

SALEM PRESS

Published & Distributed by Grey House Publishing

For Immediate Release

May 5, 2017

Contact: Jessica Moody, VP Marketing
(800) 562-2139 x101
jmoody@greyhouse.com

Salem Press Announces a New Addition to the Critical Insights Series: *Critical Insights: Billy Budd, Sailor*

Edited by Brian Yothers of the University of Texas, El Paso, this volume contains essays that look critically at one of the most frequently taught and debated short novels in the American literary tradition. Along with the massive novel-romance *Moby-Dick* and the haunting short story “Bartleby, the Scrivener,” *Billy Budd, Sailor* constitutes the core of the literary contribution of the writer who is perhaps most frequently invoked as the greatest writer produced by the United States in its history, Herman Melville. The central goals of this present volume are to outline the things that make *Billy Budd* different from almost any American literary text students will meet in their high school and college classes and to show how reading *Billy Budd* today can, as a result of new approaches and technologies, be a different experience from that which previous generations of students had.

Within these thirteen essays, introduction, biographical sketch, chronology, author’s bibliography, and academic bibliography, the reader will find a great many discussions and fresh interpretations: from the historical and material context of the work to *Billy Budd*’s influence on discussions of law and capital punishment.

In the **introductory essay**, Brian Yothers opens with a brief discussion of *Billy Budd*’s uniqueness in both American literary history and Herman Melville’s oeuvre. In the **Critical Contexts** section of the book, Peter Norberg discusses the wide array of sources that Melville used in crafting *Billy Budd*, including both literary models for Melville’s story and real-life events including Melville’s cousin Guert Gansevoort’s role in the *Somers* affair. Brian Yothers then narrates the story of the critical reception of *Billy Budd*, showing how critics preserved a dual focus on questions of justice and love as they moved from religious to more secular political and gender-based readings of Melville’s novella. Thirdly, Mary K. Bercaw Edwards shows in the third Contexts essay how the sea is ever-present in *Billy Budd*, not only as a metaphor for human desire and frustration, but also a place where sailors lived and worked and that in turn shaped the identity of the sailors who worked there. Finally, Jeffrey Einboden illustrates just how widely the response to *Billy Budd* has spread around the world through the numerous translations that have emerged in languages as diverse as Hebrew, Arabic, Chinese, and Persian.

Next comes the **Critical Readings** section of this book, which contains the following essays:

- “Problem Points of Passage: ‘Boggy Ground’ in Herman Melville’s *Billy Budd, Sailor*” John Wenke
- “Melville’s Late Reading and the Revisions in the *Bill Budd* Manuscript” Chistopher M. Ohge
- “*Billy Budd*’s Challenge to the Idea of Truth” Russell Weaver
- “‘This Matter of Writing’: Melville and the Manuscript Page” Wyn Kelley
- “Mellville’s Final Frontier” Nicole de Fee

- “Editions of Melville’s *Billy Budd: The First Forty Years*” Robert C. Evans
- “Legends of the Fall: Genesis, *Paradise Lost*, Schopenhauer, and *Billy Budd*” Jonathan A. Cook
- “In the Name of the Father: *Billy Budd* and the Critics from Melville Revival to Cold War America” David Greven
- “Conflicts of Law in Herman Melville’s *Billy Budd*” John Cyril Barton

In the final section, **Resources**, easy-to-follow lists are given in order to help guide the reader through important dates and moments in the author’s life. A selection of further reading is then provided. Each essay in *Critical Insights: Billy Budd, Sailor* includes a list of Works Cited and detailed endnotes. Also included in this volume is a **Bibliography**, biographies of the **Editor** and **Contributors**, as well as 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: Billy Budd, Sailor* 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.

BUY THE PRINT AND GET FREE ONLINE ACCESS

This edition comes with FREE ONLINE ACCESS on the popular Salem Press platform, <http://online.salempress.com>. With unlimited users and remote access included, your students and researchers can now search this amazing collection of data, anytime & anywhere, all just a click away.

Critical Insights: Billy Budd, Sailor

Pub. Date: May 2017

Hardcover ISBN: 978-1-68217-274-2 300 pages \$105.00

Ebook ISBN: 978-1-68217-275-9