



The Rise of Enlightened Sexism: How Pop Culture Took Us from Girl Power to Girls Gone Wild

Susan J. Douglas

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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.

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