



Screening Images of American Masculinity in the Age of Postfeminism

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This collection of essays presents a sampling of film and television texts, interrogating images of U.S. masculinity. Rather than using “postfeminist” as a definition of contemporary feminism, this collection uses the term to designate the period from the late 1980s on—as a point when feminist thought gradually became more mainstream. The movies and TV series examined here have achieved a level of sustained attention, from critical acclaim, to mass appeal, to cult status. Instead of beginning with a set hypothesis on the effect of the feminist movement on images of masculinity on film and television, these chapters represent a range of responses, that demonstrate how the conversations *within* these texts about American masculinity are often open-ended, allowing both male characters and male viewers a wider range of options.

Defining the relationship between U.S. masculinity and American feminist movements of the twentieth century is a complex undertaking. The essays collected for this volume engage prominent film and television texts that directly interrogate images of U.S. masculinity that have appeared since second-wave feminism. The contributors have chosen textual examples whose protagonists actively struggle with the conflicting messages about masculinity. These protagonists are more often works-in-progress, acknowledging the limits of their negotiations and self-actualization. These chapters also cover a wide range of genres and decades: from action and fantasy to dramas and romantic comedy, from the late 1970s to today.

Taken together, the chapters of *Screening Images of American Masculinity in the Age of Postfeminism* interrogate “the possible” screened in popular movies and television series, confronting the multiple and competing visions of masculinity not *after* or *beyond* feminism but, rather, in its very wake.

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