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Salem Press Announces a New Addition to the *Critical Insights* Series *Critical Insights: Frederick Douglass*

As a former slave who became a powerful writer, orator, rhetorician, social critic, and abolitionist leader, Frederick Douglass is one of nineteenth-century America's most important figures. This essay collection focuses on Douglass' contributions to American and African American literature. In addition to offering new perspectives of *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, Written by Himself*, this volume contains critical essays about "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?", "The Heroic Slave", and Douglass' later autobiographies. It also considers Douglass' writings alongside the works of his contemporaries and explores his continuing literary legacy in the global twenty-first century.

This volume, like all others in the *Critical Insights* series, is divided into several sections. It begins with an introductory piece, "Renaissance Man: On Frederick Douglass and American Literature,"—a comprehensive introduction to Frederick Douglass as a writer—by David S. Reynolds, describing both Douglass' contributions to the American renaissance and to nineteenth-century American literature as a whole. Williams' essay is followed by a brief survey of Douglass' life, written by volume editor Litasha Dennis.

Following the introductory essay, a collection of four critical contexts essays are intended to treat Douglass' work (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 other important works. This section opens with an article by Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock titled, "Autobiography as Rhetoric: Reading Douglass with Franklin." This essay explores how Douglass' and Franklin's differing historical eras impacted their self-presentations. This is followed by a piece written by Kimberly Drake, "Frederick Douglass's Rhetorical Autobiographies." The following two articles are written by Jade M. Becker and Tammie Jenkins respectively. The first, "Frederick Douglass and the (Im)Possibility of Being: An Afro-Pessimist Reading," offers a particular critical lens by focusing on Douglass' depictions of slavery and their affect on the development of Afro-pessimism. The final essay, "Bearing Witness to Peculiar Institution: A Gendered Reading of Frederick Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* and Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*," explores the function of gender within two of the most well-known American slave narratives.

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

- Canonization and Its Discontents: *Narrative of the Life* in the Context of Douglass’s Intellectual Development, David Lawrimore
- The Many Roles of Listening in Frederick Douglass’s *Narrative of the Life* and *The Heroic Slave*, Mike Kolakoski
- “The health of the eye seems to demand a horizon”: Self-Reliance and Selfishness in Ralph Waldo Emerson’s “Self-Reliance” and Frederick Douglass’s *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, Regina Yoong
- The Anticipatory Print Life of Frederick Douglass’s July Fourth Speech (1852), Lori Leavell
- Racial Geopolitics in Frederick Douglass’s *The Heroic Slave*, Srimayee Basu
- “Self-Made Men”: Frederick Douglass’s Reframing of Nineteenth-Century American Personhood, Rachel Boccio
- Making the American Self and the Self-Made Man in *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* and Benjamin Franklin’s *Autobiography*, Amina Gautier
- Black Voices for Freedom: Frederick Douglass and Jose Maria Samper’s *Florencio Conde*, Nydia R. Jeffers
- Frederick Douglass in James McBride’s *The Good Lord Bird*, Robert C. Evans
- Black Writers Matter: Frederick Douglass in the Literary Present, Laura Dubek

In the final section, **Resources**, a **Chronology of Frederick Douglass’s Life** and a list of **Works by Frederick Douglass** are provided. Each essay in *Critical Insights: Frederick Douglass* 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: Frederick Douglass* 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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