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Thoughts on *Ways of Seeing* series by John Berger

Before this assignment, I had never been exposed to the work of John Berger which was kind of fascinating because I realized my Mom had owned the book all along as it is a highly valued along collegiates for nearly fifty years.

The second episode particularly took me back with how Berger talked about being nude vs. naked. I was thinking about this episode for many days after hearing it and how it related to my own life. Women, really ARE seen that way! It was so grim to really realize that women viewed as objects been a popular viewpoint for so many years. There is something about the formality of an image hung in a museum that somehow gives it a properness. One might think the content is strange but also, maybe that these people wanted to be there. This is in comparison to a pinup photograph, which tends to come off as more “cheap,” or for entertainment. Berger is spot on though when he says “do these paintings celebrate the male voyeur or the woman portrayed?” He states that women are always waiting for permission, waiting to be “available,” even with their own sexuality. I feel like this has been very true within the limits of my own life; constantly hearing negative feedback for any outfit that doesn't read like a burlap sack. I have known women in my life who are confused about whether or not having an active sexual lifestyle makes them feel empowered or used. How they personally feel is affected by what the other person they're involved with thinks.

I really enjoyed seeing the segment where he shows the Jesus portrait to a group of children and they try to determine the sex of this character in the painting based on various

attributes. There is something really refreshing about seeing children. As a child or teenager, I never thought things were confusing and as an adult see everything in grey.

Ah and then when he mentioned the portrayal of women in Western Vs. Non Western Art!! Yes, the male and female are literally equals; they read as parts of a ying yang in “scenes of passion”. Compared to European paintings, where the woman will be lying on display like a piece of furniture.

Everything Berger says is really quite mind blowing. Out of all the readings, this piece is the one that's stayed with me the most.