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Salem Press Announces *Critical Insights: Horton Foote*

Critical Insights: Horton Foote, edited by Robert W. Haynes, a professor of English at Texas A&M International University, explores a quiet Texan whose dramatic career extended through nearly seven decades of American literature. Foote remains best known for his Academy Award-winning screenplay for the film classic *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962). This film was based on one of the best-selling books in English, a novel that was published in 1960, just as the American civil rights movement gathered strength to push aside institutionalized prejudice and open new doors for millions of citizens long denied the fundamental rights promised by their nation. Horton Foote's screenplay expresses its author's deep concern about the South's reluctance to re-think its social habits and its adherence to a sentimentalized, romantic illusion of a noble antebellum plantation society.

This title includes thirteen essays by eleven Foote scholars who discuss a variety of aspects of the plays and films that we have inherited from this American master, with commentary on works ranging from his first one-act play, staged in 1940, to the amazing nine-hour sequence *The Orphan's Home Cycle*, which he was still working on at the time of his death. Authors whose work is assembled in this title range from contributors who know Foote only through his work to others who were his close friend. All the contributors share a deep respect for Horton Foote, who maintained both artistry and integrity during a long and challenging journey through his country's theatrical life.

Critical Insights: Horton Foote is divided into four main sections, starting with **Career, Life, and Influence**. This section discusses Foote's career and the appreciation that many people have for his work. The rest of the text examines Horton Foote's plays and their growing legacy.

Critical Contexts begins with Rebecca Briley's chapter that will provide readers with a beneficial view of Foote's treatment of race and prejudice in his works. Gerald C. Wood, whose works on Horton Foote are essential to any study of the man from Wharton, has two essays in this title. The first is an assessment of Foote's critical reputation, a survey of criticism from the 1980s (when Foote scholarship began) up to Marion Castleberry's invaluable literary biography of 2014. Robert Donahoo then takes on a theoretical appraisal of aspects of one of this country's most underestimated plays, Foote's Pulitzer Prize winning *The Young Man from Atlanta*, a work that, even more than *The Actor*, constitutes a major retrospective on *The Orphan's Home Cycle*. Wrapping up the *Critical Contexts* section, Xueying Wang juxtaposes Foote's *The Trip to Bountiful* with a short story by the famous Chinese writer Lu Xun, pointing out similarities in the

protagonists' desire to recover spiritual peace and radical differences in their relative capacities to do so.

Nine chapters are included in the **Critical Readings** section, starting with Terry Barr who explores Foote's role as a southern writer, relating his artistry to that practiced by authors who, unlike Foote, are actually discussed at conferences on southern literature. Crystal Brian, whose hefty doctoral dissertation on Foote contains many jewels of insight, presents a fascinating impressionistic collage of observations and experiences supported by her conviction that this playwright is a mystic of the theater. The second essay from Gerald C. Wood, presents a detailed account of the development of the screenplay for *Tender Mercies*, the 1983 film that won Foote his second Oscar. Jan Whitt's perceptive assessment of the alterations Foote made in adapting Harper Lee's novel for the film version of *Mockingbird* also touch on this issue, and she goes on to muse on what it means to adapt a work from one genre to another. Gertrude Stein scholar and high modernist, Elizabeth Fifer provides an engaging essay focusing on the awareness and memory of three aging women and making a powerful case for the range of Foote's artistic vision. Other essays include:

- "I've always wanted a boy the town could be proud of": Issues of Conformity and Community in Horton Foote's Dual Versions of *The Chase*" by Roy J. Gonzáles, Jr.
- "A Dramatist's Archive: An Overview of the Horton Foote Papers at DeGolyer Library" by Cynthia Franco
- "Monuments, Memory, and Self-Location: Biographical Resources in Horton Foote's Drama" by Robert W. Haynes
- "The Sane Face of Texas: Pursuing the Decent Life in Horton Foote's Films" by Robert W. Haynes

Each essay in *Critical Insights: Horton Foote* 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 are **Appendixes** to provide readers with additional information and opportunities for further research, including a **Chronology of Horton Foote's Life**, a list of **Works by Horton Foote**, 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 literary criticism of the world's most studied literature. Edited and written by some of academia's most distinguished literary scholars, *Critical Insights: Horton Foote* 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: Horton Foote* 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.

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