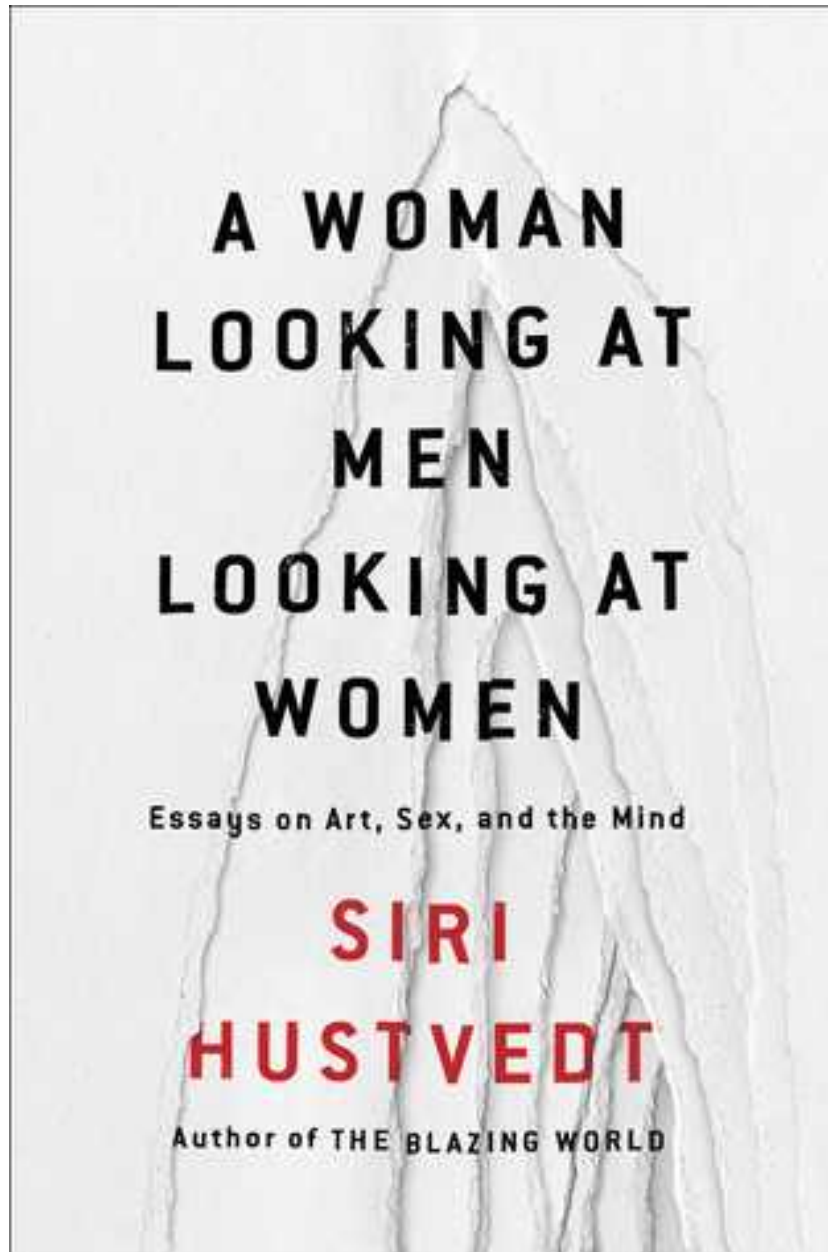


A Woman Looking at Men Looking at Women: Essays on Art, Sex, and the Mind Book PDF Download



By:
Siri Hustvedt

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What people Say:

Elyse

"A Woman Looking at Men Looking at Women: Essays on Art, Sex, and the Mind",

was at times an unfathomable experience----but given that Siri's new book is about human life, it seems reasonable that while the reader is expanding knowledge- exploring thoughts- opening their heart & mind -that consciousness would get lost. It's simply a normal part of the awareness reading process.

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I spent almost a month reading this book....an intimate affair - a journey - a course of study....(call it what you want). I was passionate - and diligently committed to reading this book --gathering background information on Google on artists - and philosophers whom I wanted to know more about>>>inspired by Siri.

Siri's vision of building a sturdy bridge supporting both the sciences and humanities is inspiring. Many of the essays draws on insights from both the sciences and humanities knowing that the disciplines are not necessarily the same. The physicist's, the biologist's, historian's, the philosopher's, and artist's modes of knowing are different. Siri talked about being wary any one discipline claiming absolutism.

Mixed in with all the essays --I enjoyed the intimacy of Siri Hustvedt herself. I enjoyed reading about her studies as a young person and her growing development. I enjoyed when she shared about her mother and daughter at different times. I often felt an emotional connection to the entire inquiry & study of 'what is the mind' - 'the self' - or reading about an artist. Siri's writing pulled me in - (like I said, the reading is challenging in parts), but most of it so damn interesting.... and Siri's personal touches made me smile, like braiding her daughters hair when her daughter was a young girl. Or learning more about her parents. Siri's incredible humbleness is beautiful and a gift to others - a gift to me anyway.

For about an entire week - I kept thinking about the influence on human life from the results of

scientific theories: computers, cell phones, electric lights etc., versus the influence from the arts on human life: Reading, history, philosophy, poetry, visual art, listening to music, dance, etc. which has made a bigger difference in my life? The arts or sciences - and is it even possible to choose?

Siri engages us in rigorous thinking. "Why are the sciences regarded as hard and masculine and the arts and humanities soft and feminine?" Yes... things are changing - more women going into mathematics... but there is still that image.

Hannah

I feel really bad about not finishing this book. And it definitely reflects more on me than on the book - because it is a me-thing this time. I do not have the mental capacity to read this book at the moment. I already knew that I was in trouble when Siri Hustvedt told the reader in the introduction that parts of the book might not be understood unless you have very specific knowledge of neuroscience or art history; which I lack, both in fact. I am good enough with art to be able to have a conve

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So what I am saying is this: I did not understand most of the essays I tried to read. And with all the books and theoretical pieces I have to read for my PhD and for work in general, there just is no room for a book like this. When I read in my free time, I am fine with being challenged and I like learning new things unrelated to my field of study but this just was too much for me. And it's a shame! I am sure if I had read this book at another time I would have learned so much. Siri Hustvedt seems like such a clever person and I like the way her mind works and the connections she makes. I am beyond impressed by her and by this collection of essays and I am very sure lots of people will enjoy this book. I might come back to this at some point (when my brain is not this overflowing with Hall and Bourdieu and all the ways in which my PhD is messing with my attention span).

I received an arc of this book courtesy of NetGalley and Simon and Schuster in exchange for an honest review. Thanks for that and sorry for not finishing it.

Kathleen

My review for the Chicago Tribune:

Siri, the computer program that operates as an artificially intelligent personal assistant, appears to know the answers to everything. So seemingly, does the author Siri Hustvedt, or at least such is the impression given by her voluminous, humorous and wide-ranging new collection "A Woman Looking at Men Looking at Women: Essays on Art, Sex and the Mind." Unlike Apple's so-called knowledge navigator, though, Hustvedt doesn't

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To explain the guiding principle behind this enormous and eclectic set of essays, Hustvedt supplies an introduction starting with a lecture given at the University of Cambridge in 1959 by the English physicist-turned-popular-novelist C.P. Snow. In it, Snow lamented "the gulf of mutual incomprehension" that he saw as having opened up between "physical scientists" and "literary intellectuals." Having recently read an expanded version of this lecture, Hustvedt — herself a Ph.D. in English literature from Columbia University and a lecturer in psychiatry at Cornell University, not

to mention the author of several works of fiction and nonfiction "wound up "severely disappointed" by Snow's arguments. For "Although he identified a problem that has only grown more urgent in the last half-century, I found his discussion of it wordy, wan, and a little naive."

Hustvedt's reaction would itself be disappointing if she merely stopped at this justified criticism of her predecessor. Fortunately, she presents this trilogy of sorts as a corrective to the problem of "the fragmentation of knowledge." She uses her background in both the arts and the sciences not merely to praise interdisciplinarianism, but also to remedy Snow's exclusion of women from his worldview. She does so refreshingly from the perspective of someone who can say "and back up" such statements as: "I love art, the humanities, and the sciences. I am a novelist and a feminist. I am also a passionate reader, whose views have been and are continually being altered and modified by the books and papers in many fields that are part of my everyday reading life."

As the subtitle suggests, this idiosyncratic and by turns meditative and argumentative book is divided into three main sections. The first, "A Woman Looking at Men Looking at Women," contains 11 essays, many of which were commissioned for catalogs and talks, and includes pieces reflecting on such artists as Louise Bourgeois, Anselm Kiefer and Robert Mapplethorpe.

Hustvedt's inquisitive and generous responses to paintings and poems give the reader the feeling of going to a museum or library with their most casually intelligent and infectiously enthusiastic friend. "I am drawn to these stories of (poet) H.D. and Emily Dickinson because they are alive with my own identifications," she writes in "Inside the Room" about the relationship between psychoanalysis and creativity.

The second section consists of a single 203-page essay, "The Delusions of Certainty," and sets out to explore the seminal post-Descartes mind-body question of philosophy, looking at "convictions about mind and matter as two things or one, the human body as a machine or as an organic, less predictable form."

The third, "What Are We? Lectures on the Human Condition," consists of nine pieces, eight of which are talks that Hustvedt delivered at academic conferences on such topics as "Suicide and the Drama of Self-Consciousness" and "Kierkegaard's Pseudonyms and the Truths of Fiction."

Viv JM

"A Woman Looking at Men Looking at Women" is a book of essays split into three sections. The first contains essays about art and criticism, the second part is almost the length of an entire book in itself and is about the mind/body connection, and the third section (my favourite) explores the human condition through the lens of literature, philosophy, sociology and science.

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The collection really demonstrates Siri Hustvedt's fierce intellect. Her knowledge is vast and encompasses not only art and literature, but also philosophy, psychology and neuroscience. This lengthy book is not an easy read, and requires a commitment of time and concentration but, for me, it was worth the effort, and I have highlighted numerous passages to return to for further consideration and perusal. I will definitely be looking to read more from this author.

Roland

Way off my territory but an exceptional read. I understood about two thirds of it. Fantastic and much food for thought.