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The New Female Action Hero: An Analysis of Female Masculinity in the New Female Action Hero in Recent Films and Television Shows

Joe Goodwill

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There's an exciting new player in films and on television shows. In the last three decades the female action hero has burst forth upon our screens, liberating women from the confines of stereotypical "feminine" traits, and enabling them to embrace positive, "masculine" attributes that once were reserved for men. This book examines the way in which popular culture has revisioned the old archetype of the hero, so that all heroes now can combine the best of both masculine and feminine traits – and so that all women potentially have more freedom. Included are analyses of several popular recent films and television shows, including Buffy the Vampire Slayer, the Alien series, Terminator, Terminator 2: Judgment Day, Xena: Warrior Princess, Star Trek, Star Trek Voyager, The Long Kiss Goodnight and GI Jane. This book analyzes the contributions of popular culture from the perspective of queer theory, focusing especially on Judith (Jack) Halberstam's groundbreaking work on female masculinity, and on Judith Butler's provocative work on the construction of gender.

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