mick learns quickly, emphasizing her drive and her potential to succeed in a vocation related to music.

She would arrange bunches of notes together until the sound came that she wanted. It was easier than she thought. After the first two or three hours she figured out some sets of chords in the bass that would fit in with the main tune her right hand was playing. She could pick out almost any piece now. And she made up new music too. That was better than just copying tunes. (*LH* 136)

Since the vocational school does not offer music courses, the implication is that music is superfluous, or a hobby for the privileged – an extra, a perk, but not a necessary way of knowing. In an effort to learn to read music, Mick pays a classmate who has taken private lessons her lunch money. The girl tutors Mick. However, Mick quickly surpasses her young teacher who "only taught her about the different scales, the major and minor chords, the values of the notes, and such beginning rules as these" (*LH* 137). The economic conditions of Mick's family make it impossible for her to take private lessons or buy a piano. Within a public vocational school in a working class town, there are no ready means for Mick's aspirations. The system keeps Mick within the working class, within the boundaries formed by the capitalist system. For a time Mick believes that there is a degree of mobility that can be achieved through school. Even if classes such as English are taught through rote memorization, as opposed to process, and the curriculum is largely skill-based, she believes that school provides a context for information to stimulate Mick's fervent mind. She knows it may be a ticket to college and future study of music.

In contrast, Scout Finch's experience in school is not stimulating, but frustrating and baffling. She discovers during her first day that the methods and content do not apply to either her or her classmates' individual learning processes. Scout is informed by Miss Caroline to tell her father Atticus not to teach her reading and writing anymore since it will interfere with the methodical approach of the Dewey Decimal System, which she is introducing to the Maycomb school. Miss Caroline is a new teacher and has been indoctrinated into inflexible interpretations of teaching methods, usurping their relevancy for students in the name of the methods themselves. Miss Caroline informs Scout of the absolutism of the methodology she "learned" while studying teaching: "We don't write in first grade, we print. You won't learn to write until the third grade" (*KM* 18).

Rigid and generic standards are imposed by school boards and perpetuated by institutions of higher learning outside the community. The resulting standards leave little room for the expression of difference or individual learning processes. Scout observes that Miss Caroline "seemed completely unaware that the ragged denim-shirted and flour-skirted first grade, most of whom chopped cotton and fed hogs from the time they were able to walk, were immune to imaginative literature" — a generic brand of which Miss Caroline reads to the class at considerable length (*KM* 29). Miss Caroline does not engage participation, solicit questions, responses or ideas. She does not make connections with the life experiences of the students. The recitation of bland children stories about housecats offers no more sensory and imaginative substance than Mick's vocational school. Just like at Vocational, the Maycomb public school leaves no room for personal stories or for making organic relevant connections. Recitation is merely a passive act for the students of Maycomb. The potential of their minds are colonized by the teacher-based structure.

In Mick's school, the focus is to prepare students for working class jobs,

as opposed to fostering their individual gifts that would make them the most fulfilled and most valuable to society. The curriculum of the Maycomb school is clearly structured for students of a social-economic class. It emphasizes values that are remote and irrelevant to the children in Scout's community; there are no attempts to make "real world" connections. Dean Shackelford points out that Scout, who has the ability for active involvement already nurtured within her by her father Atticus, finds the passive reception of instruction an empty task.⁶⁾

The remainder of my schooldays were no auspicious than my first. Indeed, they were an endless Project that slowly turned to a Unit, in which miles of construction paper and crayon were expended by the State of Alabama in its well-meaning effort to teach me Group Dynamics. What Jem called the Dewy Decimal System was school-wide the end of my first year, so I had no chance to compare it with other teaching techniques, I could only look around me: Atticus and my uncle, who went to school at home, knew everything – at least what one didn't know the other did... Jem, educated on a half-Decimal half-Duncecap basis, seemed to function effectively alone or in a group... as I inched sluggishly along the treadmill of the Maycomb County school system, I could not help receive the impression that I was being cheated out something. Out of what I knew not, yet I did not believe that twelve years of unrelieved boredom was exactly what the State had in mind for me. (*KM* 32–33)

6) Shackelford argues that "to Scout, Atticus and his world represent freedom and power. Atticus is the key representative of the male power which Scout wishes to obtain even though she is growing up as a Southern female. More important, Lee demonstrates that Scout is gradually becoming a feminist in the South"(113).

Scout expresses how students are taught "down to," how few "real-world" connections are made, and how their abilities and aspirations are limited by the institutional structure. Therefore, the students' personal ways of knowing and questioning are denied in their classrooms. The way of knowing to focus on critical thinking poses a threat to the constructed belief and behavior system that maintains the pecking-order of this "democracy." Utilizing one singular teaching methodology (in Scout's case the "Dewey Decimal System") can effectively close the mind, engendering the belief that there is a "right" and "wrong" way to learn, as opposed to multiple meanings and alternate routes of questioning. As Stephen Gould points out, education for real democracy needs learning about "diversity in order to understand, not simply to accept" (424).

Ultimately, Mick's desire to make music and Scout's accelerated reading and critical thinking skills are interpreted as "bad" since they distract from the already determined lesson plan. Mick and Scout, as most persons, do not fit comfortably into a slot pre-determined by assumptions about gender, genetics, or class.

Mick looks for a reflection of her passions in the face of the deaf mute boarder in her parent's house. What could be interpreted as a crush on the boarder is an attempt at human connection. Singer is the figure in the novel that all of the main characters project themselves onto, as if he is a mirror or prophet, as if he alone can understand them. Perhaps it is his silence that enables Mick and the other characters to create their own "Singer," who they believe can "translate" them. If Mick consciously understood empathy, standing in another's shoes, perhaps this idolization/projection would not occur. However, the lesson of empathy is "free" in the sense that mutual understanding is not at the root of empathy – empathy is its own virtue.⁷⁾ What Mick wants are reciprocity,

7) Jennifer Murray argues that "this novel's force is in the overall movement of empathy with suffering, hardship, and failure, but also with love, companionship,

recognition, and affinity. She believes she has an unspoken connection with Singer, and believes she sees her own feelings in his reflection. Without the ability to "stand in his shoes" – the lesson of empathy – she can not tell the difference between projection and connection:

She sat leaning forward in her chair with her hands on her knees, her mouth open and a pulse beating very fast on her temple. She seemed to listen all over to whatever it was she heard. She sat there the whole afternoon, and when she grinned at him once her eyes were wet and she rubbed them with her fists. (178)

Singer moves her, but it is because she believes that in his silence he understands her, perceiving a kindred soul in her. She has created a "Singer" in her own reflection as a means of affirming that substantial or subliminal human connection exists. Yet without learning empathy Mick can not hear Singer's "song."

For Mick the need for expressive communication heightens as she tries to understand her own identity and the identities of others. However, in *LH* attempts at expressive communication are continually met with silence, for the recipients are themselves isolated and self-conscious, longing for the comfort of their own reflection, proof that they are present here. Continually, characters try to make contact with others, but the same mistake is habitually made. Instead of appreciating and seeking empathy, Mick and the characters in *LH* aim to be understood themselves. As this self-articulation fails to relieve their alienation, they withdraw.

Lee offers an answer to the existential dilemma depicted by Mick's

and desire that it provokes in the reader. We identify with them not because of their age, sex, color, or politics, but because, together, they create the overall impression of a community of rich, complex creatures" (124).

pained expressive repression in *LH*. Lee holds that empathy is an aspect of the imagination. It is a tool to find meaning. It is not a tool particular to the culture of a given class and gender, but it is a tool that is "taught," just as racist and sexist discourse is "taught." Although this is never explicitly stated in *KM*, empathy can be learned in school – through genuine faith in its own power – just as it is continually modeled by parent-as-teacher, Atticus. However, the depletion of Miss Caroline's failure in the classroom is that she was instructed in generic methods, not the empathetic and freeing "method" of difference, not imagining what it is to stand in those other's shoes, and not embracing that there are actually multiple meanings, not one objective truth.

In *LH*, Mick senses that she is bereft of something, but alone cannot articulate or understand. As her dreams seem increasingly distant she feels "cheated," and does not have the tool of empathy to imagine the connections between her conditions and the conditions of others. For someone like Mick, empathy could have been liberating, leading to self-awareness. She could have come to understand her situation, that of Singer, the deaf-mute, and the conditions of her family. By understanding the positioning of others she could measure, resist, reach out in new ways, create, and take action. In this vein, an education of 'empathy' may be the just and logical education of a democracy.

KM is structured to depict the lesson of empathy, in varied contexts, with increasingly complex and higher stakes. Through these lessons the readers behold how a "bully" and a "tom-boy" who hears and wonders about the term "nigger-lover" transcends the boundaries of prejudice and hate, ultimately sitting without prejudice or fear on the other side of a segregated courtroom. Scout witnesses injustice and hears words of hate, but through conversations with Atticus, she and Jem are continually asked to imagine terms of existence different than their own. The term "empathy" is never literally used. Instead Atticus continually urges the

children to "stand in the shoes" of those they do not understand. This is connected to the mockingbird motif: "it is a sin to kill a mockingbird" because "they don't do one thing to make music for us to enjoy" (*KM* 90). Atticus' demonstration of what courage is asks the children to move out of the mode of conventional thought and consider difference as a strength. The themes of difference and of the mockingbird apply to many of the characters who are disparaged in the novel, such as Boo Radley, or Tom Robinson, who is killed while escaping prison for a crime he did not commit. Robinson's cultural sin was to be polite to a white woman, cutting wood for her at her request. As revealed in the trial, Robinson's kindness, his figurative "singing," becomes his doom in a racist society.

Re-evaluating the meaning of courage is also emancipatory in the education for empathy received by Scout and Jem. After the children learn of their father's youthful reputation as "One Shot Finch," they are impressed by their stoic middle-aged father's skill, aligning him with conventional notions of bravery. Miss Maudie explains why Atticus has concealed this gift before the appearance of the rabid dog: "I think maybe he put his gun down when he realized that God had given him an unfair advantage over most living things" (*KM* 98). That physical power is not courage is reinforced when Atticus explains to Jem why the cantankerous Mrs. Dubose was, despite her ravings, a "great lady" by overcoming an addiction to morphine by sheer will before she died (*KM* 112)

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, Mrs. Dubose won, all ninety-eight pounds of her. According to her views, she died beholden to nothing or nobody. She was the bravest person I ever knew.

(KM 112)

As Atticus quietly models respect for difference and all living things, the children look increasingly outward. Empathy becomes a way of interpretation and expression. This does not free Scout from experiencing injustice and pain, but infuses her world view with critical and humane thinking skills. Throughout the cycle of lessons of empathy in *KM*, Scout's judgment repeatedly turns into compassion, respect, and a broader world view. When Scout attends church with Calpurnia, the "maid" who has helped raise her, she meets Cal's family and is surprised to learn Cal "led a modest double life... The idea that she had a separate existence outside our household was a novel one..." (*KM* 125). Therefore, the education of empathy is applied to Scout's life experience, allowing her to reanalyze her beliefs and repudiate her prejudices.

Mick, in contrast, does not have the modeling and support that Scout does. Her family contends with considerable financial struggles, which are increased after Bubber accidentally shoots a neighborhood child named Baby with his b-b gun and the Mick's family must pay the hospital bill. As the family's economic struggles become more extreme, Mick must leave school altogether, abandoning even shop and English and Spanish so as to work in Woolworth's. Playing the piano in the gym and absorbing the mysterious music of the world is replaced by weariness.

To lionize Atticus and criticize the Mick's family would be to miss the message of both novels. The Mick's family could not enjoy the privileges Scout had as a child, who was home-schooled and had the luxury of empathy being modeled for her father. Although the Scout's family are not wealthy, they do not suffer the economic troubles of the Mick's family. That the Mick's family are pained by Mick having to work is obvious: "Even if we have to give up the house and move down in mill town,' their Mama said, 'I'd rather keep Mick at home for awhile'" (*LH* 241). Mick,

appreciating the desperation of her family's situation, became eventually a volunteer. Although her parents are hard working, they are in a cycle of financial strain and Mick must take the draining job. With no other outlet, and little free time, Mick abandons music. The implications are not to blame the family, but to consider the human values of the larger society that through its institutions allow economics and class hierarchies to control the destinies of individuals, even persons as enterprising and inspired as Mick.

Mick has been active in her attempts to find emancipation not only through music and the imagination, but through a projected connection to Singer, who ultimately kills himself. Mick knows she has been cheated, but she does not quite know who to blame. Although she feels angry, she demands courage and a positive attitude from herself. Yet the echo of her past longing reverberates in her defeat by the class system.

What good was it? That was the question she would like to know. What the hell good was it. All the plans she made, and the music. When all that came of it was this trap – the store, then home to sleep, and back at the store again. (*LH 299*)

The last time we see Mick is at the New York Cafe. She seems to be ventriliquizing the role identified with her sex and class. McCullers writes, "Mick turned sideways in the seat so that she could cross her legs. There was a run in her stocking. It had started while she was walking to work and she had to spit on it. Then later the run and gone farther..." (*LH 300*). The tragedy lies in that we have seen Mick riding a bike, her bare skin in shorts in the breeze. McCullers' existential ending reveals that gender, class, era and cultural /institutional education will suppress Mick the artist. As an adult she is trapped in systematic determinism. Mick as an adult may be tortured or embittered by the unfulfilled ecstasy of her art.

III. Conclusion

This study raises the question of why 'empathy' itself does not become an objective within institutions. Through two novels, we come to know that to develop the imagination and compassion is also to develop critical thinking skills, and this may lead to a more democratic education, an education of emancipation.

Modeled at home by Atticus, Calpurnia and Miss Maudie, Scout at the novel's end has transcended her former fears and superstitions. She is able to take the hand of the formerly feared Boo Radley who is the object of the children's gothic fear early in the novel. Now Scout leads him to his house.

This is empathy and expressive communication translated in the novel. Boo, who has quietly come to the children's rescue on many occasions, has saved Jem's life. Scout—as-narrator literally sees the world from Boo's perspective as she stands on his porch noting, "I have never seen the neighborhood from this angle" (*KM* 278). She recollects the passing of two years from Boo's perspective. Remembering the trial, the odd mysterious presents that appeared in a hollow of a tree near the Radley place, the fire at Miss Maudie's house, and all had occurred in the era that led to Jem getting "his arm badly broken at the elbow" (*KM* 3), Scout observes.

Fall, and his children trotted to and fro around the corner, the day's woes and triumphs on their faces. They stopped at an oak tree, delighted, puzzled, apprehensive. Winter, and his children shivered at the front gate, silhouetted against a blazing house. Winter and a man walked into the street, dropped his glasses, and shot a dog. Summer, and he watched his children's heart break. Autumn again, and Boo's children needed him.

Atticus was right. One time he said you never really know a man until you stand in his shoes and walk around in them. Just standing on the Radley porch was enough. (*KM* 279)

It is within this matrix of empathy and voice that Lee responds to McCullers. Lee depicts a conscious education of empathy and shows how a critical/imaginative look at experience can lead to compassion and critical thought. Although an education of empathy is a luxury in that basic survival needs must be met first, it does not require technology or financial resources, but instead a fostering of faith in the potentiality and uniqueness of others, active questioning, and senses attuned to the world outside the self. With such an 'education,' Lee suggests that some of the loneliness experienced by the characters in *LH* can be annihilated through expressive communication turned into conscious action in the world.

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Abstract

The Significance of Learning Empathy for Democratic Education in Carson McCullers's *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* and Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*

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This study explores the ways that American institutional and cultural education has been depicted in the literature of the early twentieth century. It questions the degree to which education in the United States actually engenders the critical and creative thinking necessary for democratic citizenship and shared power. A true democratic education is an education of emancipation; however, the 'othering' of race, class, and gender often prevent emancipatory education from occurring. The prominence of the issues of emancipation and indoctrination in twentieth century novels suggests that the same paradoxes about education and democracy exist. This study traces the tensions of emancipation and indoctrination from both institutions and culture in Carson McCullers's *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* and Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. It concludes that the protagonists in these novels, much like most people encountered in our schools and streets, have the ability to emancipate themselves from the 'othering' and ideologies in our culture. However, many of our institutions and societal assumptions continue to indoctrinate persons into the hierarchical system. Through these two novels, Lee and McCullers strongly suggest that learning empathy should be the only way to transcend the boundaries of prejudice and hate which our society and

culture make.

Key words: emancipation, empathy, indoctrination, construction, expressive communication

해방, 공감, 교화, 구조, 소통

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