

Review

Contemporary Lesbian Writing

By Paulina Palmer

Open University Press

The Pink Paper (1994)

Mapping the dreams, desires and differences in lesbian writing since the early 1970s, Palmer's study is a revealing and insightful examination of works that begin with the initial premise of lesbian sexuality but diverge into increasingly polarised forms of experience.

From radical lesbianism to contemporary queer politics, juxtaposing populist prose with the more academic narrative styles of literary lesbianism, the author creates a fine discussion of often conflicting genres, approaches and audience needs. Excellent and informative.

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English Today (39. July 1994)

Paulina Palmer, *Contemporary Lesbian Writing: Dreams, Desire, Difference*. An exploration of Anglo-American lesbian writing since the early 1970s, contextualizing key works of theory and fiction in relation to political and cultural movements. According to the author, novels of the early 1970s focused primarily on 'Coming Out', whereas lesbian writing has now reached into further genres, a situation which this work seeks to make clear.

The first chapter looks at aspects of theory and the following four at types of fiction: the contradiction and interaction between popular forms of lesbian writing such as the thriller and the comic novel, which appropriate and revise mainstream genres, and academic approaches based on psychoanalysis and post structuralism. Theorists who are discussed include Radicalesbians, Adrienne Rich, Audre Lorde, Monique Wittig, Luce Irigaray and Judith Butler. Political fictional genre such as the Coming Out novel are considered, and the study concludes with a discussion of the treatment of fantasy, narrativity and sex in the fiction of Jeanette Winterson, Ellen Galford, Jane DeLynn and Sarah Schulman' (cover). There are notes for each chapter, and index and bibliography.