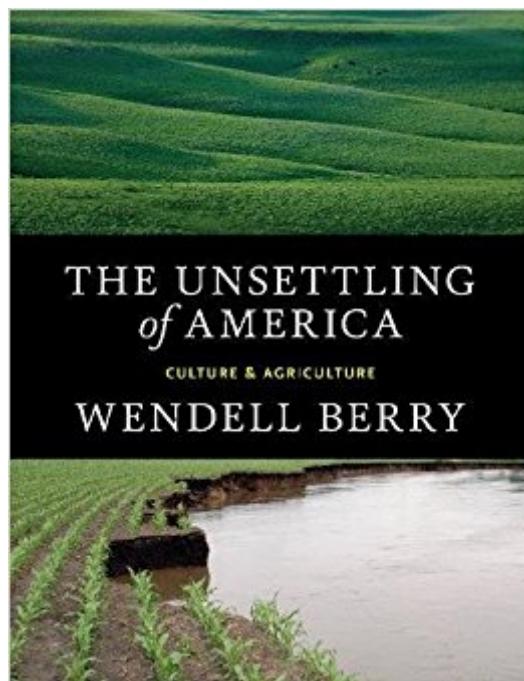


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# The Unsettling Of America: Culture & Agriculture



## Synopsis

Since its publication by Sierra Club Books in 1977, *The Unsettling of America* has been recognized as a classic of American letters. In it, Wendell Berry argues that good farming is a cultural development and spiritual discipline. Today's agribusiness, however, takes farming out of its cultural context and away from families. As a result, we as a nation are more estranged from the land; from the intimate knowledge, love, and care of it. Sadly, his arguments and observations are more relevant than ever. We continue to suffer loss of community, the devaluation of human work, and the destruction of nature under an economic system dedicated to the mechanistic pursuit of products and profits. Although this book has not had the happy fate of being proved wrong, Berry writes, there are good people working to make something comely and enduring of our life on this earth. Wendell Berry is one of those people, writing and working, as ever, with passion, eloquence, and conviction.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Wendell Berry is the author of more than fifty books of poetry, fiction, and essays. He was recently awarded the National Humanities Medal, the Cleanth Brooks Medal for Lifetime Achievement by the Fellowship of Southern Writers, and the Louis Bromfield Society Award. For more than forty years he has lived and farmed with his wife, Tanya, in Kentucky.

Eye opening exposure of a fundamental human weakness for modern man. In the opening the author explains that the book is a criticism so if you're looking for immediate solutions or feel good

stuff then don't read it. Here is a paragraph from page 20 that gets at the book's thrust.QUOTE TO END

We are dealing, then, with an absurdity that is not a quirk or an accident, but is fundamental to our character as a people. The split between what we think and what we do is profound. It is not just possible, it is altogether to be expected, that our society would produce conservationists who invest in stripmining companies, just as it must inevitably produce asthmatic executives whose industries pollute the air and vice-presidents of pesticide corporations whose children are dying of cancer. And these people will tell you that this is the way the "real world" works. They will pride themselves on their sacrifices for "our standard of living." They will call themselves "practical men" and "hardheaded realists." And they will have their justifications in abundance from intellectuals, college professors, clergymen, politicians. The viciousness of a mentality that can look complacently upon disease as "part of the cost" would be obvious to any child. But this is the "realism" of millions of modern adults.

Unless you looked, a reader enjoying The Unsettling of America is unlikely to guess that it was published in 1970, The message and issues presented are that current. You might wonder a bit here and there, but you wouldn't guess. I'm now in my 9th year living in Mexico. I've paid close attention to the indigenous culture, which is grounded in a still-powerful connection between Natural Forces ... soil, rainfall, water (Water Is Life) and crops ... and we human beings. Indigenous peoples all across the planet understand that all life is connected. Buckminster Fuller named it decades ago: Our Spaceship Earth. For an urbanite (as most of us are), this might be a challenging introduction to basic issues: soil health, crop rotation, agroecology (applying ecological principles to agriculture). But the environmental challenges posed by industrial agriculture, climate change -- and yes, corporate capitalism and globalism -- are such, that having read Wendell Berry's work as an introduction, the urban reader will begin to consider in a new light these issues raised ... and raised they are ... especially outside the United States. Simply stated: Read it.

I had been reading food-related books (Dan Barber & Michael Pollan) and kept hearing the name Wendell Berry come up. It is so wild to hear that over 30 years ago, much of the knowledge & ideas that are now becoming more mainstream were already known about. The book questions our societal values and calls for introspection and action for change in the exuberantly wasteful way we live. I believe this is a deeply enriching book that anybody would do well to read.

An important book by one of our times' most important thinkers and writers. Wendell Berry's

essays--since "The Long-Legged House" in the 1960s--have been significant contributions to the argument for America's survival. Farmer, poet, novelist, essayist, thinker: if American has a conscience, its name is Wendell Berry. There is no other voice in the United States as important as his. A must read--twenty volumes of must reads--for anyone who wants a future for this precariously occupied world of ours. Bert Hornback

A very nice an interesting read. Well worth the time and focus.

This is a quick way to get started loving Wendell Barry!

Classic book that is just as relevant today as it was when it was published. Wendell Berry is awesome.

It's amazing how a book written in the 70's about farming is as applicable today as it was then.

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