



Gay and Lesbian Literature Since World War II: History and Memory

Sonya L Jones

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Gay and Lesbian Literature Since World War II chronicles the multifaceted explosion of gay and lesbian writing that has taken place in the second half of the twentieth century. Encompassing a wide range of subject matter and a balance of gay and lesbian concerns, it includes work by established scholars as well as young theoreticians and archivists who have initiated new areas of investigation. The contributors' examinations of this rich literary period make it easy to view the half-century from 1948 to 1998 as the Queer Renaissance. Included in Gay and Lesbian Literature Since World War II are critical and social analyses of literary movements, novels, short fiction, periodicals, and poetry as well as a look at the challenges of establishing a repository for lesbian cultural history. Specific chapters in this groundbreaking work trace the development of gay poetry in America after World War II; examine how AIDS is represented in the first four Latino novels to deal with the subject matter; and chronicle the birth of lesbian-feminist publishing in the 1970s--showing how it created a flourishing gay literature in the 1980s and 1990s. Other chapters:

- outline the history of *The Ladder* from its initial publication in 1956 as the official vehicle of the Daughters of Bilitis to its final issue as a privately published literary magazine in 1972
- examine Baldwin's 1962 novel *Another Country* and discuss the complicated critical history of this work and its relation to Baldwin's literary reputation--racial, sexual, and political factors are taken into account
- chart how *Other Voices, Other Rooms*, by Truman Capote, and *The House of Breath*, by William Goyen, reveal contradictory genderings of male homosexuality--suggesting an absence of a unified model of mid-twentieth-century male homosexuality
- argue that the 1976 novel *Lover*, by Bertha Harris, can be considered an exemplary novel within discussions of both postmodern fiction and lesbian theory. (The author calls for Harris to be added to the group of writers such as Wittig, Anzaldúa, Lorde, and Winterson, who are discussed within the context of a postmodern lesbian narrative.)
- examine the short fiction of Canadian lesbian novelist Jane Rule in an effort to shed light on lesbian creative practice in the homophobic climate of postwar North America
- argue for an understanding of Dale Peck's novel *Martin and John* as an attempt to link two apparently different processes of import to contemporary male subjects through examination of the novel alongside selected passages from Nietzsche and Freud
- focus on the pragmatic issues of developing and maintaining accessible research venues from which to cultivate the study of racial and cultural diversity in lesbian lives
- Document the history of the Lesbian Herstory Archives, one of the first lesbian-specific collections in the world, from its birth in the early 1970s to the present.

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