

Gender Outlaw: On Men, Women and the Rest of Us

Gender Outlaw: On Men, Women and the Rest of Us

Author: Kate Bornstein

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Format: Hardcover Gender has been described as the battleground for the 90s. As we watch the emergence of 'gender-bending' in popular culture, the lines are being drawn and sides taken up. Somewhere above both sides stands Kate Bornstein, with a unique, funny and lucid voice. Gender Outlaw is the work of a woman who has been through some changes - a former heterosexual male and one-time Scientologist and IBM salesperson, now a lesbian writer and actress who makes regular rounds on the TV talk shows. In her book, Bornstein covers the 'mechanics' of her surgery; everything you've always wanted to know about gender (but were too confused to ask); the place and politics of the transgendered; and the questions of those who give the subject little thought. Kate Bornstein takes on various communities: gay, lesbian, straight, S/M and transgender, along with the 'society at large'. In her witty incisive observations is the foundation of a radical new politics of sexuality and gender. The book also includes Bornstein's play, Hidden: A Gender . Gender Outlaw is an ideal response to the belief that everyone talks about gender, but no one does anything about it. Kate Bornstein has taken (dramatic) steps, and invites the reader along for the trip.

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About the Author

Kate Bornstein is a performance artist, actress and writer. She has appeared on Donahue, CNBC'S Real Personal, and other television talk shows. Her performances have drawn artistic praise from San Francisco to New York. Her most recent performance piece is The Opposite Gender is. . .Neither!." From the Inside Flap

Part coming-of-age story, part mind-altering manifesto on gender and sexuality, coming directly to you from the life experiences of a transsexual woman, Gender Outlaw breaks all the rules and leaves the reader forever changed. 26 black-and-white illustrations. Review

A thoughtful challenge to gender ideology that continually asks difficult questions about identity, orientation, and desire. Bornstein cleverly incorporates cultural criticism, dramatic writing, and autobiography to make her point that gender (which she distinguishes from sex) is a cultural rather than a natural phenomenon. The chapters range from "fashion tips" on her writing style to dialogue between herself and another about the "nuts and bolts" of the surgical process of a gender change (which she has undergone). Confronting transgenderism and transgendered people is not easy for many individuals, but Bornstein does it in a way that sparks debate without putting her audience on the defensive. She suggests that "the culture may not simply be creating roles for naturally-gendered people, the culture may in fact be creating the gendered people." Her discussion of the "parts" of gender is based on respected sources and includes analyses of gender assignment, identity, and roles. Things get mixed up, according to Bornstein, because "sexual orientation/preference is based in this culture solely on the gender of one's partner of choice," in effect confusing orientation and preference. Seeing queer theater as a place in which gender ambiguity and fluidity can and should be explored, she includes in the book her play, Hidden: A Gender. Bornstein uses the term "gender defenders" to describe those who work hard to maintain the current rigid system of gender, and she claims that her "people" (i.e., the transgendered) are just beginning to challenge the system and to demand acceptance and understanding. Bornstein's witty style, personal approach, and frankness open doors to questioning gender assumptions and boundaries.

Kirkus Reviews

"Gender Outlaw is an eye-opening book, combining the emotional force of a coming-of-age story with a savvy cultural critique.."

Out

"a pastiche of oddments--dreams and memories, influences and quotations, fresh ideas and numerous received wisdoms. . ."

Richard McCann, author of Ghost Letters

"Gender Outlaw is a radical document. . ."

The Nation

