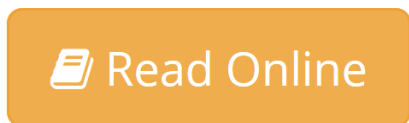


Female Masculinity

By Judith Halberstam



Female Masculinity By Judith Halberstam

Masculinity without men. In *Female Masculinity* Judith Halberstam takes aim at the protected status of male masculinity and shows that female masculinity has offered a distinct alternative to it for well over two hundred years. Providing the first full-length study on this subject, Halberstam catalogs the diversity of gender expressions among masculine women from nineteenth-century pre-lesbian practices to contemporary drag king performances.

Through detailed textual readings as well as empirical research, Halberstam uncovers a hidden history of female masculinities while arguing for a more nuanced understanding of gender categories that would incorporate rather than pathologize them. She rereads Anne Lister's diaries and Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* as foundational assertions of female masculine identity. She considers the enigma of the stone butch and the politics surrounding butch/femme roles within lesbian communities. She also explores issues of transsexuality among "transgender dykes"—lesbians who pass as men—and female-to-male transsexuals who may find the label of "lesbian" a temporary refuge. Halberstam also tackles such topics as women and boxing, butches in Hollywood and independent cinema, and the phenomenon of male impersonators.

Female Masculinity signals a new understanding of masculine behaviors and identities, and a new direction in interdisciplinary queer scholarship. Illustrated with nearly forty photographs, including portraits, film stills, and drag king performance shots, this book provides an extensive record of the wide range of female masculinities. And as Halberstam clearly demonstrates, female masculinity is not some bad imitation of virility, but a lively and dramatic staging of hybrid and minority genders.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Readers who have followed the postmodern gender debate in the university presses (ranging from Thais Morgan's sedately twisted analyses of Victorian male lesbianism to Judith Butler's acclaimed *Gender Trouble*) will delight in the latest little earthquake: Judith Halberstam's deft separation of masculinity from the male body in *Female Masculinity*. If what we call "masculinity" is taken to be "a naturalized relation between maleness and power," Halberstam argues, "then it makes little sense to examine men for the contours of that masculinity's social construction." We can learn more from other embodiments of masculinity, like those found in drag-king performances, in the sexual stance of the stone butch, and in female-to-male transgenderism. Halberstam's subject is so new to critical discourse that her approach can be somewhat scattershot--there is simply too much to say--but her prose is lucid and deliberate, and her attitude refreshingly relaxed. Essential reading for gender studies and a lively contribution to cultural studies in general. --Regina Marler

From Library Journal

Halberstam (literature, Univ. of California, San Diego; *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters*, Duke Univ., 1995) presents a unique offering in queer studies: a study of the masculine lesbian woman. Halberstam makes a compelling argument for a more flexible taxonomy of masculinity, including not only men, who have historically held the power in society, but also women who embody qualities that are usually associated with maleness, such as strength, authority, and independence. Fleshing out her argument by drawing on a variety of sources?fiction, films, court documents, and diaries?Halberstam calls for society to acknowledge masculine lesbian women and value them. A dense work that requires some knowledge of gay studies, this is recommended for academic libraries and will appeal to scholars in gay studies, gender studies, women's studies, film studies, and sociology.?Kimberly L. Clarke, Univ. of Minnesota Lib., Minneapolis
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Review

"*Female Masculinity* is a very important work that scholars in cultural studies will be talking about for years. Nothing like it exists, period."—Esther Newton, author of *Cherry Grove, Fire Island*

"Thank goodness for the dashing Judith Halberstam! Her new book is a smart, entertaining and informed tour of that most threatening of cultural identities: the masculine female. Oh, yum!"—Kate Bornstein, author of *My Gender Workbook*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Saul Robinson:

This book untitled Female Masculinity to be one of several books in which best seller in this year, that is because when you read this guide you can get a lot of benefit onto it. You will easily to buy that book in the book store or you can order it via online. The publisher with this book sells the e-book too. It makes you easier to read this book, as you can read this book in your Smart phone. So there is no reason for you to past

this book from your list.

Ross Adams:

The actual book Female Masculinity has a lot details on it. So when you check out this book you can get a lot of gain. The book was authored by the very famous author. Tom makes some research just before write this book. This specific book very easy to read you can get the point easily after scanning this book.

Michael Albright:

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Santos Ball:

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