

## Contemporary Gay American Novelists: A Bio-Bibliographical Critical Sourcebook

Emmanuel S. Nelson

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Publication of this sourcebook on important gay American fiction writers grants legitimacy and recognition to this rapidly emerging area of literary studies. Though wary of canon-formation in this groundbreaking work, editor Nelson has selected fifty-seven writers whose works have received serious critical acclaim and/or have won large audiences or, in a few cases, are worthy of greater attention. Included are representative writers of detective fiction and science fiction, but not authors of erotic fiction or pulp novels. Also excluded are a few novelists whose expressed wishes for privacy were respected. Writers and their works are examined in the gay literary context, and a majority of the contributing essayists are themselves gay male scholars and writers who bring with them a level of personal and political sensitivity that is generally lacking in non-gay assessments of this literature.

Each entry begins with biographical information, proceeds to an interpretive summary of major works and themes, provides an overview of critical reception accorded the author, and concludes with bibliographies of primary and secondary materials. In a lively and perceptive introductory essay, Bredbeck inquires into what we mean by gay literature and the inherent tensions in these terms. Conceding the impossibility of speaking conclusively of gay literature, he nevertheless stresses the importance of the task and ends with a survey of critical studies of the gay male novel and works of gay male criticism.



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