



Challenging Myths of Masculinity: Understanding Physical Cultures (Interactionist Currents)

Lee F. Monaghan, Michael Atkinson

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Many myths surround male bodies and associated bodywork, especially when such bodywork is labelled culturally or socially atypical or 'problematic'. Bodybuilding, for example, has been explained in terms of gender inadequacy and an 'Adonis complex' akin to reverse anorexia, while men electing to undergo aesthetic cosmetic surgery are deemed 'too concerned' about their appearance and thus woman-like. Myths also discredit men and boys who do not engage in appropriate bodywork when this is expected. For instance, amidst public health concerns surrounding a so-called 'obesity epidemic', men and boys who resist physical activity and/or attempts to promote a 'healthy weight' are deemed ignorant, apathetic and in need of correction. Drawing on extensive field research conducted in North America and Britain over a twenty year period, this book challenges such masculine myth making. Mindful of a rich sociological tradition that seeks to understand the social world as lived and experienced, the authors provide insights that are likely to challenge common perceptions of various groups of men and boys, their diverse physical cultures, shared ways of being and identities. Presenting empirically grounded understandings of diverse bodily practices and discourses including bodybuilding, cosmetic surgery, dieting and nightclub security, Challenging Myths of Masculinity will appeal to scholars of sociology, geography and cultural studies, with interests in gender, embodiment and masculinities.



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