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## **Salem Press Announces a New Addition to the *Critical Insights* Series** ***Critical Insights: Conspiracies***

Widespread or limited, motivated by individual benefit or public betterment, conspiracies -- and the secrecy, plotting and unlawfulness that accompany them -- have played a prominent role in human interaction and are featured in literature from the Bible to Shakespeare to Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*. This volume explores touchstone moments in conspiracy fiction -- in film as well as in classic and popular works -- and delves into the socio-political aspects of conspiracies while examining them at the heart of some of the most beloved canonical literature in English.

This volume, like all others in the *Critical Insights* series, is divided into several sections. It begins with an introductory piece, "Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Conspiracy,"—an allusion to the Declaration of Independence—by editor James Plath, which introduces the topic of conspiracies and conspiracy theories within the broader contexts of history, politics, psychology, literature, and American life.

Following the introductory essay, a collection of four critical contexts essays are intended to treat the novel (1) from a historical vantage point, (2) in terms of its critical reception, (3) using a specific critical lens, and (4) by comparing and contrasting it with another important work. This section opens with an article by Tammie M. Kennedy titled, "Conspiracies and Religion in Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*." This essay focuses on the historical context of the novel as a incentive for the great number of conspiracy novels to follow. This is followed by a piece written by Rebecca Bell-Metereau, "Corporations as Villains in Postwar Conspiracy Films." The following two articles are written by Matthew Shipe and Tim Engles respectively. The first, "'The Old Man's Laughter': The Conspiracy of American Life in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*," offers a particular critical lens by focusing on the novel's exposition of black life in America. The final essay, "Heroism and Indeterminacy in Oliver Stone's *JFK* and Don DeLillo's *Libra*," compares and contrasts the titular novel and film.

Following these four Critical Context essays is the **Critical Readings** section of this book, which contains the following essays:

- Conspiracy: Not Just a Theory in Contemporary Young Adult Fiction, M. Katherine Grimes
- Conspiracy in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, Robert C. Evans

- State Conspiracies in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, Thomas Horan
- Conspiracy in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Robert C. Evans
- Conspiracies of the Flesh: Disciplinary Power and Female Embodiment in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, Aisha Matthews
- Who Reads the Reader? Surveilling the Conspiracies in *Watchman*, Sid Sondergard
- Suspicion, Conspiracy, and Overinterpretation in *Foucault's Pendulum*, Jessica Sciubba
- Irrational, Unimaginable (and Perhaps Unintelligible) Horrors: Super/Natural Conspirators in *The Shining*, Peter J. Bailey
- What Evil Lurks: James Bond's Battles with S.P.E.C.T.R.E., Erik Eskilsen
- Oedipa Maas and the Uses of Conspiracy in Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49*, Kerry Grant

In the final section, **Resources**, a select bibliography of non-fiction that is pertinent to the theme is provided. Each essay in *Critical Insights: Conspiracies* includes a list of **Works Cited** and detailed endnotes. Also included in this volume is a Bibliography, biographies of the **Editor** and **Contributors**, and 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: Conspiracies* 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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