



Impertinent Decorum: Gay Theatrical Manoeuvres (Cassell Lesbian & Gay Studies)

Ian Lucas

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"Theatrical manoeuvres" are the self-conscious and purposeful use of different forms of drama and ritual. This work studies how gay men have adopted theatrical manoeuvres to create, affirm and protect sexual identities. The analysis is based on the practice of gay "theatre" from Wilde through Orton and Crisp, to Gay Sweatshop and Bloodlips, and includes the dynamic activist "theatre" of groups such as OutRage! and ACT-UP. It investigates the diverse and inventive uses of theatrical manoeuvres in gay sub-culture and its challenges to and influences on mainstream culture. Chapters consider cross-dressing, drag and camp; "queer" semiotics, encoded signals and polari (gay "language"); and historical perspectives on the gay use of public spaces, either legally or illicitly - from the Molly house of the 18th and 19th centuries, to the annual carnival of Pride marches.

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