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Recovering the Commons: Democracy, Place, and Global Justice

Herbert Reid, Betsy Taylor

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This penetrating work culls key concepts from grassroots activism to hold critical social theory accountable to the needs, ideas, and organizational practices of the global justice movement. The resulting critique of neoliberalism hinges on place-based struggles of groups marginalized by globalization and represents a brave rethinking of politics, economy, culture, and professionalism.

Providing new practical and conceptual tools for responding to human and environmental crises in Appalachia and beyond, *Recovering the Commons* radically revises the framework of critical social thought regarding our stewardship of the civic and ecological commons. Herbert Reid and Betsy Taylor ally social theory, field sciences, and local knowledge in search of healthy connections among body, place, and commons that form a basis for solidarity as well as a vital infrastructure for a reliable, durable world. Drawing particularly on the work of philosophers Maurice Merleau-Ponty, John Dewey, and Hannah Arendt, the authors reconfigure social theory by ridding it of the aspects that reduce place and community to sets of interchangeable components. Instead, they reconcile complementary pairs such as mind/body and society/nature in the reclamation of public space.

With its analysis embedded in philosophical and material contexts, this penetrating work culls key concepts from grassroots activism to hold critical social theory accountable to the needs, ideas, and organizational practices of the global justice movement. The resulting critique of neoliberalism hinges on place-based struggles of groups marginalized by globalization and represents a brave rethinking of politics, economy, culture, and professionalism.

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