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

Salem Press Announces A New Addition to the *Critical Insights Series: Contemporary Immigrant Short Fiction*

The United States has long prided itself on being a nation of immigrants, and certainly immigrants or their immediate descendants have long made valuable contributions to the nation's literature. Immigrant writers and their children have brought with them both memories and dreams, both experiences and aspirations. In the process of sharing their thoughts and experiences with readers of fiction, they have often enriched both American literature and the English language.

Critical Insights: Contemporary Immigrant Short Fiction, edited by Robert C. Evans, a Young Professor of English at Auburn University at Montgomery, examines various pieces of work from immigrant writers. In her introductory essay to this volume, Natalie Friedman offers helpful reminders of the history of the often close relations between immigrants and short fiction. She suggests that short stories—because of their simultaneous brevity and possibilities for complexity—have frequently been ideal forms for immigrant writers.

After the introduction, the collection introduces four **Critical Context** essays that provide a real sense of the strength of immigrants' contribution to American literature and culture. Starting **Critical Contexts**, Solveig Zempel begins by discussing the short fiction of Norwegian American writer O.E. Rolvaag. Zempel notes writers and their works “do not exist in isolation; instead, they are embedded in a wide variety of historical situations. Discussing those situations in broadly general terms can be useful, but even more useful, in some respects, is an examination of a particular author in light of contexts both specific and broad.” The kinds of topics Zempel discusses, and the kinds of methods she uses, are relevant to every other writer discussed in this book. Next, Editor Robert C. Evans offers an overview of sources relevant to the critical reception of recent immigrant short fiction, and then he shows how one kind of critical approach (formalism) can be used to explicate such fiction. Finally, in the last of the four opening “contextual” essays, Anupama Arora compares and contrasts the works of two of the most important of contemporary immigrant writers of short fiction—Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (originally from Nigeria) and Jhumpa Lahiri (born to parents from India).

The next major section of the book consists of a variety of **Critical Readings** of numerous works by a real cross-section of recent immigrant authors. John Paul Russo begins by offering insightful readings of two short stories by an Italian American author, Don DeLillo, who is better known for his novels than his short fiction. More typical of the rest of the present volume is the essay that follows Russo's. In that ensuing piece, King-Kok Cheung argues that “Yiyun Li's ‘The Princess of Nebraska’ and ‘Gold Boy, Emerald Girl’ bring out the pressure on Chinese gays and lesbians to lead compromised lives so as to create the semblance of heterosexual families and to avoid the homophobic gaze of their larger societies. The suspense in reading these two stories lies on ferreting

out the secrets and pains the characters try to hide from one another and even from themselves. In another essay on a Chinese American writer, Te-hsing Shan discusses two short story collections by Ha Jin, an immigrant author whose rise to prominence has been nothing short of astonishing. The list of achievements that Ha Jin has won suggests that the US still welcomes and celebrates talented writers from abroad in ways and to degrees that might seem extremely unusual in other countries. Asian American writers have been among the most successful of all immigrant authors and perhaps none more so than Ha Jin. The next several essays in the Critical Readings section focus on writers associated with areas far to the east of the Caribbean and several subsequent essays focus on a group of writers who are from or are closely associated with Spanish-speaking countries. These essays include:

- ““Even the dead make noises”: Silence and Language in Ernesto Quiñonez’s Stories” by Bridget Kevane
- “Heroic Insecurity in Junot Díaz’s *Drown* and *This is How You Lose Her*” by David A. Colón
- “Artistry, Thematic Criticism, and Two Short Stories by Randa Jarrar” by Robert C. Evans
- “Immigration, Irony, and Vision in Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Interpreter of Maladies*” by Brian Yothers
- Plus much more.

Each essay in *Critical Insights: Contemporary Immigrant Short Fiction* 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, a list of **Works of Contemporary Immigrant Short Fiction**, 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 more studied literature. Edited and written by some of academia’s most distinguished literary scholars, *Critical Insights: Contemporary Immigrant Short Fiction* 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: Contemporary Immigrant Short Fiction* 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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