

Interrogating Postfeminism



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This timely collection brings feminist critique to bear on contemporary 'postfeminist' mass media culture, analysing phenomena ranging from female action films to the 'girling' of ageing women in productions such as the movie "Something's Gotta Give" and the British television series "10 Years Younger". Broadly defined, 'postfeminism' encompasses a set of assumptions that feminism accomplished its goals and is now a thing of the past. Yet, as the essays show, postfeminist discourses of transformation and empowerment are based on a limited vision of gender equality as already achieved yet somehow still unsatisfactory. Postfeminism is defined by class, age, and racial exclusions; it is youth-obsessed and white and middle-class by default. Anchored in consumption as a strategy and leisure as a site for the production of the self, postfeminist mass media takes for granted that the pleasures and lifestyles with which it is associated are somehow universally shared and, perhaps more significantly, universally accessible. Essays by feminist film, media, and literature scholars based in the United States and United Kingdom provide an array of perspectives on the social and political implications of postfeminism. Among several essays investigating the origins of this pervasive cultural phenomenon is a compelling argument that postfeminism is more than a simple backlash against second-wave feminism. Other essays engage with specific media forms, including magazines, mainstream and independent cinema, popular music, and broadcast genres from primetime drama to reality television. Contributors examine postfeminist phenomena such as self-fashioning through makeovers and cosmetic surgery, the 'metrosexual' male, and the 'black chick flick'. "Interrogating Postfeminism" demonstrates not only the viability of, but also the necessity for, a powerful feminist critique of contemporary popular culture.

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目录:

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