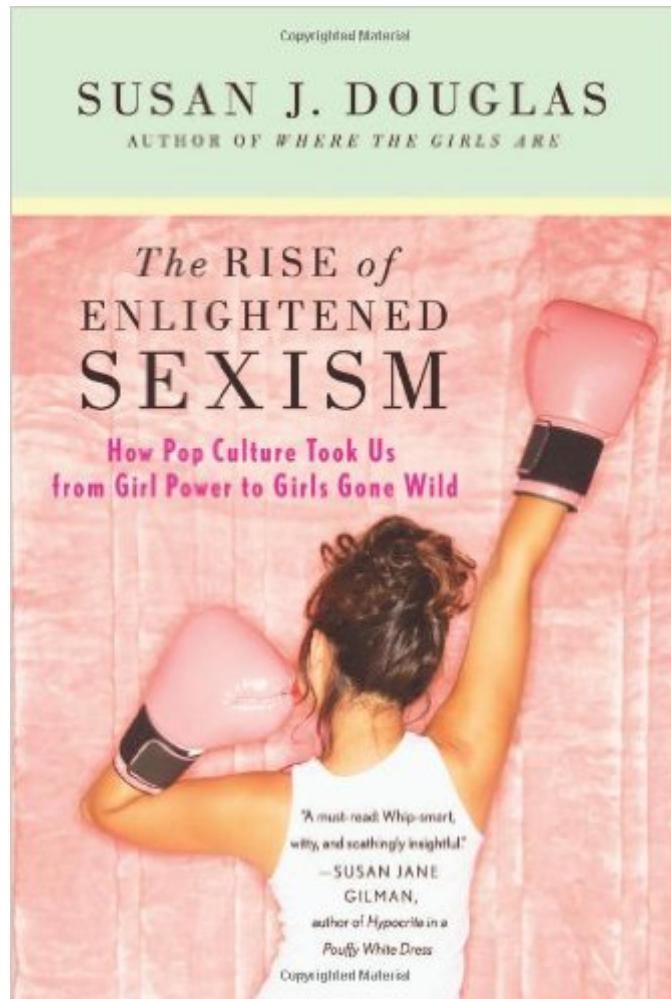


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The Rise Of Enlightened Sexism: How Pop Culture Took Us From Girl Power To Girls Gone Wild



Synopsis

Women today are inundated with conflicting messages from the mass media: they must either be strong leaders in complete command or sex kittens obsessed with finding and pleasing a man. In *The Rise Of Enlightened Sexism*, Susan J. Douglas, one of America's most entertaining and insightful cultural critics, takes readers on a spirited journey through the television programs, popular songs, movies, and news coverage of recent years, telling a story that is nothing less than the cultural biography of a new generation of American women. Revisiting cultural touchstones from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* to *Survivor* to *Desperate Housewives*, Douglas uses wit and wisdom to expose these images of women as mere fantasies of female power, assuring women and girls that the battle for equality has been won, so there's nothing wrong with resurrecting sexist stereotypes—all in good fun, of course. She shows that these portrayals not only distract us from the real-world challenges facing women today but also drive a wedge between baby-boom women and their "millennial" daughters. In seeking to bridge this generation gap, Douglas makes the case for casting aside these retrograde messages, showing us how to decode the mixed messages that restrict the ambitions of women of all ages. And what makes *The Rise Of Enlightened Sexism* such a pleasure to read is Douglas's unique voice, as she blends humor with insight and offers an empathetic and sisterly guide to the images so many American women love and hate with equal measure.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Susan J. Douglas is professor of communication studies at the University of Michigan; she has also written/co-written books such as *Where the Girls Are: Growing Up Female with the Mass Media*, *Listening In: Radio And The American Imagination*, "The Mommy Myth," etc. [NOTE: page numbers below refer to the 2010 354-page hardcover edition.] She wrote in the Introduction to this 2010 book, "This book is about the rise and evolution of these media-created fantasies, from the early 1990s to the present: their origins, their manifestations, their contradictory mixed messages, and their consequences. While these fantasies have been driven in part by girls' and women's desires, and have often provided a great deal of vicarious pleasure, they have also been driven by marketing and the use of that heady mix of flattery and denigration to sell us everything from skin cream to running shoes." (Pg. 8-9) She states, "The early 1990s was an era of fits and starts for the emerging common sense we'd eventually know as enlightened sexism. Despite Amy Fisher, girls were not being sexualized the way they are today: feminism---explicit, out-there feminism---still sold TV shows, books, and even politics | there were not yet multiple reality TV shows in which women presented as bimbos got in catfights over men. Nonetheless, for a new ideological understanding to take hold, it often needs to identify a threat to which it is responding, and from which it offers protection and escape.

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