

by Harvey Dyck in Khortitsa in 1999. The significance of this period to the development of transnational scholarly relations cannot be emphasized enough. This volume has laid a solid foundation for future research in the field.

*Aileen Friesen*, Assistant Professor of History and Executive Director of the Plett Foundation, University of Winnipeg, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Joseph R. Wiebe. *The Place of Imagination: Wendell Berry and the Poetics of Community, Affection, and Identity*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2017.

In *The Place of Imagination*, Joseph R. Wiebe provides an account of Wendell Berry's moral imagination via compelling readings of Berry's fiction. Wiebe's project centers on the contention that "fictive journeys" with Berry's characters "can articulate to readers what it means to live well in wounded communities and broken places" (10). *The Place of Imagination* is divided into two sections. The second section contains close readings of three of Berry's novels *The Memory of Old Jack*, *Jayber Crow*, and *Hannah Coulter*. The first section appears to be an attempt to set a foundation for the close readings in the second section, first outlining Berry's understanding of imagination, then presenting his vision of affection and community primarily via the account of race and racism in *The Hidden Wound*, and finally discussing Berry's various narrative styles.

Wiebe is at his best when performing close readings of specific texts. His readings of the novels draw on Berry's own literary sources and inspirations, as well as Wiebe's impressive range of scholarship, to deliver subtle interpretations. Each interpretation presents a substantive and provocative theological vision and way of life. Wiebe draws us into his subject's imaginative world where knowledge is a work of faithful affection to "visible and invisible reality" (83), magnanimous despair and heartbreak expand "the soul's capacity to love" beyond guarantees (111), and the bodily ascents and descents of patient affection unite a person "with the world" (141). Wiebe's reading of *The Hidden Wound* is likewise superb, not only

providing an essential account of how race figures in Berry's work, but offering insightful commentary on the intersections of embodiment, place, work, and desire in it.

Wiebe is not always as persuasive as when he is doing these close readings. In the third chapter, he looks at four novels and short stories in order to argue that, while other narrative styles that Berry employs are ultimately inadequate for his vision, "first-person retrospective reflection is an appropriate style for expressing Berry's understanding of the ethics of affection" (77). Wiebe's readings of the separate texts in this chapter are convincing and illuminating of Berry's vision and style, but this overarching argument feels contrived and overdetermined, seemingly ignoring what Berry accomplishes with, for example, the third-person limited voice in a story like "The Boundary" or the third-person multiple voice in one like "Fidelity."

My biggest concern is the place Wiebe gives to the imagination. Especially in the introduction and the first chapter, he repeatedly claims that for Berry imagination is *the* central and exclusive faculty and starting point for the life of affection (3-4, 6, 9, 15-16, 20, 24-25, 36-38). In Wiebe's construct, one's imagination leads to one's affection and fidelity, which then informs "how one should live . . . as a result" (37). I know of nothing in Berry's writings, including those passages Wiebe cites, that would support such claims, which risk obscuring the extent to which specific practices, places, economies, and technologies engender different kinds of imagination for Berry. When, in *Hannah Coulter*, Nathan Coulter's son-in-law leaves Nathan's stepdaughter for a younger woman, Nathan does not comment on his insufficient imagination, but rather says: "It would have been better for [him] if he had been tired at night" (*Hannah Coulter* [Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2004], 142).

Wiebe likewise misstates the extent to which, for Berry, local culture and tradition is essential for cultivating characters capable of imaginatively enacting an alternative economy. While his subject states that "the answers to the problem of economy are to be found in culture and in character" (*What Are People For?* [Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2010], 198), Wiebe claims that the moral imagination Berry promotes must strip away "preconceived cultural and political frameworks" so that we can *then* "see the world as it

is” (20). The danger here is that imagination starts to appear floating above and imperviously dictating how one approaches any technology or form of life. Berry’s critique loses its edge if we discount how far Berry thinks the body must learn the life of affection through particular economic practices, perhaps not on the farm, as Wiebe frequently emphasizes (44, *sic passim*), but still alien to the world’s dominant economies.

This book is essential for doing work in theology with Wendell Berry. It should be of interest to anyone wanting to cultivate a more affectionate imagination amidst an alienating economy.

*Gerald Ens*, Ph.D. student, Religious Studies, McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario.

J. Lawrence Burkholder. *Recollections of a Sectarian Realist: A Mennonite Life in the Twentieth Century*. Edited by Myrna Burkholder. Elkhart, IN: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 2016.

Based on interviews with C. Arnold Snyder and edited by the subject’s daughter Myrna Burkholder, *Recollections of a Sectarian Realist* is the autobiography of J. Lawrence Burkholder (1917-2010). The book narrates Burkholder’s life story, covering his childhood (chapter 1), college years and early ministry (chapter 2), formative years as a relief worker in India and China (chapter 3), teaching at Goshen and Princeton (chapters 4 and 5), appointment to Harvard Divinity School (chapter 6), and tenure as president of Goshen College (chapter 7). The book also details early parts of his retirement (chapter 8) and includes further “Musings on Pressing Issues of My Time” (chapter 9). In the foreword, John A. Lapp remarks upon Burkholder’s considerable influence on North American Mennonite life and describes how “he challenged the rigidity and self-satisfaction of some traditional [Mennonite] thought” (viii).

Although Burkholder was not strictly or simply a sectarian or a realist, the title of the book hints at the challenge that his life and work were (and may still be) to Mennonite thinking about a range of issues from the place of the church in wider society, to the relationship between power and violence,