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Salem Press Announces a New Addition to the Critical Insights Series: *Of Mice and Men*

Salem Press is proud to announce *Critical Insights: Of Mice and Men*, edited by Barbara A. Heavilin, chief editor of the Steinbeck Review. Despite the fact that John Steinbeck's writing was not always held up to the same standards as the likes of other writers of his era, such as Hemingway or Fitzgerald, he has regardless maintained relevance and increased in popularity for the pervasive human quality of his works. Within this volume, readers will encounter many separate yet intersecting view-points by leading Steinbeck scholars such as the masculine psyche, alienation, and the plight of migrants, and consideration of why this novel is still taught in high school curriculums today.

The first section of the volume, **The Book and Author**, contains the Editor's views on John Steinbeck's legacy as an American author. Essays in the next section, **Critical Contexts**, examine *Of Mice and Men* in its broadest cultural and historical contexts. The section opens with the editor's own work "'the [wall] of background': Cultural, Political, and Literary Contexts of John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*" which digs into motifs of Nazism and the outcast and what these interpretations can mean for today's society.

Novelist and scholar Nick Taylor covers the many textual variations of *Of Mice and Men*, a "property," as they say in Hollywood, that has had a long, varied, and mostly stellar media life. Steinbeck's works have had enormous critical and popular success in their visual forms, and *Of Mice and Men* is surely among the very best and widely lauded and has reached a level of achievement the fictions of his more celebrated contemporaries Hemingway, Faulkner, Fitzgerald, for instance, rarely attained.

Next, scholar Brian Railsback, also a novelist, brings his talent to bear on *Of Mice and Men*'s rich critical reception and establishes that, despite its brevity, Steinbeck's novella contains "big ideas," not the least of them the significance the novella or short novel genre held for Steinbeck. Finally in the Critical Contexts section, Kathleen Hicks bravely owns up to the "often divergent and sometimes even contradictory" readings of *Of Mice and Men*. In her chapter, "Steinbeck's Humble Parable: 'He who has ears, let him hear,'" she steers a resolute course through the conflicts by pointing out yet another brick in Steinbeck's wall of background, another aesthetic guide to anatomizing "something that happened."

The next section, **Critical Readings**, contains nine essays exploring more specialized topics that provide additional fresh insights into *Of Mice and Men*:

- Surveying Steinbeck’s “Coupla Acres”: *Of Mice and Men*’s Place in High School Curricula Today, Laura Smith and Luchen Li
- Curley’s Wife: Feminist Approaches to *Of Mice and Men*, Mimi Reisel Gladstein
- “A new dramatic form”: Echoes of Sophocles in Steinbeck’s *Of Mice and Men*, Barbara A. Heavilin
- Of Mice and Meaning in John Steinbeck’s *Of Mice and Men*, Tom Barden
- *Of Mice and Men* for an International Audience: Reception of the Novel in the Slovene Cultural Space, Danica Čerče
- Steinbeck’s Humble Parable: “He who has ears, let him hear,” Kathleen Hicks
- A Male World: The Masculine Psyche in *Of Mice and Men*, Mimi Reisel Gladstein
- The Migrant Bunkhouse in Steinbeck’s *Of Mice and Men*: Images and Dreams of Home, Cecilia Donohue
- *Of Mice and Men* and Morality, Richard E. Hart

Each essay in *Critical Insights: Of Mice and Men* includes a list of Works Cited and detailed endnotes.

In the final section, **Resources**, a **Chronology of John Steinbeck’s Life and Legacy** is featured, followed by a selection of further reading. 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: Of Mice and Men* 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.

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