



Vamps & Tramps: New Essays

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The bestselling author of *Sexual Personae* and *Sex, Art, and American Culture* is back with a fiery new collection of essays on everything from art and celebrity to gay activism, Lorena Bobbitt to Bill and Hillary. These essays have never appeared in book form, and many will be appearing in print for the first time.

Vamps & Tramps: New Essays Details

Date : Published October 11th 1994 by Vintage (first published October 10th 1994)

ISBN : 9780679751205

Author : Camille Paglia

Format : Paperback 532 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Writing, Essays, Feminism, Cultural, Criticism, Philosophy

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From Reader Review Vamps & Tramps: New Essays for online ebook

Rachel says

This is a combination of stellar, witty, brazen commentary and self-gratuitous reflections... Has outstanding moments and definitely shows a more liberal "feminism" than traditional/mainstream feminist thought.

John says

Vamps & Tramps is one of the better Paglia collections. As the others, it do contain a decent amount of repetition in the different articles an pieces presented, but this is a tad broader. One of the beginning pieces, or masterpieces, is the best thing she ever wrote, the long essay called "No law in the Arena" and from there it then diversifies into smaller and wider stuff that never really get boring until the media chronicles at the end. Here you get all what Paglia is about, raw and uncensored, that will make you a bit uncomfortable but unable not to be drawn in by the argument even if it is initially a bit repellent. As it should be. Educational and not easy to swallow.

Cecilia says

It was all a blur. I can't rememberoh hang on, Yes, I got the book because some book club I belonged to sent it to me and I did not have time to run to the post to return it so they billed me for it so I thought I better read it now that it was around. Read it and then my friend who ended up as a teacher at some Top Universtiy asked me if I thought Camille Paglia "overstates" her case...and my response was,"Probably a little bit to make her point...but then the opposite side the stalinist-feminists are worse...they want to legislate into people's bedroom by making sweeping generalisations about the nuances that make up human sexuality. I consider what Paglia did a "counter leverage" to their stupid sensationalism & com-modification of other women's empowerment."

That's all I can remember and something about Elvis...her being...wanting to be..???

www.ceciliawyu.com

Swati says

better to just read sexual personae, it'll let you look at the world through some camille-keyhole, and you can predict much of what's new here if you look through it right. but, sexual personae is very very fat. whereas this can be read in little bits before bed over a long time (though you may not be able to sleep afterwards).

Sandy Bookwitch says

Haven't really read anything of hers for at least ten years and never had a copy of this one until a couple years ago. I've only been meaning to read it since it came out 20 years ago. Oh my...

So far it's rather self-indulgent, but I still love what her point of view was then. Since she started eschewing weird politics and criticizing Clinton for his sexual exploits (which seems highly hypocritical based on what her philosophies were in the early-mid 90s) on Salon.com in the late 90s early '00s, I've not paid much attention to her. I think ultimately I'll like this one, but we'll see. Trying to read it AND the Chinese exploration book (now that I've found it again) and a cyberpunk anthology.

Richard says

I'd probably have given it five stars if it had been edited down somewhat.

Some of the stuff here is the boring kind of self-indulgent.

Some of it's great though.

The stuff on date rape and sexual harrassment pushes the envelope in the good way.

The stuff on domestic violence does so as well and flirts with crossing the line.

The bits on domestic violence and pedophilia come across ultimately as the kind of cavalier musings that someone who felt their childhood was too happy might entertain. I was, at fleeting moments, appalled.

Sometimes my response was visceral, even at one point putting the book down with a bout of intense nausea. But there are highly entertaining bits in this book. It's mostly engaging, usually thought provoking, and frequently insightful, once you've learned how to read her.

I guess it might be helpful to get an idea of what her personality is and what she was reacting against and interpret what she's saying through that sort of filter.

I laughed out loud many times, particularly while reading "Sontag Bloody Sontag."

I half think that if you look at the author as a character, you could almost conceptualize this as a sort of atypical novel.

Chris says

I went to a college that believed, strongly believed, in a well rounded education. We had to take many courses that were outside of our major. A really good idea considering the state of education today. One of the courses I took for my distribution requirements was a sociology class that dealt with race and ethnicity. We had to buy and supposedly read three books for the class. I say supposedly because even though we were told to read *This Bridge Called My Back Writings* by Radical Women of Color, we never ever discussed it in class. I hated that book for three reasons. One, we paid for it but the teachers never used it. Two, we were told to read it, but the teachers never used it. Three, there was an essay in the collection that said you couldn't be a feminist if you were a white woman or a heterosexual. The class was taught by two women, one of whom made fun of a female student who said she would change her last name upon getting married. I got a good grade because I barely said anything. I hardly said anything because I felt like my views were wrong or strange or too different (as well as low self esteem), and I saw what happened in that class if you disagreed with the status quo. You have no idea how much guts it takes me to post reviews on this website I wish that I had read *Vamps and Tramps* or anything by Camille Paglia at that time. I think it would have saved me years

of feeling too different and strange. I think students should be challenged by ideas that are different, radical, or upsetting, but students should have the right to challenge those beliefs too.

Today, Paglia's book is somewhat dated. It is most likely not as shocking as it once was. Some of what she tackles, however, is still current today. There is a backlash against different views on college campuses which I believe hinders learning. There is a tendency of young women to see feminism as something evil. Today, too often people only read opinions that they 100% agree with, and there is a tendency to put everything and everyone into a nice, neatly labeled box. How boring! I may disagree with Paglia on some things, but she is never boring. I think we need more writers like her. That is, writers who are not afraid to say what they think and to challenge mouthpieces.

In this collection, the best and most thought provoking essay is "No Law in the Arena". In this essay, Paglia tackles views on the gender wars as well as rape and pedophile. What Paglia does in her writing is truly examine something. I may not agree with all her conclusions, but at least she makes me think. At least, she doesn't make me feel stupid if I disagree with her. This last bit is interesting because Paglia is cutting in some of the transcripts, but when she is talking to the reader, she is never condensending, challenging but not insulting. It really is a dialogue. Even though the essay appeared 15 years ago, it still is current because we are still wrestling with the same issues.

Other essays in the book are slightly dated. One wonders, for instance, how different "Diana Regina" would be today after Princess Diana's death, something that in retrospect, Paglia's seems to foreshadow. Additionally, the book is getting four stars because it is very heavy on the ego. This is very true of the last 60 pages.

What I found most interesting, however, were her comments about teaching and about students which are still current today. I would take her attack on Political Correctness further. I would say in addition to hindering debate and learning, PC hinders the student from learning to read actively. So many students have been turned off of reading for a host of reasons. They are told they are not reading literature, that they are stupid if they like that book, that they shouldn't read that because it is X (X is always something bad). Reading is a skill that needs to be developed. Only reading political correct works hinders that.

Nat Wichrowska says

This was a fun read, but Paglia is at her best talking about art & poetry. For the most part, reading this collection of columns, essays, transcripts and excerpts felt like flipping through a magazine or scrap book. If you don't already love her, this isn't where you'll start. If you do, reading this feels like getting together for many, many cups of coffee with that crazy friend who does all the talking.

PM says

Paglia is an acquired taste. She's fun and likes to push people's buttons. Whether or not you agree with her, she's a true original thinker (who is pretty full of herself).

Orna Ross says

I WANT to put the bomp back into the bomp-de-bomp', roars a new book of essays on feminism, sex, popular culture, education and Madonna. Yes, you got it, it's Camille Paglia time again.

The main thesis of Paglia's latest rag-bag of ideas is that the missing piece in the feminist jigsaw is woman as vamp or tramp. The prostitute, the stripper, the high-glamour star, the seductress; these are "seasoned symbols of tough cookie feminism, my answer to the smug self-satisfaction and crass materialism of yuppie feminism."

She is as scathing as ever about US feminists like Catherine McKinnon and Andrea Dworkin, "the Mad Hatter and her dumpy dormouse," or Naomi Wolf "Little Miss...yuppie...twit."

Paglia has been much criticised for her vitriolic comments, getting personal where others thought she should have kept it political.. As far as she is concerned, they're missing the point. She aims to "espouse offensiveness for its own sake, as a tool of attack against received opinion and unexamined assumptions." And of course gratuitous offensiveness is a good way to keep all that lovely attention coming.

Vamps and Tramps is many things but more than anything it is Camille's gaze into the mirror of her many media moments - out of 44 items in the book only five were written specially for it; the rest is previously published articles, reviews and transcripts of TV and film projects, not to mention quotes about Paglia, cartoons of Paglia, reprinted interviews with Paglia - everything that's been thought about Paglia on air or print since her last book promotion.

In her preface, she compares herself to American radio personalities Rush Limbaugh and Howard Stern, to businessman-turned-politician Ross Perot, to President Bill Clinton. "We have widely different political views," she says, "but all four of us, with our raging egomania and volatile comic personae tending toward the loopy, helped restore free speech to America." Is this woman for real?

The answer, of course, is no. 'Persona' is Camille's favourite word and it is in the invention and promotion of the Paglia persona that she has been most successful. When she met the media it was love at first sight and the infatuation looks like settling into a longterm affair. They love her because, as one journalist put it, "she gives good quote;" she loves them because they spread her ideas around, enabling her to crow: "my terminology and frame of analysis have passed into general usage." She stays sexy in media terms by vamping it up - "improvising, ornamenting, pumping up the excitement" - and adopting a variety of different poses.

So much for the medium, what about the message? There's much to disagree with in Paglia's work, not least her biological determinism. Scholarship is only scratching the surface of the nature versus nurture debate but Paglia breezily dismisses thousands of years of social conditioning and declares that the reason women can't make art is because they have wombs and oestrogen instead of penises and testosterone. She collapses the cultural into the social. "The woman 'on the stroll' (streetwalking) is a prowler and predator, self-directed and no one's victim." While this might be true of the whore as a cultural construct - that is, construct of the male artistic sensibility - it hardly describes the real experience of the majority of prostitutes.

Similarly, when she writes of striptease as "the ritual unveiling of a body that will always remain mysterious because of the inner darkness of the womb," and speaks of the admiration and awe of men beholding a nude dancer, she is telling only half the story, overlooking the low social status of sex-workers - and the more

patriarchal the society, the lower their status goes.

Contrary to Paglia's thesis, woman as sex symbol is not missing from our culture; she is everywhere. If feminism has stayed aloof it is because feminism is about arming women with more weapons than the double-edged sword of sexual allure.

But even if you don't agree with Paglia you do enjoy the romp through western culture with her provocative critical intelligence. She writes about art and popular culture with passion and knowledge. She crams more no-holds barred ideas into a chapter than many of her critics do into a lifetime and presents them with oodles more wit and style.

Read her and rage.

Brandy says

This lady means business. Serious, lady business. Her opinions are pretty out there and often made me feel uncomfortable but always in a thought-provoking way. She's smart, she's tough, she's radical, she's quite a little crazy (and she's not committing genocide), so kudos to Camille!

Natalie says

Fuck Camille Paglia.

Yeah, I said it.

Sabrina Chapadjiev says

great bathroom reading.

Matt says

Ah, ma bon Camille...I stumbled across this title when I was reading other reviews on this site and I was charmed to find that I could glimpse, grunt a bit, and quietly murmur in that way known to the freakishly bookish "I read that."

It was in undergrad. Such an undergrad type of book. Her style is all meathooks and dynamite. Not to say it wasn't salient- I still shudder and remove myself from engaging with the more dense and sci-fi sterile tomes of Frenchified Filosophy- "gunk" was the fun and bracing and refreshingly colloquial term she used. I have always enjoyed her insouciance. She's a whip-smart cultural critic when she's not trying to be uber edgy, provocative, obsterperously outrageous. It was exciting to read back when I was 18 or so, on a very radical, if solicitous and self-righteous campus, just coming into some *buildungsroman* awareness of the political myself, after painfully shedding religious terpitude.

Paglia was the jolting breath of life to me, at that tender age when sex is more in the head than anywhere else. And it was a lot of fun, energizing indeed, to read her one woman kulturkampf against the squares and the prudes and the persnickities. She gave me a jolt of sugary, near-lucidating brain energy, maybe a really cold fanta for the burgeoning belletrist. It made me want to at least dream of being a provocative intellectual myself one day (one day! one day!) and stun the moneyed, literate boobooise by talking about orgasms, Balzac, Bergman, and Led Zeppelin on a daytime talk show. I used to have a crush on her. Now she's more like a kooky old aunt I remember hanging out with before I left for summer camp.

When I found out she was in Yale in the 70's in Bloom's class I asked a teacher I knew could be placed in the same milieu if he knew of her at all and he said with a certain kind of poky nonchalance that he did- he sat next to her in class, in fact. Wow. What was she like?

"Wimpy little kissass."

Helena says

Q: What does 400 pound [metaphorically] controversial gender theory intellectual write about?

A: Whatever She Wants.

[start with "sexual personae," to really get an idea of the substantive genius of Lady C. This is pure indulgent joy, with a lot of really sharp and eye opening cultural criticism lying around in the set dressing.]
