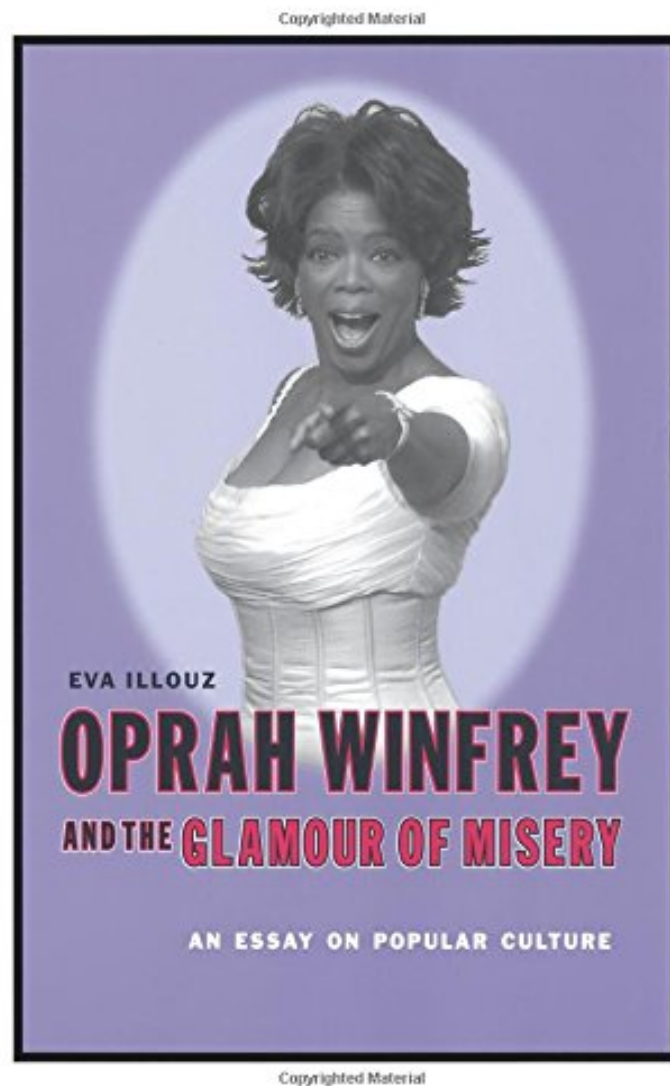


Oprah Winfrey and the Glamour of Misery: An Essay on Popular Culture

Eva Illouz

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Eva Illouz : Oprah Winfrey and the Glamour of Misery: An Essay on Popular Culture before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Oprah Winfrey and the Glamour of Misery: An Essay on Popular Culture:

2 of 19 people found the following review helpful. Another look at OprahBy Helen S. GarsonAfter a number of years during which only magazine and newspaper writers found Oprah important enough to discuss, in recent times there

has been a spate of books about her, most from different views about her influence and importance to the reader. For the person who is not particularly interested in popular culture or Oprah's influence on it, this work, while well researched and useful for students, is probably not one Oprah lovers would settle down to read in an easy chair.

Oprah Winfrey is the protagonist of the story to be told here, but this book has broader intentions, begins Eva Illouz in this original examination of how and why this talk show host has become a pervasive symbol in American culture. Unlike studies of talk shows that decry debased cultural standards and impoverished political consciousness, *Oprah Winfrey and the Glamour of Misery* asks us to rethink our perceptions of culture in general and popular culture in particular. At a time when crises of morality, beliefs, value systems, and personal worth dominate both public and private spheres, Oprah's emergence as a cultural form the Oprah person becomes clearer, as she successfully reiterates some of our most pressing moral questions. Drawing on nearly one hundred show transcripts; a year and a half of watching the show regularly; and analysis of magazine articles, several biographies, *O Magazine*, Oprah Book Club novels, self-help manuals promoted on the show, and hundreds of discussions on the Oprah Winfrey Web site, Illouz takes the Oprah industry seriously, revealing it to be a multilayered "textual structure" that initiates, stages, and performs narratives of suffering and self-improvement that resonate with a wide audience and challenge traditional models of cultural analysis. This book looks closely at Oprah's method and her message, and in the process reconsiders popular culture and the tools we use to understand it.

We should commend Illouz in her willingness to blaze a new, and certainly untested path in anthropological writing. (Seth Jacobs *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*) Outstanding... its author digs deeper into her subject matter than any other researcher yet to address Oprah. (David W. Park *Journal of Communication*) About the Author Eva Illouz is a professor at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She is the author of *Consuming the Romantic Utopia: Love and the Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (University of California Press) and *The Culture of Capitalism* (in Hebrew).