



The Feminization of American Culture

By Ann Douglas

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This modern classic by one of our leading scholars seeks to explain the values prevalent in today's mass culture by tracing them back to their roots in the Victorian era. As religion lost its hold on the public mind, clergymen and educated women, powerless and insignificant in the society of the time, together exerted a profound effect on the only areas open to their influence: the arts and literature. Women wrote books that idealized the very qualities that kept them powerless: timidity, piety, and a disdain for competition. Sentimental values that permeated popular literature continue to influence modern culture, preoccupied as it is with glamour, banal melodrama, and mindless consumption.

This new paperback edition, with a new Preface, will reach yet more readers with its persuasive and provocative theory. Richard Bernstein of *The New York Times* said: "Her remarkable scholarship is going to set the standard for a long time to come."

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The Feminization of American Culture By Ann Douglas Bibliography

- Rank: #836134 in Books
- Brand: Ann Douglas
- Published on: 1998-09-30
- Released on: 1998-09-30
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.50" h x .93" w x 5.50" l, 1.21 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 416 pages

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

This classic of modern feminism is an ambitious attempt to trace certain present-day values back to cultural shifts of the 19th century. Historian Ann Douglas entwines the fate of American women, most notably those of the white middle class, with that of clergy marginalized by the rise in religious denominations and consequent dilution of their power base. No longer invited to wield influence in vital (some might say traditionally masculine) political and economic arenas, clergy were pushed toward more feminine spheres and rules of expression. Likewise, as growing numbers of middle-class white women lost their place as the indispensable center of household production, and many lower-class women became easily replaced industrial cogs, a none-too-subtle shift in perceptions about women's strengths and abilities occurred. Women lost voting rights and other legal privileges; barred from healing and midwifery, they were also less likely to appear in other increasingly male professions. Academies for wealthier girls imparted skills deemed to entice and soothe men without taxing supposedly tiny feminine brains; when Emma Willard offered geometry lessons to girls in the 1820s, one opponent harrumphed: "They'll be educating cows next." Douglas chronicles the rise of an overwhelmingly sentimental "feminization" of mass culture--in which writers of both sexes underscored popular convictions about women's weaknesses, desires, and proper place in the world--with erudite and well-argued scholarship. --*Francesca Coltrera*

Review

"Indispensable reading for . . . anybody of serious intelligence." ?*The New York Times*

"An exciting, readable book." ?*The New Republic*

"Admirably documented and ambitious . . . [The] examination of the perils of sentimentalism and the legacy it bequeathed modern culture is excellent." ?*Newsweek*

From the Publisher

A modern classic by one of the leading feminist thinkers of our time, *The Feminization Of American Culture* has been continuously in print since its original publication more than fifteen years ago. An Anchor backlist title since 1988, this book has been given a provocative new cover design to capture the attention of the readers who made *Sexual Personae* a best-seller. *The Feminization Of American Culture* seeks to explain the values prevalent in today's popular culture by tracing them back to their roots in Victorian times. Feminist scholar Ann Douglas examines the best-selling novels and magazines of the day to show how women exploited their feminine image and idealized the very qualities that kept them powerless: timidity, piety, narcissism, and a disdain for competition. Here is a major rethinking of the American past with shocks of recognition for everyone today.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

James Williams:

Book is to be different for every single grade. Book for children until eventually adult are different content. As we know that book is very important normally. The book *The Feminization of American Culture* had

been making you to know about other understanding and of course you can take more information. It is rather advantages for you. The guide The Feminization of American Culture is not only giving you more new information but also to get your friend when you really feel bored. You can spend your current spend time to read your reserve. Try to make relationship while using book The Feminization of American Culture. You never really feel lose out for everything should you read some books.

Maria Davis:

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Orville Norman:

People live in this new time of lifestyle always try to and must have the extra time or they will get lots of stress from both way of life and work. So , when we ask do people have spare time, we will say absolutely of course. People is human not only a robot. Then we inquire again, what kind of activity are there when the spare time coming to you actually of course your answer may unlimited right. Then do you ever try this one, reading textbooks. It can be your alternative in spending your spare time, the particular book you have read is The Feminization of American Culture.

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