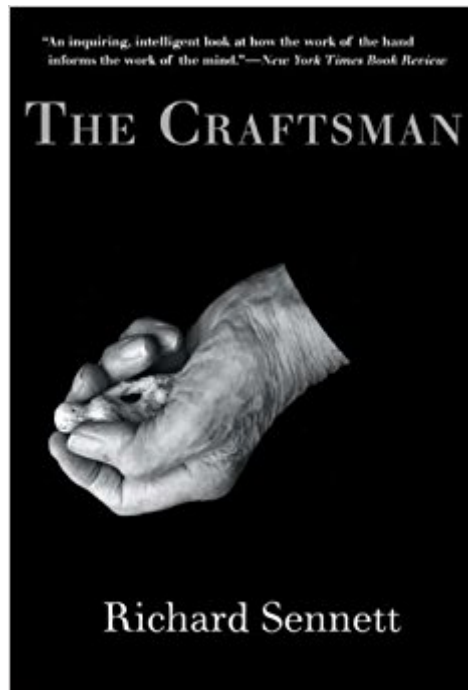




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The Craftsman



Synopsis

Craftsmanship, says Richard Sennett, names the basic human impulse to do a job well for its own sake, and good craftsmanship involves developing skills and focusing on the work rather than ourselves. The computer programmer, the doctor, the artist, and even the parent and citizen all engage in a craftsman's work. In this thought-provoking book, Sennett explores the work of craftsmen past and present, identifies deep connections between material consciousness and ethical values, and challenges received ideas about what constitutes good work in today's world. The Craftsman engages the many dimensions of skill—from the technical demands to the obsessive energy required to do good work. Craftsmanship leads Sennett across time and space, from ancient Roman brickmakers to Renaissance goldsmiths to the printing presses of Enlightenment Paris and the factories of industrial London; in the modern world he explores what experiences of good work are shared by computer programmers, nurses and doctors, musicians, glassblowers, and cooks. Unique in the scope of his thinking, Sennett expands previous notions of crafts and craftsmen and appraises us of the surprising extent to which we can learn about ourselves through the labor of making physical things.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

With this volume, author and sociologist Sennett (The Culture of the New Capitalism) launches a three-book examination of "material culture," asking "what the process of making concrete things reveals to us about ourselves." Taking in everything from Pandora and Hephaestus to Linux programmers, Sennett posits that the spirit of craftsmanship—an "enduring, basic human impulse,

the desire to do a job well for its own sake"-is tragically lacking in many areas of the industrialized world. Craftsmanship, by combining skill, commitment and judgment, establishes a close relationship between head and hand, man and machine, that Sennett asserts is vital to physical, mental and societal well-being; the symptoms of craftsmanship-deficiency can be found in worker demoralization, inefficiency and waning loyalty from both employees and employers, as well as other (largely institutional) effects. Sennett looks at the evolution of craftsmanship and the historical forces which have stultified it, how it's learned in the areas it still thrives (among scientists, artists, cooks, computer programmers and others), and issues of quality and ability (skill, not talent, makes a craftsman). Sennett's learned but inclusive prose proves entirely readable, and the breadth of his curiosity-delving into the minds behind the Manhattan project, touring Soviet suburbs, examining the methods of Julia Childs-take him in a number of fascinating directions. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Sennett considers an array of artisans across different periods, from ancient Chinese chefs to contemporary mobile-phone designers, in this powerful meditation on the "skill of making things well." The template of craftsmanship, he finds, combines a "material consciousness" with a willingness to put in years of practice (a common estimate of the time required to master a craft is ten thousand hours) and a strategic acceptance of ambiguity, rather than an obsessive perfectionism. Sennett's aim is to make us rethink the notion that society benefits most from a workforce trained to respond to the metamorphoses of a global economy. Ultimately, he writes, the difficulties and possibilities of craft can teach "techniques of experience" that help us relate to others, and lead to an "ethically satisfying" pride in one's work. Copyright © 2008 Click here to subscribe to The New Yorker --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Sennett wrote a well-researched book that is also fairly easy to read. It does allow the reader to ponder some fundamental questions.

Great!

The Craftsman, by Richard Sennett [...], is a looking-back-in-anger exercise to search for models to overcome the corrosive character of 21st Century Capitalism. It is a thought-provoking book,

historically grounded and, although apparently humble, hugely ambitious in its proposal. It is a very interesting reading for educators with a sociological perspective.

Husband loved it!

this is what it is ALL about. an excellent point of view.

As expected

Overall, this book is okay. It brings up some pretty interesting points about the history and development of crafts, as well as the use of technique and machines in craft. I say that this book is "okay" because of the fact that there are many times when this author writes on a tangent and then returns to his main point, leaving the reader confused and frustrated. It has made me think about what I consider to be crafts, and also the processes that crafts involve. This book was assigned reading, but it wasn't too bad for assigned reading (college english course).

All the books I've bought, are written very successful.

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