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Salem Press Announces a New Addition to the Critical Insights Series: *Critical Insights: Rebellion*

Salem Press is proud to announce a new addition to the Critical Insights Series: *Critical Insights: Rebellion*. This volume explores the history, themes, styles, and forms of rebellion in literature. It will focus on defining works, especially from British and American writers such as Melville, Dickinson, Shelley, and Amis. Authors represented are diverse in gender and ethnicity as well as in their economic, spiritual, and political orientations.

Each essay is 2,500 to 5,000 words in length, and all essays conclude with a list of "Works Cited," along with endnotes. Finally, the volume's appendixes offer a section of useful reference resources:

- About This Volume
- Critical Context: Original Introductory Essays
- Critical Readings: Original In-Depth Essays
- Further Reading
- Detailed Bibliography
- Detailed Bio of the Editor
- General Subject Index

This book, which concerns the general topic of rebellion, is organized according to the same principles as other volumes in the Critical Insights series. It explores works in varied genres—novels, short fiction, poetry, drama, and films—from a broad range of different critical perspectives.

The volume opens with a flagship essay, "On Rebels and Rebellion in Literature," by Christopher Baker. Baker surveys numerous aspects of the topic and touches on many particular texts. He argues, for instance, that "rebel outsiders remind us that literary rebels of all kinds may be morally conflicted and not always sympathetic," but that "the most compelling of them take us into their struggles, sometimes against our will, in ways that linger in the memory." Literary rebels, Baker contends, "confront us with the problems we would prefer not to face or the lies we have become used to telling ourselves, calling upon us to reexamine comfortable assumptions or beliefs."

The Critical Contexts section of the book, like the volume as a whole, has been organized essentially in chronological order. Thus, **the first of the contextual essays**—by Robert C. Evans—compares and contrasts the male speakers who often appear as "Rebels in Renaissance Love Poetry." Covering works by a number of writers, Evans argues that the men who often pursue women in English erotic verse of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries frequently resemble latter-day stalkers.

Jonathan D. Wright, in the **second of the four contextual essays**, looks at Shakespeare's Falstaff using an historical approach. Wright observes that Falstaff is, in many ways, one of Shakespeare's most appealing rebels: he enjoys life, humor, food, friendship, and drinking. But his love of drinking helps to undo him, "partly because it leads to his eventual rejection by Prince Hal, the young heir apparent whom Falstaff loves."

A third contextual essay by Evans—"Rebellion in John Donne's 'The Perfume'"—presents a critical lens in which one work is read intensively from a particular point of view. In this witty, humorous lyric by Donne, a male lover recounts how he has convinced a young woman to engage in an illicit romantic relationship—a relationship her parents firmly oppose. Finally, in **the last of the contextual essays**—this one designed to sample the critical reception of rebellion as a topic in literary criticism—Evans examines the ways rebellion has been studied in recent editions of Herman Melville's novel *Billy Budd*. He notes that "practically every major character" in that book has been "considered a rebel by someone and in some sense."

The book's **Critical Readings section** has again been organized chronologically. Thus, Alexander L. Kaufman studies one of the most famous rebels of all time, and one of the earliest in English literature: Robin Hood. Kaufman contends, however, that the "Robin Hood of the later Middle Ages is one whose representations do not all conform to modern expectations of the celebrated outlaw."

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As all the essays in this volume suggest, rebellion is a topic of never-ending relevance, whether it concerns Robin Hood in the English Middle Ages, Satan before earthly time began, various kinds of rebellions conceived and depicted in literature from the sixteenth century to the twenty-first, or even rebellions set in imagined galaxies or futures far, far away from our present places, era, and existences.

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The Critical Insights series is an outstanding, in-depth scholarship by renowned literary critics; great starting point for students seeking an introduction to the theme and the critical discussions surrounding it.

Critical Insights: Rebellion

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