



To Kill a Mockingbird: Threatening Boundaries (Twayne's Masterwork Studies Series) (No 139)

Claudia Durst Johnson

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Tom Robinson, Mayella Ewell, Atticus and Scout Finch - these are the unforgettable characters that populate *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960), Harper Lee's haunting account of a mysterious recluse, a black man accused of raping a white woman, the courageous attorney who defends him, the attorney's son who is traumatized by the trial, and his six-year-old daughter, who narrates the story. An extraordinary indictment of racism in the American South during the 1930s, *To Kill a Mockingbird* has sold some 15 million copies, been translated into 10 languages, won a Pulitzer Prize in literature along with dozens of other honors, and been adapted into an Oscar-winning film and a timelessly popular stage play. And yet, for all the novel's distinctions - and, more important, relevance for contemporary readers - until now no book-length critical study has been devoted to it. Enter Claudia Durst Johnson's *To Kill a Mockingbird: Threatening Boundaries*, offering not only a corrective but a winningly lucid and enlightening analysis of this great American classic. Drawing on extensive research, Johnson furnishes readers with key insights into the novel's historical and biographical contexts, its place in American literature, and its critical reception. She then presents a five-part reading of *Mockingbird*, underscoring the novel's form and elucidating its pertinence for American society today. Special attention is paid to linking the novel's 1930s setting with the concomitant Scottsboro incident and connecting *Mockingbird*'s writing in the 1950s with the concurrent events of the civil rights movement. An in-depth examination that pays tribute as it informs, *To Kill a Mockingbird: Threatening Boundaries* holds strong appeal for students, scholars, and general readers. Included in the volume are a Chronology, Notes, Selected Bibliography, and Index.

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