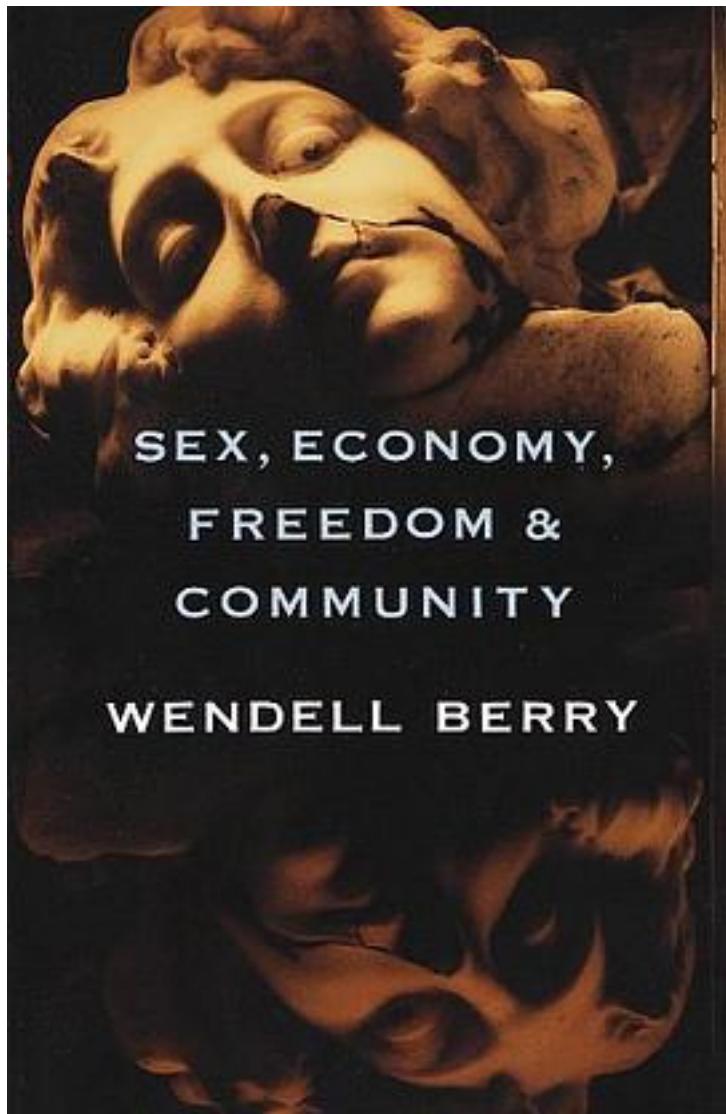


Sex, Economy, Freedom & Community



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In this new collection of essays, Wendell Berry continues his work as one of America's most necessary social commentators. With wisdom and clear, ringing prose, he tackles head-on some of the most difficult problems which face us as we near the end of the twentieth century.

Berry begins the title essay with the Anita Hill–Clarence Thomas hearings as an example of a “process that has been well established and well respected for at least two hundred years—the process . . . of community disintegration.” Community, a “locally understood interdependence of local people, local culture, local economy, and local nature,” bound by trust and affection, is “being destroyed by the desires and ambitions of both private and public life which for want of the intervention of community interests, are also destroying one another.”

He then moves on to elucidate connections between sexual brutality and economic brutality, and the role of art and free speech. Berry forcefully addresses America's unabashed pursuit of self-liberation, which he says is “still the strongest force now operating in our society.” As individuals turn away from their community, they conform to a “rootless and placeless monoculture of commercial expectations and products,” buying into the very economic system which is destroying the earth, our communities, and all they represent.

Throughout the book Berry asks, What is appropriate? What is worth conserving from our past and preserving in our present? What is it to be human and truly connected to others? What does it mean to be free?

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