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Salem Press Announces the Newest Addition to the Award-Winning *Critical Insights* Series; *Critical Insights Film: Bonnie & Clyde*

Edited by Rebecca Martin, an Professor of English at Pace University in New York, *Critical Insights: Bonnie & Clyde* presents a collection of essays that will be of interest to a wide range of readers, both those who are familiar with Arthur Penn's controversial and influential film, *Bonnie & Clyde* (1967), and those who are not, but who want to explore a film that is emblematic of its violent and unsettled time. There are many ways into the subject and readers will find that this group of essays can facilitate any number of them. The coverage is both broad and deep and will provide a range of contemporary scholarly approaches to the subject, as well as essential background and context.

Context is crucial to understanding this film. Readers will come to understand that *Bonnie and Clyde* is both a product of its time and one whose roots and influences can be traced to earlier productions in the gangster film genre, but it is also touched by the complex American mode of expression that the French retroactively named film noir and by the practices of the small group of French directors of the 1950s and 1960s who were busy expressing a new attitude toward film itself and establishing new practices in filmmaking; this is the French New Wave of François Truffaut and Jean-Luc Godard, both of whom play roles, direct and indirect, in shaping the film that became *Bonnie and Clyde*. Readers will note, too, that *Bonnie and Clyde* is most identified as the film that incited and introduced the explosion of creativity called the New American Cinema, or the American New Wave.

Beginning with **The Movie & the Director**, Editor Rebecca Martin begins by providing an introduction to *Bonnie & Clyde* and follows with a biography on the director and his work. The book then shifts to a series of four **Critical Contexts**. For readers who may be less familiar with the prosperous but violent times of America in the 1960s, Bruce Campbell's chapter, "'Something's happening here': *Bonnie and Clyde* and the Sixties," helps fill in this historical context and provides a broad overview of the position of *Bonnie and Clyde* as a film that mirrored some of the countercultural values of the era, but went on to have its own profound influence on the period, especially as part of the ongoing conversation about social violence, its causes, and its means of expression. The chapter by Matthew Ducca and Rebecca Martin about the film's critical reception ("'As pointless as it is lacking in taste': The Reception and Re-Reception of *Bonnie and Clyde*"), a reception that first took form of rejection and then of celebration, explores the attitudes among film reviewers and critics, many of whom were forced by *Bonnie and Clyde* to re-examine their values and their assumptions about what films could and should express. Matthew Ducca's essay, "Outlaw Woman, Impotent Men: Gender Subversion in *Bonnie & Clyde*," explores the film's expression of gender. Lastly, Alexander Davis' chapter "You've heard the story of Jesse James': *Bonnie and Clyde*

and the Gangster Film” explore the film’s relationship to earlier genres and modes and the particular creative innovations that Penn employed to shape his film.

The next major section, **Critical Readings**, comprises of nine essays from a variety of different critics. Beginning with Richard L. Edwards chapter, “We rob banks’: Cinematic Thievery in Arthur Penn’s *Bonnie and Clyde*,” Edwards reveals another layer of meaning in the film and the way in which it participates in the cultural dialogue about the power of cinema to move and influence. The question mark in the title of Caroline Langhorst’s chapter, “Youth Gone Wild?: *Bonnie and Clyde* and the American (Counter) Culture of the Sixties,” indicates her more skeptical view of where the film is positioned on the spectrum of values with Counterculture on one end and Establishment on the other. “What Once Was or What May Never Have Been: En/De/Re Coding (Outlaw) Masculinity” by Robert Mundy and Bryan DeSousa, takes another route into gender issues in the film, focusing specifically on comparing the performance of masculinity in the 1930s, the time putatively depicted in the film, and the 1960s, when *Bonnie and Clyde* was released and the concerns of which it largely reflects. Elena Trencheva’s essay, “She Is a Peach; He is a Dandy: Style as Longing in Arthur Penn’s *Bonnie and Clyde*,” is an education in the interdisciplinary concerns that come into practice in costume design and the role that costume plays in the film’s expressive effects. Other essay topics include:

- “*Bonnie and Clyde* as Counterculture Gangster Film: Reimagining Classic Gangster Pictures and Film Noir” by Sheri Chinen Biesen
- “Impotence, Homoeroticism, and Hysteria: Gender and Sexuality in *Bonnie and Clyde* and the Cinema of Arthur Penn” by Joseph Paul Moser
- “...Just shot the devil out of them”: Images of the Deaths of Bonnie and Clyde” by Douglas C. MacLeod, Jr.
- “Overhearing the Past in a Happening Present: *Bonnie & Clyde*’s Radical Soundtrack” by Daniel Bishop
- “*Bonnie and Clyde* in the Charts” by Martin Carter

Each essay in *Critical Insights: Bonnie & Clyde* is 2,500 to 5,000 words in length, and all essays conclude with a list of Works Cited and detailed endnotes. Also included in this volume is a list of the **Cast & Credits** and **Awards & Honors**, a **Chronology of Director’s Life**, a list of **Director’s Filmography**, an annotated **Bibliography**, biographies of the **Editors** and **Contributors**, and an alphabetical **Index**.

The *Critical Insights* Series distills the best of both classic and current criticism of the world’s most studied literature and films. Edited and written by some of academia’s most distinguished film scholars and critics, *Critical Insights: Bonnie & Clyde* provides authoritative, in-depth scholarship that students and researchers will rely on for years. This volume is destined to become a valuable purchase for all.

Free Online with Print Purchase.

In addition, *Critical Insights: Casablanca* comes with complimentary online access via <http://online.salempress.com>. A single purchase of the printed version is all it takes to gain access to this important title on the web.

Critical Insights: Bonnie & Clyde

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