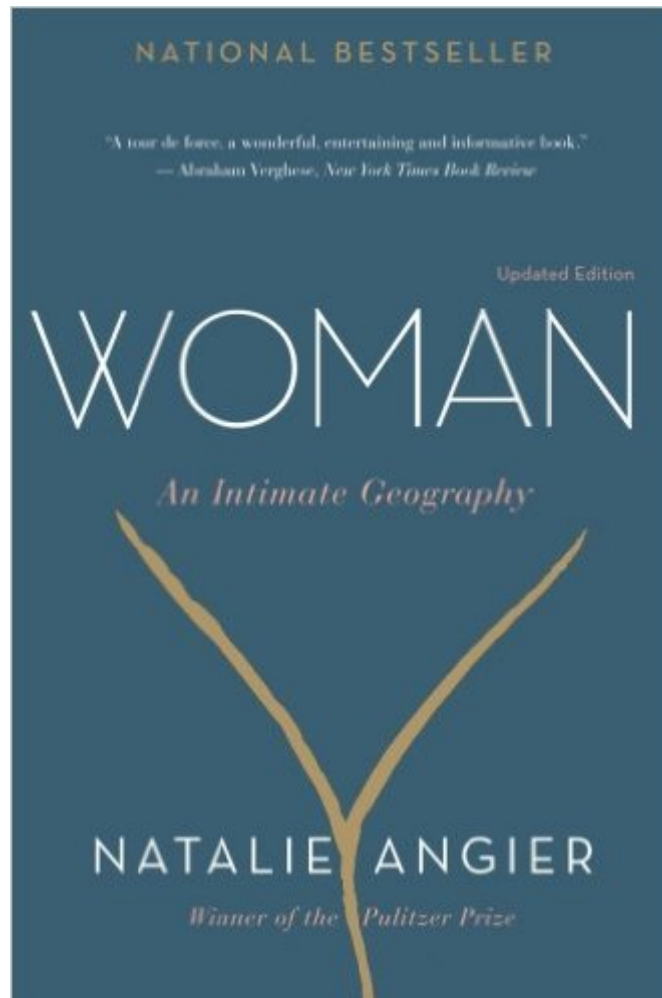


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# Woman: An Intimate Geography



## Synopsis

National Book Award finalist A New York Times notable book "A tour de force, a wonderful, entertaining and informative book." —Abraham Verghese, New York Times Book Review After fifteen years in print, *Woman* remains an essential guide to everything from organs to orgasms and hormones to hysterectomies. With her characteristic clarity, insight, and sheer exuberance of language, bestselling author Natalie Angier cuts through the still prevalent myths and misinformation surrounding the female body, that most enigmatic of evolutionary masterpieces. *Woman* is a witty and assured narrative tour de force with a reliable grasp of science. Updated throughout and with a new introduction bringing readers up to date on the latest science in evolutionary psychology and hormone replacement therapy, this new edition of *Woman* reinvigorates Angier's joyful vision of womanhood.

## Book Information

Paperback: 512 pages

Publisher: Mariner Books; Reprint edition (August 5, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0544228103

ISBN-13: 978-0544228108

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 1.3 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.5 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars — See all reviews (178 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

*Woman: An Intimate Geography* is the most delightful and informative book on the physiology of women I have ever read. The range of Angier's research leaves almost no aspect of the female body unexplored or unexplained. Even, for example, such barbaric rituals as infibulation and clitorodectomy (still shockingly practiced in as many as 28 countries) are depicted for us in a rare combination of absolute fidelity to scientific detail, and with a moral outrage that is paradoxically spiritual. *WOMAN*, throughout its nearly four hundred pages, is exquisitely written. By brilliantly blending her scientific data with acute personal insights and by her expert use of language—exuberant and optimistic when the message is merry, solemn and meticulous when the

message is most serious--Angier manages to create for her reader a kind of scientific poetry of the body. Ms. Angier's book should appeal to women of all ages: to adolescents for whom she lucidly illuminates the lovely tapestries of their bodies; to women of child-bearing age whom her encyclopedic information will help in making the difficult reproductive decisions of our era; and it will appeal to older women who have lived through so much feminist history (and turmoil) since Simone de Beauvoir first expelled us from the Garden of Ignorance. Angier's stylistic eloquence bathes us all in her affection and respect for women; she blesses us with the strength and resilience of her language; she nourishes us, evoking our most primordial response even as we absorb her intellectual richness at their source--giving us what every human needs--affection and knowledge, from our stem cells to the final Silence.

This is one of those books that I am considering buying for every woman I know: young, old, of all creeds, races, and religions.... even after completing it I am STILL floored by its appropriate, humorous, scientific, lyrical, and profound words. It is empowering without any negativism. There is not a shread of male-bashing in this work of art. Natalie Angier is a science writer for the New York Times and her work is infused with just enough science to make all the fascinating issues she covers comprehensible to any and everyone who reads this book. She covers the female body like no one ever has, and I don't just mean the chapters on breasts, the uterus, and the ovaries, but the hormones, the menstrual cycles, nursing babies, menopause, exercise, chemistry, and the psychology of being a woman. I wish so much that this amazing piece of work had been around when I was 18 and wondering what the hell was WRONG with me! (nothing. apparently. But who can tell an 18 year old anything.... maybe if I could have read it.....). Angiers carefully weaves together the myths, the legends, the cultures, and even the misogyny from where we ALL come and gracefully and humorously meshes them with the studies, the sciences, the theories and the facts, and gives the reader an entire body of work on all of the issues about ourselves we are curious about. It is book that teaches you something fascinating about how and why you are and work and play and love. One of the themes that surrepticiously repeats in this book is the completely normal, completely natural, "you are SO ok - it's laughable to think otherwise" theme. Women are complex and complicated creatures and we owe that to this magnificent temple called the body and we now have all the evidence and joy in this book to know that.

.. others have missed the point of *Woman*, that it is a book celebrating female physiology and biology in a way that it often has not been by the (typically now but almost always in years past)

male science writers. This is not to say that there are no good books about the female body, simply that this once should be taken in the construct in which it was conceived. Angier certainly does convey the wonder of the female body, the absolute miracle of the biology that creates and sustains life. And she also makes a compelling case for the argument that the biology of women has traditionally been seen as 'other,' with the norm being male, and that writing, opinion and diagnoses (particularly psychological) have often sprung from this misconception - the fact that every fetus starts off as female still does nothing to convince people that women are not the second sex. Many of the recent books I've read in evolutionary biology highlight this basic dichotomy, with the male traits still somehow the 'better,' more highly evolved ones (of course, that many female writers feel differently illustrates clearly how science, a 'rational,' 'logical' and 'intellectual' discipline is nevertheless highly subjective). I think that *Woman* is marvelous in its celebration of woman and her unique capacity to give birth (with the help, of course...). The myths about menstruation that have been around forever - including the current theory du jour that women don't NEED to menstruate - have made it a curse, a major pain, a source of suffering, and it is amazingly refreshing to have it and other parts of being female actually spoken of in wonder at nature's incredible artistry to devise such cool ways of keeping a woman's body healthy. I am not a scientist, so I cannot vouch for the accuracy of her scientific data, but I did learn a lot that has been borne out in other things that I've read. Angier's wit, intelligence and incredible writing made it impossible for me to put this book down, and I have since then recommended it to many women who have loved it - and who got sick of me saying 'wanna hear something cool?' I think this book is also important in the way it approaches female biology, not as something incidental but as part of the miracle of nature. In a society in which women are encouraged to hate their bodies, I think this book has incredible significance and recommend it most highly. It is, however, as much a social commentary as anything else, so for 'pure' science you might, as others have suggested here, want to look elsewhere as well.

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