Environment & Society Portal

Multimedia Library Collection: Periodicals

Major, William, "Other Kinds of Violence: Wendell Berry, Industrialism, and Agrarian Pacifism"

Major, William. "Other Kinds of Violence: Wendell Berry, Industrialism, and Agrarian Pacifism." *Environmental Humanities* 3, no. 1 (2013): 25-41. doi:10.1215/22011919-3611221.

This article examines the need to understand pacifism and environmentalism as essentially consonant philosophies and practices, just as a proper theorization of ecocide must also include the violence inherent to industrialism and militarism. Few contemporary writers understand the stakes involved in this conflation as well as Wendell Berry, and few have had more occasion to enact the entwined values of pacifism and environmentalism than he has. Berry therefore marries pacifist politics to a land ethic of care, a union from which emerges an environmentalism highly critical of the violence of American corporate capitalism and militarism, the apotheosis of which can be seen in the guise of war (Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq, the "War on Terror"). Moreover, such violence has its domestic ecocidal analogy, best evidenced by strip mining and mountaintop removal. Berry's union of peaceableness and agrarian environmentalism does, however, deserve critical examination, for it often rests upon the construction of a sometimes frustrating disconnection between a precious and benign domesticity and a theoretically corrupt public sphere. To be sure, in his reworking of the fluid boundaries between the private and public through which his agrarian ethics is often articulated, Berry simultaneously invokes and disavows a separation he clearly understands to be artificial. In Berry's peaceful agrarian vision, then, the agrarian pacifist who is also by definition an environmentalist must draw upon enormous internal resources if she is to revolutionize the economies of ruin that characterize modern life. (Text from author's abstract)

© William Major 2013. *Environmental Humanities* is available online only and is published under a Creative Commons license (CC BY-NC-ND 3.0).

Download:
Journal article by William Major
https://www.environmentandsociety.org/sites/default/files/key_docs/environmental_humanities-2013-major-25-41.pdf

Related links:

- *Environmental Humanities* website

http://environmentalhumanities.org/

- *Environmental Humanities,* vol. 3
  http://environmentalhumanities.dukejournals.org/content/3/1.toc

Periodicals Collection, Multimedia Library, Environment & Society Portal
Major, William, "Other Kinds of Violence: Wendell Berry, Industrialism, and Agrarian Pacifism"
Source URL: http://www.environmentandsociety.org/node/8020
Print date: 04 November 2026 18:00:59