



The Queer Renaissance: Contemporary American Literature and the Reinvention of Lesbian and Gay Identities

Robert McRuer

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Before the 1969 Stonewall Riots ushered in the contemporary gay liberation movement, overt representations of same-sex desire in American literature and the arts were few and far between. Even in the 1970s, when gay and lesbian cultures began to register on our national consciousness, such work was still quite rare. In the 1980s and 90s, however, all that changed. The Queer Renaissance puts a name to the unprecedented outpouring of creative work by openly lesbian and gay novelists, poets, and playwrights in the past two decades. This volume is one of the first to analyze critically this cultural awakening and is one of the only books to consider the work of gay male and lesbian writers together. Most importantly, The Queer Renaissance is the first book to consider how this wave of creative activity has worked in tandem with a flourishing of radical queer politics. The Queer Renaissance explores the work of such important figures as Audre Lorde, Edmund White, Randall Kenan, Gloria Anzalda, Tony Kushner, and Sarah Schulman to question the dichotomy between art and activism. In addition, The Queer Renaissance interrogates the ways queer theory deploys, intersects with, and contests contemporary theoretical movements such as cultural studies, feminist theory, African American theory, and Chicano/a theory.

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