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Salem Press Announces a New Addition to the Critical Insights Series; *Critical Insights: American Short Story*

Edited by Michael Cocchiarale, an associate professor of English at Widener University and Scott D. Emmert, an English professor at University of Wisconsin-Fox Valley, *Critical Insights: American Short Story* provides thoughtful, accessible essays that, taken together, provide a firm sense of the range of thematic, stylistic, and formal developments of the American short story over the past two hundred years.

In **Contextual Essays**, Jennifer J. Smith begins with a cultural/historical context chapter on the development of the short story genre. Smith shows how the history of the American short story can be understood by studying book-length collections of interrelated stories. Nicholas Birns then offers a useful, comprehensive overview of two centuries' worth of scholarship on the American short story. Hannah Jocelyn examines the short stories of Annie Proulx through the surprising lens of postcolonial criticism and, in the process, establishes new ways of thinking about this contemporary virtuoso. Finally, Stacy Esch defines metafiction as a story that "draws attention to its own creation" and illustrates how it works in short stories by Tim O'Brien and Richard Russo, two of our most lauded contemporary writers.

The main section of the book consists of ten **Critical Readings** that take a variety of approaches. Some revisit often-studied works and writers, others bring attention to forgotten or neglected stories and writers, and still others develop insights on significant contemporary authors. The first two essays focus on late-nineteenth-century. In "Knowledge and Power in Henry James' 'In the Cage,'" Lind Simon examines a lesser-known work and demonstrates that on the surface the story is about the ordinary daydreams of a young working-class woman (a telegraph operator) but, when examined further, reveals a complicated exploration of "class, power, and knowledge." In the next essay, "'The Blue Hotel' and Stephen Crane's American Violence," Marc Dziak reconsiders Crane's often-anthologized work to delineate Old West masculine expectations and connect them to the naturalist theme of determinism.

The next five essays take up the aesthetic achievements of short story writers in the early to mid-twentieth century. "A Study in Pain": Musical Variations and Ernest Hemingway's "The Gambler, the Nun, and the Radio," by Nicole J. Carnastra analyzes one of Hemingway's often overlooked stories to demonstrate how "tempered optimism" emerges through the writer's artful "appropriation of the musical genre of variations." "The Country in the Woman": "Voice" in a "New" Story by Zora Neale Hurston and the Revival of Formalist Criticism by Robert C. Evans shows how specific language choices (in dialogue and imagery) and structural strategies

(narration, juxtaposition) make this story one that could very well surge to the top of the list of Hurston favorites. "The 'Vanishing American': Remembering Weldon Kees' Short Fiction," Ola Madhour examines the work of an under-appreciated short story writer who gave up the genre for poetry. The other two chapters on mid-twentieth century American short fiction focus on more familiar works and writers, *Famine in the Cabin: Reading the Hungry in Richard Wright's Uncle Tom's Children* by McKinley E. Melton reveals how imagery of hunger and thirst highlight racial injustice, while lending formal cohesion to Wright's story cycle. *Girls in Search of a Viable Identity in Eudora Welty's The Golden Apples* by Imola Bulgozdi, examines the Southern writer's famous short story cycle and the gender roles key characters either assume or transgress. The three final essays in the volume explore the thematic and generic diversity richly represented in short stories by contemporary American authors.

Each essay in *Critical Insights: American Short Story* 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 including additional works in the American Short Story genre, an annotated bibliography for readers seeking to study more about this subject, about the editors, contributors, and a subject 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: American Short Story* 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: American Short Story* 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: American Short Story

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