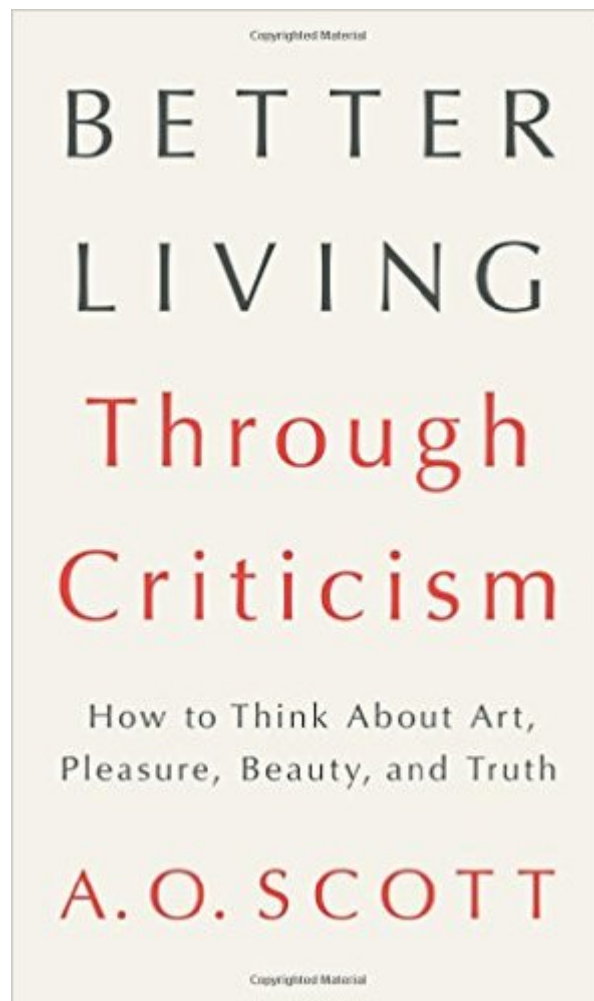


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Better Living Through Criticism: How To Think About Art, Pleasure, Beauty, And Truth



Synopsis

The New York Times film critic shows why we need criticism now more than ever. Few could explain, let alone seek out, a career in criticism. Yet what A.O. Scott shows in *Better Living Through Criticism* is that we are, in fact, all critics: because critical thinking informs almost every aspect of artistic creation, of civil action, of interpersonal life. With penetrating insight and warm humor, Scott shows that while individual critics--himself included--can make mistakes and find flaws where they shouldn't, criticism as a discipline is one of the noblest, most creative, and urgent activities of modern existence. Using his own film criticism as a starting point--everything from his infamous dismissal of the international blockbuster *The Avengers* to his intense affection for Pixar's animated *Ratatouille*--Scott expands outward, easily guiding readers through the complexities of Rilke and Shelley, the origins of Chuck Berry and the Rolling Stones, the power of Marina Abramovich and 'Ode on a Grecian Urn.' Drawing on the long tradition of criticism from Aristotle to Susan Sontag, Scott shows that real criticism was and always will be the breath of fresh air that allows true creativity to thrive. "The time for criticism is always now," Scott explains, "because the imperative to think clearly, to insist on the necessary balance of reason and passion, never goes away."

Book Information

Hardcover: 288 pages

Publisher: Penguin Press (February 9, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1594204837

ISBN-13: 978-1594204838

Product Dimensions: 5.8 x 1 x 9.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.5 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (16 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #86,197 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #42 in Â Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Aesthetics #106 in Â Books > Arts & Photography > Other Media > Film & Video #152 in Â Books > Humor & Entertainment > Movies > History & Criticism

Customer Reviews

BETTER LIVING Through Criticism A. O. SCOTT Reviewed by Author Roy Murry • Who but a lunatic or an idiot would critique a rose or a mountain or a sunset, or for that matter an earthquake or a thunderstorm? • is a line from Mr. Scott's inviting titled dissertation. I hope he got his

doctorâ€™s degree. I am the lunatic that is reviewing a book about criticism written by a prominent critic. What a way to start a Sunday morning with coffee. Kidding aside, I have been reviewing books since college and have as recent as three years ago been writing them for my blog to help promote my novels. If I wasnâ€™t an avid reader with an eclectic background and a college education, I would have been lost in Mr. Scottâ€™s historical interpretation of criticism. From the allegories of Titian or Rubens to Kant in the 1790s to Keats and then to the present centuryâ€™s anointed, Scott gives the reader an education â€“ information for the inquisitive mind. If you are in this reader category or a college student studying World, English, or American Literature, this may be what you need to expand your mind. His study into the psychological reasons humans criticize one another whether it be for poetry, writing, movies, theater or whatever, was an enjoyable read. I wasnâ€™t surprised at the immense connecting content, after reading the Index and Acknowledgement sections while reading the core explanations. As they say, â€œIt takes a village to bring up a child,â€• I say about this book, â€œIt took an army of critics, professors, and writers to put BETTER LIVING Through Criticism into print.â€• Mr. A.O. Scott spent his time wisely to get this thesis into print, but I donâ€™t feel it was written for the general public, where I normally donâ€™t fit.

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