

Inquiry into Protest and Social Change, Bill Hardwig

Our nation likes to see itself as a country built on revolution, and much of our cultural mythology has been built around the concept of our rebellious attitude (think of the Boston Tea Party, Civil Rights demonstrations, etc.), yet over the years we remain a society that is extremely resistant to major changes in our society. How do we understand ideas of American protest and protest writing in this context? What are the differences and similarities in contemporary protest (about the environment or the current war in Iraq, for example) and historical protest (about slavery or the founding of the nation, for example)? We will explore these questions, and other aspects of political, social and literary dissent, by reading a wide variety of types of protest writing that cover a multitude of issues.