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Justice and Fortitude in Harper Lee’s*To Kill a Mockingbird*

February is Black History Month in the United States. The history of the African Americans in the United States is a history of centuries of injustices committed from the beginning of the history of the United States. African Americans were not even considered human beings in the times of slavery, so every kind of injustice was perpetrated on them. Mattison, in Chapter 7 of our textbook, *Introducing Moral Theology: True Happiness and the Virtues* explains the relationship of justice and fortitude. One of the most important books in U.S. American literature is *To Kill a Mockingbird*, by Harper Lee. The very famous and popular book was published in 1960 at a time when many people were fighting for civil rights. In Chapter 7, Mattison’s explanations about fortitude can be applied to the work of this white author who risked her own wellbeing to write a very personal story about the injustice of false accusations made against a young black man who was accused of raping a white woman. The hero of the book was the white attorney, Atticus Finch, who decided to take the risk of defending the unjustly accused young black man, Tom Robinson.His work in defending also showed fortitude under great risk and pressure from the community in the racist community of Maycomb, Alabama, during the Great Depression (1930s). South to work towards justice.

In the course of the trial, Atticus proves that Tom couldn’t have injured the white woman, Mayella, because his one arm was smashed in an accident leaving him permanently disabled. Atticus proves that her own father abused her. During the trial, Atticus argues that Mayella's injuries could not have been caused by Tom, whose left arm was crushed in accident years before. In spite of Atticus Finch’s excellent defense, the all-white jury finds him guilty and he is later killed in the prison.

The storyis very sad and shows that even when people fight for justice and show great fortitude33many terrible things happen to innocent people. The fights for civil rights in the United States are filled with terrible sacrifices and violent suffering, but there are also stories of great fortitude and bravery. We recently celebrated the birth of Reverend Martin Luther King, a Christian minister who gave his life for the justice of civil rights in America.

The timeline of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States which began in the 1940s is filled with stories of fortitude and bravery shown by Americans who fought to end racial discrimination and establish equal rights and protection for African Americans and other oppressed groups according to the laws of the country.

Some important events of the Civil Rights Movement that showed justice and fortitude were the legal ending of racial segregation in public schools (1954) though, this problem is not totally solved and many schools are still segregated according to location. In 1955, Rosa Parks chose to remain seated on an Alabama bus, and not give her seat to a white passenger. This act of fortitude started a long bus boycott. In**1957**the Civil Rights Act of 1957 became law to protect voter rights. In Greensboro, North Carolina, four college students sat down in a restaurant at a “whites only” lunch counter. This nonviolent action showed great fortitude and helped the Civil Rights movement. In 1963, 250,000 people participated in a march in Washington led by Reverend Martin Luther King. They were marching for civil rights.

One of the great tragedies of the movement was when 4 young black girls were killed mand many more injured while they were in their church in Alabama on September 15, 1963. On July 2, 1964, *The Civil Rights Act of 1964* became law. It now was against the law to discriminate according to race, color, sex, religion or national origin.

In March of 1965 more than 600 people marched from [Selma to Montgomery, Alabama protesting for the rights of black voters. They were violently attacked by local police.](http://www.history.com/topics/black-history/selma-montgomery-march) After successfully fighting in court for their right to march, Martin Luther King and other civil rights leaders lead two more marches and finally reach Montgomery on March 25.

Violence against the African American leaders and the white leaders who fought for civil rights continued. This leaders, black and white, showed great fortitude in the face of terrible injustice. Malcolm X, Reverend Martin Luther King, President John F. Kennedy and his brother Robert Kennedy were all assassinated because they fought for justice.

**Reference**

**Civil Rights Movement**