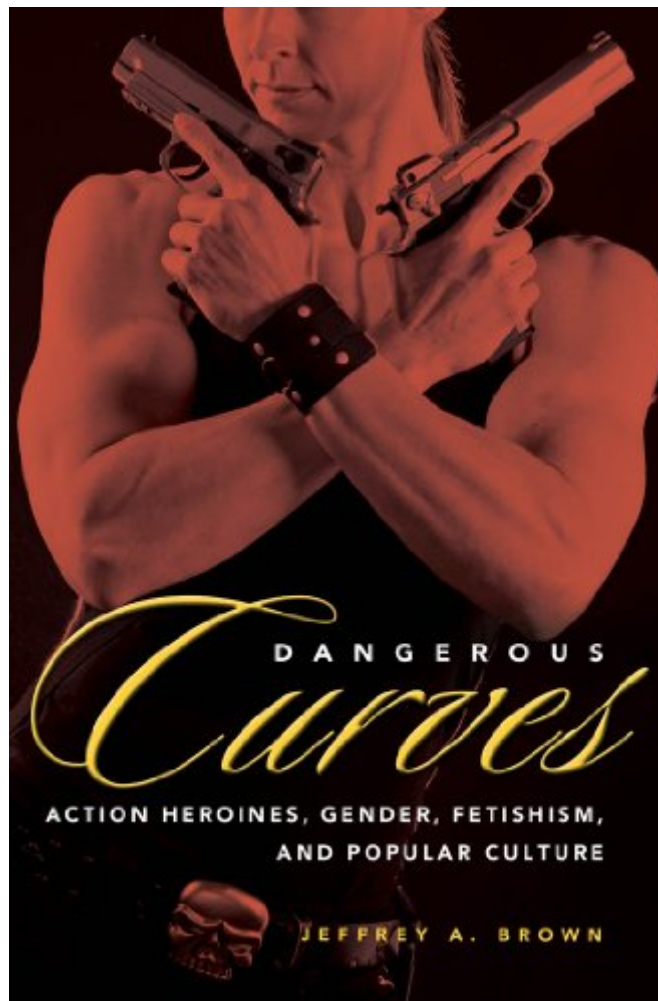


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Dangerous Curves: Action Heroines, Gender, Fetishism, And Popular Culture



Synopsis

Dangerous Curves: Action Heroines, Gender, Fetishism, and Popular Culture addresses the conflicted meanings associated with the figure of the action heroine as she has evolved in various media forms since the late 1980s. Jeffrey A. Brown discusses this immensely popular character type as an example of, and challenge to, existing theories about gender as a performance identity. Her assumption of heroic masculine traits combined with her sexualized physical depiction demonstrates the ambiguous nature of traditional gender expectations and indicates a growing awareness of more aggressive and violent roles for women. The excessive sexual fetishism of action heroines is a central theme throughout. The topic is analyzed as an insight into the transgressive image of the dominatrix, as a reflection of the shift in popular feminism from second-wave politics to third-wave and post-feminist pleasures, and as a form of patriarchal backlash that facilitates a masculine fantasy of controlling strong female characters. Brown interprets the action heroine as a representation of changing gender dynamics that balances the sexual objectification of women with progressive models of female strength. While the primary focus of this study is the action heroine as represented in Hollywood film and television, the book also includes the action heroine's emergence in contemporary popular literature, comic books, cartoons, and video games.

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Customer Reviews

I was excited for this book because I cannot say anything bad about Brown's Black Superheroes, Milestone Comics, and their Fans. It is one of my favorite books studying pop culture. Then Dangerous Curves was not necessarily a badly written book, but it is difficult to agree with the arguments made. His grip of feminist studies is questionable at best. Instead, these action heroines are placed in a male-centric analysis that does not seem to do them justice. Sometimes, Brown's analysis is appropriate given that action media is a male-centric industry, from creators to target audience. Brown casts a wide net of subjects in this book, including films, advertising, and television shows. His familiarity with these many sources is impressive. Readers do not have to worry about familiarity because any person interested in the topic would be familiar with at least one of the popular titles examined. Brown approaches each title with (outdated) psychoanalysis around the female action heroine's performance of gender and her sexuality. It would be much better if written by someone known for LGBT, gender, and feminist studies.

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