



# **Pulp Friction: Uncovering the Golden Age of Gay Male Pulps**

*Michael Bronski*

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Long before the rise of the modern gay movement, an unnoticed literary revolution was occurring, mostly between the covers of the cheaply produced pulp paperbacks of the post-World War II era. Cultural critic Michael Bronski collects a sampling of these now little-known gay erotic writings—some by writers long forgotten, some never known and a few now famous. Through them, Bronski challenges many long-held views of American postwar fiction and the rise of gay literature, as well as of the culture at large.

## **Pulp Friction: Uncovering the Golden Age of Gay Male Pulps Details**

Date : Published January 14th 2003 by St. Martin's Griffin (first published 2003)

ISBN : 9780312252670

Author : Michael Bronski

Format : Paperback 384 pages

Genre : Lgbt, History, Nonfiction, Gay, Anthologies, Glibt, Queer

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# From Reader Review Pulp Friction: Uncovering the Golden Age of Gay Male Pulps for online ebook

## John says

The sociology and socio-literary history in here is interesting, but hardly exhaustive. There are excerpts from representative novels mentioned but over all the book feels "lite". There's a bit of hard porn excerpted, but the most interesting parts are the way men and their interactions are portrayed and how different the social codes were in different eras. There is also the sad evolving of an understanding of homosexuality in the context of its historical marauders: the Church, psychoanalysis, and the ever present lowering visage of the law as interpreted and enforced by established & deeply malicious authorities.

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## Paul says

A fascinating account with a selection of excerpts from gay pulp fiction from the 40s through to the 70s, pre- and post-Stonewall. Michael Bronski's introductory essays are worth the price alone but the stories are wild, hugely entertaining and, at times, quite fruity!

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## Thomas says

A great, saucy compilation. I've always wanted to start collecting these old gay pulps, but they're (a) hard to find, and (b) expensive when you do. So this is a fair compromise, and with interesting context provided by the editor.

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## Elwycke says

Although some of these excerpts made for interesting (occasionally quite horny!) reading, I do think what would've made it even more enjoyable is that the front covers of the books should've been shown too! After all, surely that's what first seduced the would-be gentle reader's gaze. Some of the stories were terrific and I'd love to read the entirety of 'Gay Revolution' by Mr Miller, a witty take on 'Invasion Of The Body-Snatchers' seen from the view-point of the pod-people, only here 'pod' is replaced with 'gay'.

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## Josh says

At first, I was a little disappointed with Pulp Friction. I was hoping for more of a historical perspective on gay pulps, and while there is a little of that, the book is much more anthology than historical exegesis. I got over that once I discovered how thoroughly entertaining the pulp novels themselves are. Bronski only gives glimpses of the novels, but he curates which portions to reprint exceedingly well. They give a glimpse of the general plot and usually involved a sex scene, but they also ably demonstrate the diverse writing styles of the

authors and how pulp content changed from the 40s to the 70s.

Just know what you're getting into when you start it, and Pulp Friction will be a great (and educational) read.

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### **Adam Dunn says**

I loved this book but it took me many years to read it. I would start it and read a section and that would list ten other books I wanted to read and then I'd have to stop to read them. When I finally got this book in Kindle I was able to finish it, only stopping to read two pulps in the middle.

The great thing about this book is that it got me into the whole gay pulp phenomenon that I didn't even know existed before I read this book. The book is a wonderful gateway into a lost world of gay life and literature that many have over-looked and for that I'll be forever grateful. What I also liked about the book was that it included some post-1969 titles. After 1969 when the laws were relaxed about 99% of the books published became porn with a sex scene every three or four pages and not much plot, meaning they became almost impossible to read in later years. They served a purpose for the time but by having someone else go through them and pick out a few with literary elements or even exciting sex, the author has done a service.

I also agree that the notes at the end with a list of gay-themed books published by year is also invaluable.

While I was reading it I was thinking how useful a list like this would have been to someone from the time period.

A final note on copyright, a few of these books have been reprinted now in E-reader form but many have not due to issues with copyright. I imagine that is the biggest challenge with putting a book like this together. For the few authors of these books that are still living the author obtained permission from them but for others the authors wrote under a pseudonym and either signed away their rights to book companies long gone or died without assigning rights to anyone creating a situation where the books become unpublishable. I note for a few of the books the author has permission to re-use the titles from two websites, one no longer in business and another that publishes a few erotic ebooks and doesn't publish any of the titles listed, so who knows how he got that to fly, but I'm glad he did.

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### **Hannah Givens says**

I wish he could've given us more than excerpts, but even those are interesting since these books are getting so hard to find. The commentary is excellent too, there's not a ton of scholarship on pulp, so Bronski is summarizing the history in a readable way but also offering details I hadn't found in any other book on the subject. I also love that he chose excerpts displaying both porn and politics, because they're intertwined in this genre.

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### **Angus Bussi says**

Definitely an interesting read if you're interested in learning more about gay history and gay literature. The excerpts deliver on the pulp and some were exactly how I expected them to be, but others took me by surprise. I feel like I learned a lot from this book and my only disappointment is that a majority of the pulps he draws from are out of print so I can't read more.

My only negative critique is that a couple of excerpts in the book deal with sexual assault in graphic terms

and while Bronski is up front with the reader in his introduction to the book that some pulps do touch on that (and I went in expecting that these issues would be mentioned at different points in the book), it would have been nice to include in the introduction he writes to each excerpt a mention of what to expect, as it can be jarring going from a tender excerpt to a violent one.

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### **Ruth Ann says**

I enjoyed this more than I expected to! Not all of the authors sampled here were gifted writers, but since the excerpts were only a chapter or two, they were still interesting as examples of various points the editor wanted to make. I totally want to find a copy of the pulp novel "Gay Revolution," about a scientist who discovers a drug that turns everyone gay and puts it in drinking water all over the world. The chapter included here was marvelous!

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### **Garnet says**

The tagline reads, "Uncovering the golden age of gay male pulp novels" This collection of excerpts from a variety of stories, is somewhat interesting in the fact that they are prefaced with an interesting introduction that attempts to place it in it's proper place in history. Having read the book, I realized that I now find reading passages of graphic sexual activity, strait or gay to be incredibly boring. I found myself skipping over several pages.

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### **Jesse says**

The book is a sometimes interesting, sometimes dull look at a neglected area of gay literature. The main thing about the provided selections that surprised me is how modern and non-judgmental some of them were. Several of the stories (especially the pornier ones) depict gay life (and sex) as normal, healthy, and enjoyable. Other selections that leaned a bit more toward higher literary aspirations even intrigued me enough to want to seek out the original novels ("Song of the Loon" is one example). Ultimately, however, a lot of the selections cover the same thematic ground, namely, being gay is a hard, lonely life and something that needs to be hidden, which I've heard quite enough of, thank you. Author/editor Michael Bronski's commentary is neither very insightful or interesting, mainly serving as an encyclopedic overview of the selection he's presenting, but he does point the interested reader in the way of other novels that one may not have heard about. Ultimately, Bronski's thesis seems to be that depictions of homosexuality in pre-Stonewall literature has been unfairly maligned as largely negative and depressing, and while a few of the selections he provides support that notion, the large number of them simply reaffirm what is already largely believed. An interesting historical document, perhaps even a gateway into gay literature for the interested reader, but nothing more.

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### **Chris says**

A very readable anthology, criticism, and bibliography of nearly unknown works of gay literature from 1940-1970s. Highly recommended for collectors and general readers, too, for the lengthy excerpts from

featured works. The Appendix, listing all the works known to Bronski for this interval year-by-year, along with a relevant sentence or two for each, is worth the price of the book itself, especially for collectors.

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### **Martin Fry says**

PULP FRICTION - Gay pulps- before and after Stonewall- are universally acknowledged for fantastic color images. I am hoping for an art book one day that will offer full sized high quality covers. There is a lot of material covered here briefly. If you are looking for an in-depth analysis this book doesn't do that.

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