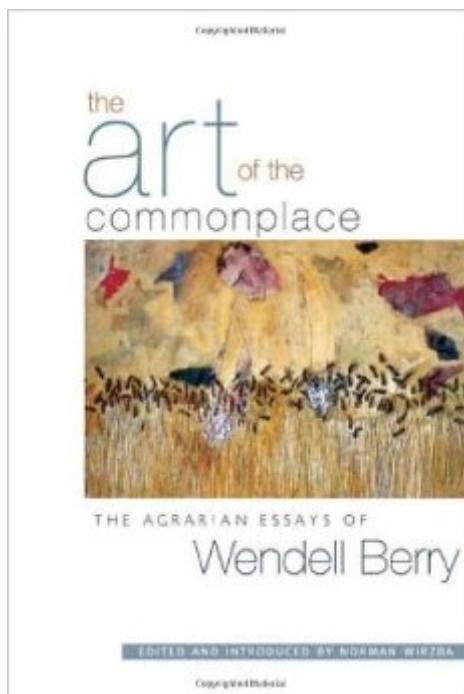


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The Art Of The Commonplace: The Agrarian Essays Of Wendell Berry



Synopsis

"Here is a human being speaking with calm and sanity out of the wilderness. We would do well to hear him." The Washington Post Book WorldArt of the Commonplace gathers twenty essays by Wendell Berry that offer an agrarian alternative to our dominant urban culture. Grouped around five themes—an agrarian critique of culture, agrarian fundamentals, agrarian economics, agrarian religion, and geo-biography—these essays promote a clearly defined and compelling vision important to all people dissatisfied with the stress, anxiety, disease, and destructiveness of contemporary American culture. Why is agriculture becoming culturally irrelevant, and at what cost? What are the forces of social disintegration and how might they be reversed? How might men and women live together in ways that benefit both? And, how does the corporate takeover of social institutions and economic practices contribute to the destruction of human and natural environments? Through his staunch support of local economies, his defense of farming communities, and his call for family integrity, Berry emerges as the champion of responsibilities and priorities that serve the health, vitality and happiness of the whole community of creation.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book took me more time to get through than any other I can recall, page for page, because I had to constantly set it down and take notes. In fantastic irony I was taking these notes on my phone and emailing them to myself. Berry would be so horrified! I ended up with about 6,000 words of notes from this, and that's from having read half the essays (generally I take about 0 notes when reading a text). As a young suburbanite who considers himself extremely "progressive" and very pro

government, as someone who has made a life of living off fake food, as an atheist, as a rationalist obsessed with finding all the correct answers and believing we will find them in the laboratory, and as a current student at an agricultural university where the agriculture department is invisible (and committed to biotechnology) and everything else is business, I was taken by this selection of essays and essentially thrown against the wall. I've absolutely never been so influenced by a single text in my life. Berry is the first person I have ever conversed with (and because of the way this man writes it feels like I did converse with him) who could explain traditional religious ideals in terms of their actual practical application. As a student of literature, despite my societal and technologically ingrained commitment to specialization and fragmentation and fracture, I at least recognize that there is something to a story, something that is difficult, right now, to explain in terms of a series of chemical reactions in the reader's mind. Don't misunderstand me: I am an atheist and a materialist still, but that's exactly the point. Berry, despite his protestantism, explains everything in the most rational and sequential way possible.

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