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The Women

Hilton Als

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#200506 in Books Hilton Als 1998-01-31 1998-01-31 Original language: English PDF # 1 228.60 x .37 x 6.001, .54 #File Name: 0374525293160 pages ISBN13: 9780374525293 Condition: New Notes: BRAND NEW FROM PUBLISHER! 100% Satisfaction Guarantee. Tracking provided on most orders. Buy with Confidence! Millions of books sold! | File size: 44.Mb

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This book, which I read a decade ago and rediscovered this month, changed the way I look at friendship and mentorship. Hilton Als is one of my favorite writers
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Loved it!!
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By A Stone
Good ass book.

A New York Times Notable Book
Daring and fiercely original, *The Women* is at once a memoir, a psychological study, a sociopolitical manifesto, and an incisive adventure in literary criticism. It is conceived as a series of portraits analyzing the role that sexual and racial identity played in the lives and work of the writer's subjects: his mother, a self-described "Negress," who would not be defined by the limitations of race and gender; the mother of Malcolm X, whose mixed-race background and eventual descent into madness contributed to her son's misogyny and racism; brilliant, Harvard-educated Dorothy Dean, who rarely identified with other blacks or women, but deeply empathized with white gay men; and the late Owen Dodson, a poet and dramatist who was female-identified and who played an important role in the author's own social and intellectual formation. Hilton Als submits both racial and sexual stereotypes to his inimitable scrutiny with relentless humor and sympathy. The results are exhilarating. *The Women* is that rarest of books: a memorable work of self-investigation that creates a form of all its own.

.com This memoir is a meditation on what it means to be black, gay, and female in U.S. culture. Als, a gay man, writes about his mother; his sisters; Malcolm X's mother; and Dorothy Dean, an African-American woman who was at the center of New York's gay male circles. But his real subject is--as he puts it--what it means to be a "Negress" in white culture. Examining how race and gender shape all of our attitudes toward what it means to be a "woman," "man" or "homosexual," Als gets at the root of self-definition in a world that constructs very limited options. *The Women* is elegantly written and moves us through a variety of ideas and emotions with a fluidity that is both graceful and startling; it is unique in contemporary writings about race, sexuality, and gender.
From Publishers Weekly
"I knew I was a Negress... [when] I saw myself in my mother's eyes; the reflection showed a teenage girl, insecure, frightened and vengeful." Thus does Als, a black man, introduce the story of his mother's life and his intense identification with it, which, he feels, affected the direction of his sexuality. It is the first of three powerful essays on race and sexual identity in the black community. The other two essays explore the life of a legendary black "fag hag" and the culture of what Als dubs the gay "nigerati." Als, a staff writer for the *New Yorker*, does a highwire act, perched between an anguished portrait of his mother and himself and a dispassionate examination of a segment of black urban culture whose males feel they have two role models?"bad niggers" or victimized mothers. Both postures often coalesce in an ambivalent mix of pride and humiliation. Although he deals with familiar themes of black attitudes toward color, white values and perceptions, his vision is both original and wrenching. Altogether, this is a provocative, engrossing vision of both homosexuality and black culture. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.
From Library Journal
Als's first book reads not unlike an extended essay in *The New Yorker*, where he works as a staff writer (he also edited the catalog for the controversial 1994-95 exhibition at the Whitney Museum, "Black Male: Representations of Masculinity in Contemporary American Art"). The predominant motif of this autobiographical tract is what Als calls the Negress. As a gay African American man, an "auntie man" (a term his West Indian mother uses), Als both identifies and competes with his mother, sister, and other representations of matriarchal society. His intriguing memoir is deeply felt and beautifully written with provocative digressions, such as a tirade on the questionable treatment of Malcolm X's mother in the *Autobiography of Malcolm X* and a minibiography of Dorothy Dean (an important figure in New York gay society). Recommended for gay studies and African American studies collections.
?Janice E. Braun, Mills Coll., Oakland, Cal.
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