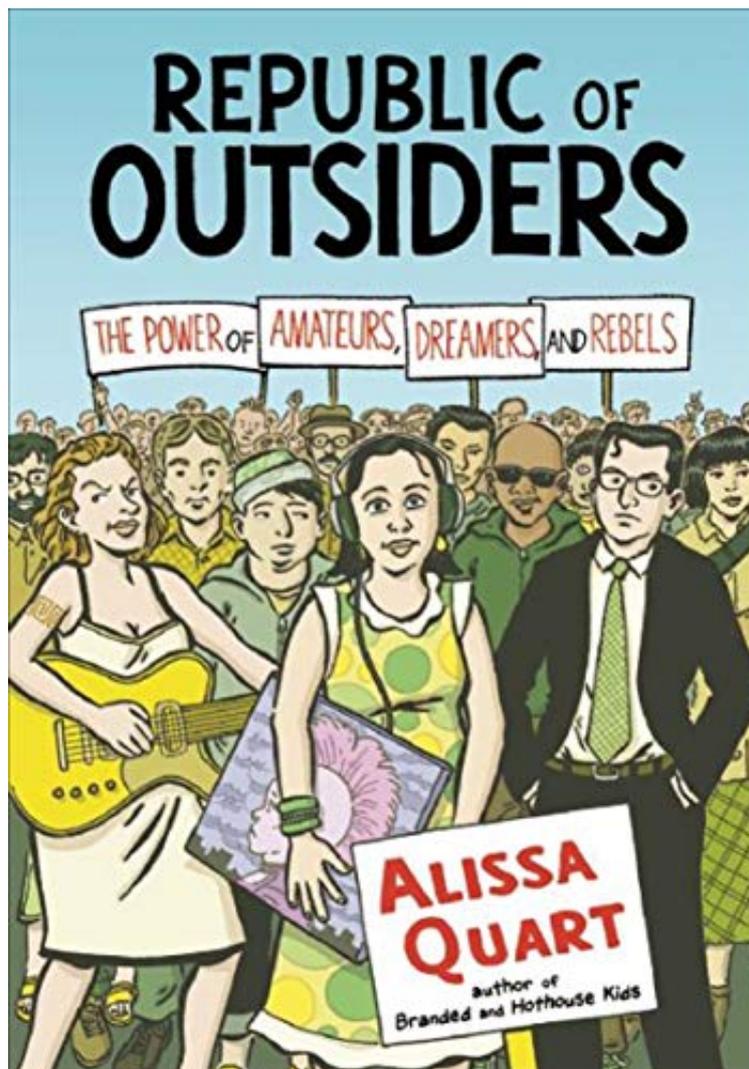


Republic of Outsiders: The Power of Amateurs, Dreamers, and Rebels

by

Alissa Quart



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Synopsis

“Vivid portraits” of individuals and subcultures by a writer who “unmasks the assumptions we make about what counts as normal” (The New York Times). They are outsiders who seek to redefine fields from mental health to diplomacy to music. They push boundaries and transform ideas. They include filmmakers crowdsourcing their work, transgender and autistic activists, and Occupy Wall Street’s “alternative bankers.” These people create and package themselves in a practice cultural critic Alissa Quart dubs “identity innovation.” In this “fascinating” book, Quart introduces us to individuals who have created new structures to keep themselves sane, fulfilled, and, on occasion, paid. This deeply reported book shows how these groups now gather, organize, and create new communities and economies. Without a middleman, freed of established media, and highly mobile, unusual ideas and cultures are able to spread more quickly and find audiences and allies. Republic of Outsiders is a critical examination of those for whom being rebellious, marginal, or amateur is a source of strength (Barbara Ehrenreich). “Even if you don’t consider yourself an outsider or a rebel, Quart’s book has several lessons for creative work, particularly when it comes to making art outside a heavily commercial system.” —Fast Company “One of the smartest cultural interpreters of her generation. In Republic of Outsiders, she mixes sharp-eyed analysis with an empathetic heart. The result is a great read, and a brand-new lens through which to view outsiders, insiders—and ourselves.” —Susan Cain, author of Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can’t Stop Talking

What people say about this book

NB, "Interesting read. I enjoyed reading about groups of people who have banded together for their cause. There isn't anything in the mainstream I have found providing an inside look at what some people face in life and how they have managed to help each other and themselves. Very worthwhile education in humanity."

A-ESS-EFF, "Five Stars. GOOD STUFF!"

Jeff Commissaris, "Worth reading. In this book, the author overviews how the Internet and people that live their lives outside the boxes of conformity are changing the landscape. Even though they may be on the far fringes of society, they are slowly re-shaping the mainstream society as a whole. Each chapter goes through different ways this is being done, be it healthcare, Hollywood, business, banking, and a few other things she talks about, and the opposition and individualist thinking to this. An interesting read, and it's a good thing we have these groups of people or we'd be living in a world filled with mass-consuming, drug-induced, carbon-copy religion, do-as-your-told robots. The book could get a bit redundant to me at times, however, as the theme is stretched and stretched to make it into a full-length book."

Avid reader, "Brilliant Book. This is a fantastic book - timely, intelligent, brilliantly agnostic yet appreciative about subjects of subcultures more used to being judged than understood. As with Quart's other books, this is journalism at its renegade best - as much poetry as reportage, it draws its observations from and about the way we live now with an insight, historical consciousness and sense of the bigger picture so conspicuously lacking elsewhere. Alissa Quart never fears to identify and name a trend, a phenomenon, an epoch, a culture; she recognizes her outsiders by their tools and weapons, their virtues and flaws, their delusions, their idioms, their dress codes... but she never fails to treat her subjects with care, with respect, with a generosity borne out of genuine curiosity, and sometimes even hope. Her outsiders are diverse and often strange, but they are never, in her hands, freakish. It's great to meet the people she has interviewed in a book that knows the theories underpinning so many of the movements and ideas behind various identity-formations and online or off-line activism, but which knows, too, that theory is one thing and practice is another - here, in this book, are the people who take ideas seriously enough to live by them. I cannot recommend it highly enough."

RaK206, "Immensely Insightful Counterculture Exploration. Alissa Quart's new book is an immensely insightful exploration of counterculture, identity innovation, and the boundaries that divide the marginal from the mainstream. Although she brings the carefully calibrated objectivity of a journalist to her examination of these myriad "alternative" groups, there's also something extremely compassionate, almost reverent, in her portrayal of those who are defining themselves in radical terms; in opposition to the status quo. The book's central tenant is that

there is immense value to be gained by observing the radical activities being enacted on the margins. Quart contends that the internet age has allowed for the amplification of renegade voices -- on topics as far ranging as mental illness, feminism, banking, and the generation of art, and that there's something, not everything, but something to be gained by listening. Through painstaking research, and wonderful prose, Quart delivers a message from the "outside" to the "inside," a message of examples that may serve as great instruction for a culture searching for the tools of authentic expression, activist empowerment, and community connection."

Mama Lit, "A really great read. I picked up this book thinking I'd be reading about somewhat marginal communities, only to realize that it offers powerful insights about the making of the mainstream. It was so much fun to read about the creative subcultures Quart chose as her focus. Exposing the "hidden circuitry" of how we are influenced, she explains how identities are created and refined, and how we move forward as a culture. Some of what's on the margins of today will be at the center tomorrow. I highly recommend this book for anyone with an interest in community, cultural interpretation, and the present-day political climate."

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