



Unruly Girls, Unrepentant Mothers: Redefining Feminism on Screen

Kathleen Rowe Karlyn

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Since the 1990s, when *Reviving Ophelia* became a best seller and "Girl Power" a familiar anthem, girls have assumed new visibility in the culture. Yet in asserting their new power, young women have redefined femininity in ways that have often mystified their mothers. They have also largely disavowed feminism, even though their new influence is a likely legacy of feminism's Second Wave. At the same time, popular culture has persisted in idealizing, demonizing, or simply erasing mothers, rarely depicting them in strong and loving relationships with their daughters.

Unruly Girls, Unrepentant Mothers, a companion to Kathleen Rowe Karlyn's groundbreaking work, *The Unruly Woman*, studies the ways popular culture and current debates within and about feminism inform each other. Surveying a range of films and television shows that have defined girls in the postfeminist era—from *Titanic* and *My So-Called Life* to *Scream* and *The Devil Wears Prada*, and from *Love and Basketball* to *Ugly Betty*—Karlyn explores the ways class, race, and generational conflicts have shaped both Girl Culture and feminism's Third Wave. Tying feminism's internal conflicts to negative attitudes toward mothers in the social world, she asks whether today's seemingly materialistic and apolitical girls, inspired by such real and fictional figures as the Spice Girls and Buffy the Vampire Slayer, have turned their backs on the feminism of their mothers or are redefining unruliness for a new age.

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