



# **Into the Closet: Cross-Dressing and the Gendered Body in Children's Literature and Film (Children's Literature and Culture)**

*Victoria Flanagan*

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*Into the Closet* examines the representation of cross-dressing in a wide variety of children's fiction, ranging from picture books and junior fiction to teen films and novels for young adults. It provides a comprehensive analysis of the different types of cross-dressing found in children's narratives, raising a number of significant issues relating to the ideological construction of masculinity and femininity in books for younger readers.

Many literary and cultural critics have studied the cultural significance of adult cross-dressing, yet although cross-dressing representations are plentiful in children's literature and film, very little critical attention has been paid to this subject to date. *Into the Closet* fills this critical gap. Cross-dressing demonstrates how gender is symbolically constructed through various items of clothing and apparel. It also has the ability to deconstruct notions of problematizing the relationship between sex and gender. *Into the Closet* is an important book for academics, teachers, and parents because it demonstrates how cross-dressing, rather than being taboo, is frequently used in children's literature and film as a strategy to educate (or enculturate) children about gender.

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