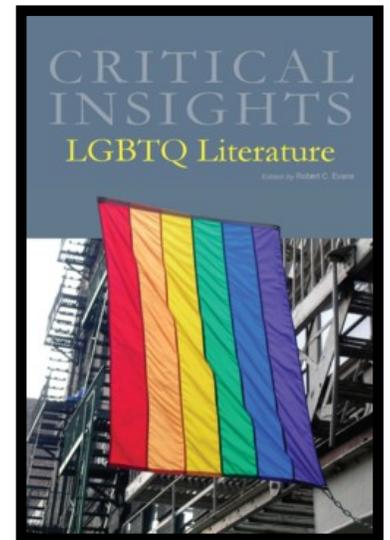


Critical Insights: LGBTQ Literature

“This volume in the Critical Insight series gathers a number of well-curated essays examining a genre of literature that has perhaps only been openly studied over the last half a century. With the crux of its focus on nineteenth-and twentieth-century American literature (although a few non-American works are considered), **Critical Insights: LGBTQ Literature tracks the genre’s challenges, dissemination, and evolution through this time.** The opening Critical Contexts section provides **a necessary foundation for understanding the history of LGBTQ literature** both from the perspective of its authors and critics. In two essays, Margaret Sönser Breen briefly catalogs the most well-known examples of LGBTQ work from the nineteenth century to the present, spotlighting such writers as Oscar Wilde, Frank O’Hara, and Patricia Highsmith. In doing so, she points out the ways these writers might have adapted to a potentially unwelcoming readership. For example, she notes that American author Ann Bannon managed to “affirm lesbian desire” in her pulp novels of the 1950’s at a time when censorship defined lesbianism as “a deviant form of sexuality aligned with criminality and disease.” Other essays in this section **note helpful resources with which to pursue the thriving realm of LGBTQ scholarship**, how “critical pluralism” may be an apt literary theory with which to approach LGBTQ literature, and how the marked sexual differences of two great writers, Gertrude Stein and Ernest Hemingway, affected their attitudes toward the devastating Great War. Working chronologically from an analysis of James Fenimore Cooper’s mid-nineteenth century work Jack Tier to more recent work by Sharon Dennis Wyeth, the essays in the Critical Readings section expose a number of compelling topics, including the use of cross-dressing, homo-erotic imagery, the advent of “openly” gay literature, the constraints of traditional gender roles, and more. For example, Lorna Raven Wheeler’s essay entitled “The Fugitive Erotic in the Poetry of Mae V. Cowdery” adds another dimension to the study of the Harlem Renaissance via the cryptic but clearly sexual verse of this lesser-known poet. The book finally presents **a number of useful resources for further study of this burgeoning area of literature**, including a listing of dramatic, fictional, and poetic works in the LGBTQ genre, a bibliography, and notes on contributors. **As the world works towards better integration and understanding of its LGBTQ population, this book can be a discerning resource for further education at the public and academic level.”**

- ARBA

Text Reviews



Pub. Date: May 2015
ISBN: 978-1-61925-423-7
Price: \$105.00

SALEM PRESS

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