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Salem Press Announces the New Addition to Critical Insights Series; *Critical Insights: Tim O'Brien*

Edited by Robert C. Evans from Auburn University at Montgomery, *Critical Insights: Tim O'Brien* highlights Tim O'Brien's stature as one of the most important living American authors that seems to grow with each passing year. Although O'Brien has not published a new novel in over a decade, interest in his earlier work has continued to intensify. His titles *Going After Cacciato*; a later novel, *In the Lake of the Woods*; and the "work of fiction" that many readers consider his personal masterpiece as well as one of the greatest pieces of all recent American writing, *The Things They Carried* are all titles that have led to the success of Tim O'Brien. Much of O'Brien's work deals with American participation in the Vietnam War, and it is not an exaggeration to say that he is usually considered *the* key writer about that crucial chapter in U.S. history. O'Brien is more than a writer "about Vietnam", he is also one of the most careful and accomplished literary craftsman of his time. His books are almost always at least as interesting for *how* they are written as for what they are *about*.

This volume offers a comprehensive overview of O'Brien's entire career. It includes essay overviews by many senior scholars of O'Brien's works. To know something about O'Brien and his work, first understand that experience and language will always be intertwined; experience and truth, on the other hand, will not.

In **Contextual Essays**, scholars who are highly familiar with Tim O'Brien and his work examine the wide variety of titles. Reita K. Gorman begins by discussing the influence of popular culture in O'Brien's novel titled *The Nuclear Age*. Anyone who lived through that period will recognize how well Gorman has captured and conveyed the often bizarre spirit of those times. Next, Susan Farrell provides an overview of critical commentary on his works by noting major trends and controversies, while suggesting directions for further work. Editor, Robert C. Evans, offers an essay designed to offer a particular "critical lens" on O'Brien's writing, then suggests how "critical pluralism" can help us appreciate not only the work of O'Brien but of practically any other author. Finally, Stefania Ciocia compares and contrasts various works by him with various works by Ernest Hemingway, partly to discuss how each writer was the author of short story sequences.

The main section of the book-which consists of diverse **Critical Readings** of O'Brien's texts-opens with two general overviews. The essay by Catherine Calloway examines the importance of the pursuit of military medals in various works by O'Brien. Kathleen M. Puhr explores O'Brien's persistent concern with what she calls "surface and depth" in his fiction. The essays remain tend to be more focused on particular works, although even they often comment on O'Brien's writings more broadly. Brad E. Lucas and Michael Zeitlin examine O'Brien's first extended work of fiction, *Going After Cacciato*. Derek C. Maus offers an essay that deals with *The Nuclear Age*, Susan Farrell and Robert C. Evan discuss the work that no critic of O'Brien can afford to ignore: the highly innovative and immensely powerful short-story-sequence-cum-novel-cum-"work of fiction" titled *The Things They Carried*, and finally three essays are

devoted to another important O'Brien work from the 1900s: his structurally innovative novel titled *In the Lake of the Woods*.

Each essay in *Critical Insights: Tim O'Brien* 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 a chronology of O'Brien's life, a complete list of works by Tim O'Brien, an annotated bibliography for readers seeking to study more about the author in greater depth, 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: Tim O'Brien* 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: Tim O'Brien* 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: Tim O'Brien

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