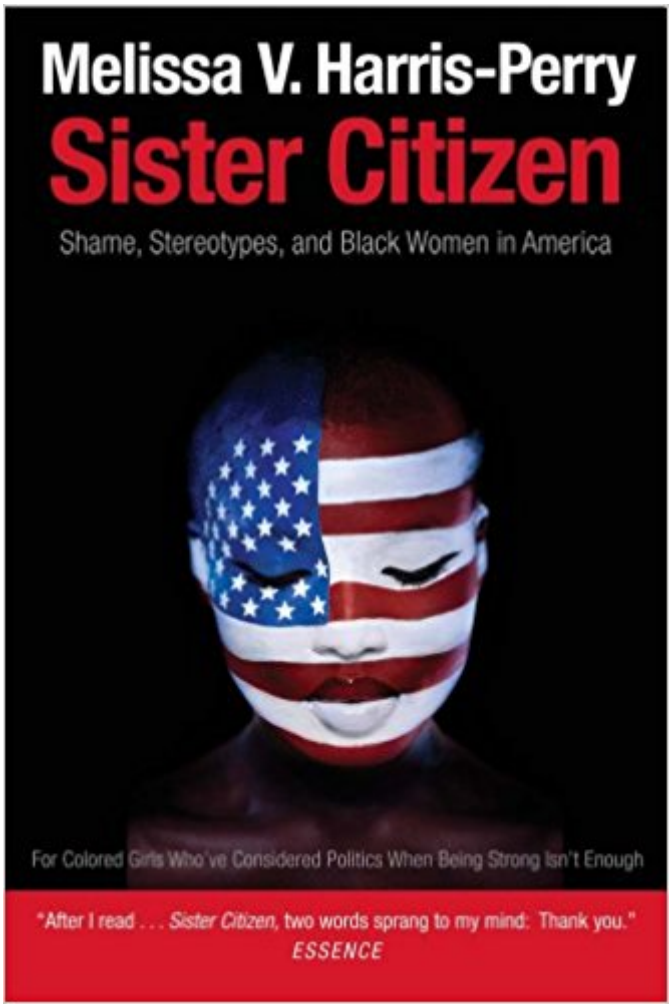
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Sister Citizen: Shame, Stereotypes, And Black Women In America



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Synopsis

Jezebel’s sexual lasciviousness, Mammy’s devotion, and Sapphire’s outspoken angerÃ¢â ¬â •these are among the most persistent stereotypes that black women encounter in contemporary American life. Hurtful and dishonest, such representations force African American women to navigate a virtual crooked room that shames them and shapes their experiences as citizens. Many respond by assuming a mantle of strength that may convince others, and even themselves, that they do not need help. But as a result, the unique political issues of black women are often ignored and marginalized. In this groundbreaking book, Melissa V. Harris-Perry uses multiple methods of inquiry, including literary analysis, political theory, focus groups, surveys, and experimental research, to understand more deeply black women’s political and emotional responses to pervasive negative race and gender images. Not a traditional political science work concerned with office-seeking, voting, or ideology, Sister Citizen instead explores how African American women understand themselves as citizens and what they expect from political organizing. Harris-Perry shows that the shared struggle to preserve an authentic self and secure recognition as a citizen links together black women in America, from the anonymous survivors of Hurricane Katrina to the current First Lady of the United States.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Astonishing. . . .Ã Â Sister Citizen is written for the benefit of all AmericansÃ¢â ¬â •sister citizens, brother citizens, and anyone else who cares about the way this country works."Ã¢â ¬â •Tayari

Jones, San Francisco ChronicleÃ Â "This is the beauty of the book. . . . The insight and grace with which Harris-Perry tackles the thorny issue of African American womenÃ¢â ¬â„¢s identity politics makes it a must-read."Ã¢â ¬â •Jordan Kisner, SlateÃ Â "After I read Melissa Harris-Perry's new effort, Sister Citizen, two words sprang to my mind: Thank you. . . . [She] convincingly argues that tired images of Black women as castrating shrews, neck-rolling round-the-way girls and long-suffering, asexual mammies undermine Black women's progress and power. . . . She wisely uses the powerful chorus of real women to echo her battle cry that all sisters must be seen as true citizens before this country can move forward."Ã¢â ¬â •Patrik Henry Bass, EssenceÃ Â "Harris-Perry offers fascinating observations of how black women are, at times, constricted by their mythology and asserts that their 'experiences act as a democratic litmus test for the nation.'"Ã¢â ¬â •Vanessa Bush, BooklistÃ Â "[Melissa Harris-Perry's] academic research is inspired by a desire to investigate the challenges facing contemporary black Americans and the creative ways that African Americans respond to these challenges."Ã¢â ¬â •Great Neck Record Ã Â "After I read Sister Citizen, two words sprang to my mind: Thank you."Ã¢â ¬â •Patrik Henry Bass, EssenceÃ Â "In Sister Citizen, Harris-Perry combines her skills as a social scientist, political observer, writer and griot to deftly illustrate how the social, economic, and political conditions of black women, particularly those on the margins, are the index for America at large."Ã¢â ¬â •Byron Williams, Oakland TribuneÃ Â "A feminist manifesto endeavoring to free sisters forever from the cruel and very limiting ways in which they continue to be pigeonholed."Ã¢â ¬â •Kam Williams, InsightÃ Â "Sister Citizen carefully documents the complex challenges and hurdles Black women face in the 21st century. Harris-Perry's book is both insightful and provocative. A must read for those interested in learning more about American politics."Ã¢â ¬â •Donna Brazile, Political Commentator for CNN and ABC News and former Interim Chair of the Democratic National Committee "Melissa Harris-Perry is one of our most trenchant readers of modern black life. In Sister Citizen, she gives new life to the idea that 'the personal is political.' This book will change the conversation about the rights, responsibilities, and burdens of citizenship."Ã¢â ¬â •Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Alphonse Fletcher University Professor, Harvard University "This is a broad, ambitious and important book that centers black women at the heart of American politics.Ã Â Harris-Perry broadens our ideas of what counts as political, disrupts our ideas about what the study of American politics should look like, and restores our belief that resistance and struggle can change lives, communities and nations."Ã¢â ¬â •Cathy J. Cohen, author of Boundaries of BlacknessÃ Â and Democracy RemixedÃ Â "In this compelling book, dazzling in its breadth and depth, Melissa Harris-Perry deploysÃ Â the quantitative tools of the

political scientist as expertly asÃ Â sheÃ Â displaysÃ Â theÃ Â qualitative methods of the literary and culturalÃ Â critic.Ã Â Sister Citizen challenges readers to rethink the meaning of politics when it comes to the complex lives of African American women."Ã¢â ¬â •Beverly Guy-Sheftall, founding director, Spelman College Women's Research and Resource CenterÃ Â "Sister Citizen lends empirical heft to the adage the 'personal is political.' Melissa Harris-Perry does an excellent job of weaving literature, social science, and personal accounts to produce a powerful work on black women's politics. Brilliant."Ã¢â ¬â •Lester K. Spence, author of Stare in the Darkness: The Limits of Hip-hop and Black Politics

This groundbreaking book brings to light derogatory stereotypes that shape the experiences of African American women, then assesses the emotional and political costs of the struggle to counteract such negative assumptions.

You will be changed if you read this book. If you cannot see yourself changing from an open discussion of color, race and sexism then please do not read this book, it will only make you angry. However if you have questions, an open mind to these topics, you will feel challenged as you read, being carefully guided through a difficult and at times emotional topic by a skilled professor.I did not know what to expect when I purchaed the book, only a general interest, and respect for the author having seen her on MSNBC. She writes like she talks, articulate and careful to achieve mutual understanding. You will not be preached to and allowed to come to your own conclusions.Be warned your soul will weep, be you white, black, or in between. You will come away at the end with a better understanding of yourself, and the community around you. You will come to understand the hidden truths to the behaviors on the surface. You cannot help but change for the better.

I originally bought this book for class but I am so happy I did. This is a wonderful piece of literature that explores the African American woman’s place in U.S. history and socio-political reams via the cultural, psychological, and stereotypical expectations put on us from U.S. slavery to the 2008 election. I highly recommend. She has cited all of her sources thoroughly but manages to write in a narrative that doesn’t bore or seem like a textbook.

Melissa Perry’s book is a must read for all women but especially women of color. The way she manifest our arduous plight to ward off shame and our struggle for recognition, something all humans strive for, is insightful and on point. Her use of the `crooked room’ theory which refers to

how when we have to confront race and gender stereotypes it becomes almost impossible to figure out which way is up ...furthermore, how we choose to view what it means to stand upright has far reaching implications and consequences on our everyday as well as political choices.She brilliantly identifies the myths and stereotypes via the lens of great works of art by legends such as such as the great Toni Morrison and Zora Neale Hurston. The way she analyzes segments of these books then compares and contrasts them to today is phenomenal. You'll want to reread those books with a more enlightened understanding. Her last chapter on the FLOTUS (first lady of the United States) - Mrs. Michelle Obama - brings it all home.

There's no denying this book its immediate place in Feminist thought. It's already garnered a position in Ms. Magazine's 100 best Feminist works. This book carefully yet accessibly unpacks black women's place in U.S. society at the intersection of race and gender. I'd highly recommend this book to anyone with interest in Civil Rights and/or Feminism. Actually, to anyone involved with the U.S. at all because this book weaves through vital experiences and facts of history so commonly ignored or even maliciously resisted.

I truly liked this book because it takes you from where a black woman has comes from to where a black woman struggles are. I liked how she tied black women religion beliefs in it, well done. Melissa Harris Perry did a great job telling about how black women are overcoming their struggles with the labeled that they have to endure. I would recommend this book to my book club. I also liked all the references she made in the books she referred to. I have picked up three of them and I am now starting on my second book... Mrs. Angelique Clayton...

This work is gripping, engaging, and academic in its research and presentation. It opened my eyes to new ideas and helped me identify more quickly issues that should be addressed head-on in our nation. I have recommended it to all my friends and family. Melissa V. Harris Perry's work is well-supported and the integration of the Katrina narrative throughout the book, engaging.

Melissa Harris-Perry has a great command over the subjects in this book. You can see her perspective on the intersectionality of race and gender in American citizenship, political status, power and the lack thereof very clearly throughout the entire text. She also does a great job of bringing in significant African-American women-centered literature as well as media coverage of recent events in America to better expound on her points. There is a chapter or two that she spends

more time bogged down in technical or historical details than I cared for, so be aware that you may come across that as well. I'd highly recommend it for anyone who wants to become more conscious about the political status of black women in America!

Lots of insight into the struggles of many black women in America. I have not finished the book but just a few chapters in I have felt like my understanding has grown significantly. READ!

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