Chapter 1: Background on Harper Lee

1 The Life of Harper Lee
   *Dorothy Jewell Altman*
   Although she published only one novel, Harper Lee has made both a literary and a social impact. *To Kill a Mockingbird* was selected by the Literary Guild, was made into an Academy Award–winning film, and helped bring to light serious social injustices.

2 *To Kill a Mockingbird*’s Racism Stems from History
   *Charles Shields*
   Occurrences of racism during Harper Lee’s childhood, and in particular, her father’s advocacy for minority rights, shaped *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Chapter 2: *To Kill a Mockingbird* and Racism

1. Southern Values, Old and New
   *Fred Erisman*
   Old South values preserve class distinctions, a caste system, and sexual taboos. In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Harper Lee inspires hope for a New South, one centered on a tolerant skepticism involving Emersonian ideals.

2 The Case Against *To Kill a Mockingbird*
   *Isaac Saney*
   While it remains one of the most celebrated books in American literature, members of the Black Educators’ Association hope to ban the use of *To Kill a Mockingbird* in schools. Their reason is they believe the book buys into and spreads racist stereotypes.
3 In Defense of *To Kill a Mockingbird*

**Jill May**

There have been numerous censorship attempts on *To Kill a Mockingbird*, by both conservatives and liberals. This desire to ban the book may stem from the desire to avoid facing America’s grim past.

4. Atticus Finch—Right and Wrong

**Monroe H. Freedman**

Atticus Finch's human qualities, including patience and respect for others, are commendable. But his complacency regarding the racism around him disqualifies him as a hero of social justice.

5. Representation of Race and Justice in *To Kill a Mockingbird*

**Joseph Crespino**

Twentieth-century America was draped in racial injustice that included Jim Crow laws, lynching, and ignorance. But beneath the blanket of cruelty and hatred was a quest for justice.

6. Racism and Other Injustice in Harper Lee’s Writing

**Laurie Champion**

*To Kill a Mockingbird* arrives at its climactic moment during the trial scene. Here, references to “right” and “left” serve as symbolism for “good” and “bad,” “just” or “unjust,” or “tolerant” and “racist.”

7. The False Accusation of Tom Robinson

**Lisa Lindquist Dorr**

Tom Robinson's death became inevitable once he became accused by a white woman of a sexual advance. This does not necessarily reflect the real-life experiences of many black men in the twentieth-century South.

8. The Africanist Presence in *To Kill a Mockingbird*

**Diann L. Baecker**

In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the black voice is muted, as, until recently, American literature was written for a white male audience. Still, the Africanist presence has long been integrated into American culture, laid beneath the surface of its literature.
9. Contending Voices in *To Kill a Mockingbird*

*Theodore R Hovet and Grace-Anne Hovet*

Racial prejudice is displayed by people across the classes; it is not only poor whites who have displayed this prejudice. Further, class and gender have intensified racial prejudice.

10. *To Kill a Mockingbird* A Paradox

*Eric J Sundquist*

The Jim Crow South used white womanhood as an excuse for segregation. Through this argument for white female "purity," blacks and women were kept in their subordinate places.

11. Learning Good Judgment in the Segregated South

*Thomas L Shaffer*

Southern white womanhood's rigid system once dictated society's right and wrong, but it is outside this box that right and wrong can be discovered.

12. Listening to the Mockingbird

*Calvin Woodard*

*To Kill a Mockingbird* is a truly southern novel, but one whose southern writer attempts to improve the regional problem of racism. Harper Lee uses a literary approach to accomplish her purpose. Improving racism by altering white values.

Chapter 3: Contemporary Perspectives on Racism

1 Educational Resources Still Limited for Minorities

*Neil Foley*

*To Kill a Mockingbird* was published in 1960, nearly ten years after *Brown v Board of Education*, which integrated public schools. But in 1960, unequal education between blacks and whites persisted, and some believe that blacks continue to have limited access to educational resources.
2. Breaking the Silence on Racism

Sherrilyn A. Ifill

The racism and violence shown toward Tom Robinson is representative of real-life historical events. To address and reconcile this past, the silence of racially violent acts must be broken.

3. School Integration Is Still a Hot Topic

Richard D. Kahlenberg

*To Kill a Mockingbird*, set twenty years before schools were integrated, depicts a world of separate education for blacks and whites. Today, more than fifty years after integration, some believe using race to determine school entry violates the Constitution.

4. Continued Racism Calls for New Movement

Herb Boyd

Because of continued racism and civil rights violations that African Americans face—as well as an AIDS epidemic and massive unemployment—members of the black community believe a new movement fighting these issues must begin.

For Further Discussion

For Further Reading

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