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Salem Press Announces A New Addition to the *Critical Insights Series: Southwestern Literature*

Critical Insights: Southwestern Literature examines fourteen original essays that provide an overview of scholarship regarding Southwestern Literature. Edited by William Brannon, a professor of English at Collin College, this title examines the role that the Southwest region played in author's lives and their writings.

Following an introductory essay, four “**Context Essays**” are intended to provide a general introduction to the volume's theme and facilitate the immersion of readers into the more focused ten “**Critical Readings**” chapters that follow. A historical background essay addresses how Southwestern literature has been influenced by different time periods, and examines what makes the literature of the Southwest relevant to a modern audience. A critical reception essay reviews the history of the critical response to Southwestern literature, surveying the major concerns that critics of the region's literature have addressed over the years. A critical lens essay uses a feminist approach to offer a close reading of the work of Sandra Cisneros. A comparative analysis essay examines how different writers have considered Glen Canyon. The next ten essays provide an in-depth study of representative Southwestern authors and related themes, examining the role the Southwest region plays in not only inspiring writers, but also providing a tableau aptly suited to depicting the challenges encountered by individuals who negotiate the sometimes blurred boundaries between the different cultures that comprise the region, as well as the multiple contradictions characteristic of the Southwest.

Literature of the Southwest includes many different genres. In her essay “The Indiana Captivity Narrative: A Genre of the Southwest,” Randi Lynn Tanglen suggest that while the Puritan Indian captivity narrative of New England has often been recognized as the first unique form of American literature, the first published account of Indian captivity in the Americas actually took place in the Southwest. Leslie Marmon Silk is also the subject of the critical attention for Wilma Shires in “Balances and Harmonies Always Shifting: An Ecopostcolonial Borderlands Reading of Silko's *Ceremony*.” Shires recognizes that one of its central themes involves healing and progressing, while maintaining a changing traditional culture and this is evident in the plight of the novel's protagonist, Tayo. Mexican American literature is an important part of the Southwest's literary culture and the next three essays focus on different texts within this field of study. Paul Guajardo provides a survey of Mexican American memoirs in “Mapping the Territory: Mexican American Memoir” and argues that these narratives grapple with important questions of identity for Mexican Americans. In “Resisting Dominant National Narratives: Recovering María Amparo Ruiz de Burton's *Squatter and the Don* and (Re)writing Mexican American History” Annette Portillo challenges what she describes as “the notion of America's ‘eastern-centered’ historical origins and the myth of a cohesive, self-contained ‘American ‘national narrative’” by focusing on Ruiz de Burton's *Squatter and the Don*, a

“recovered” novel, originally published in 1885. Mike Lemon claims in “Ecological Martyrs: Ecocritical Considerations in Ana Castillo’s *So Far from God*” that “for most readers and theorists...*So Far from God* has a discernible shift within the text, from magical realism to ecocritical and political considerations.” Other essays included are:

- “Willa Cather and Southwestern Aesthetics” by John Samson
- “Creative Genius: Willa Cather’s Characters and the Influence of the American Desert Southwest” by Max Despain
- “Of Judges and Fairybook Beasts: The Male Mentor and Violence in Cormac McCarthy’s *Blood Meridian*” by Maria O’Connell
- “The Haunted Frontier: Cormac McCarthy’s Border Trilogy” by Cordelia E. Barrera
- “Coming to Terms with Death in the West: Anticipation of Death and the Effects of Loss in the Novels of Larry McMurtry” by Roger Walton Jones

Each essay in *Critical Insights: Southwestern Literature* 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 list of **Additional Works of Southwestern Literature**, 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: Southwestern Literature* 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: Southwestern Literature* 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: Southwestern Literature

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