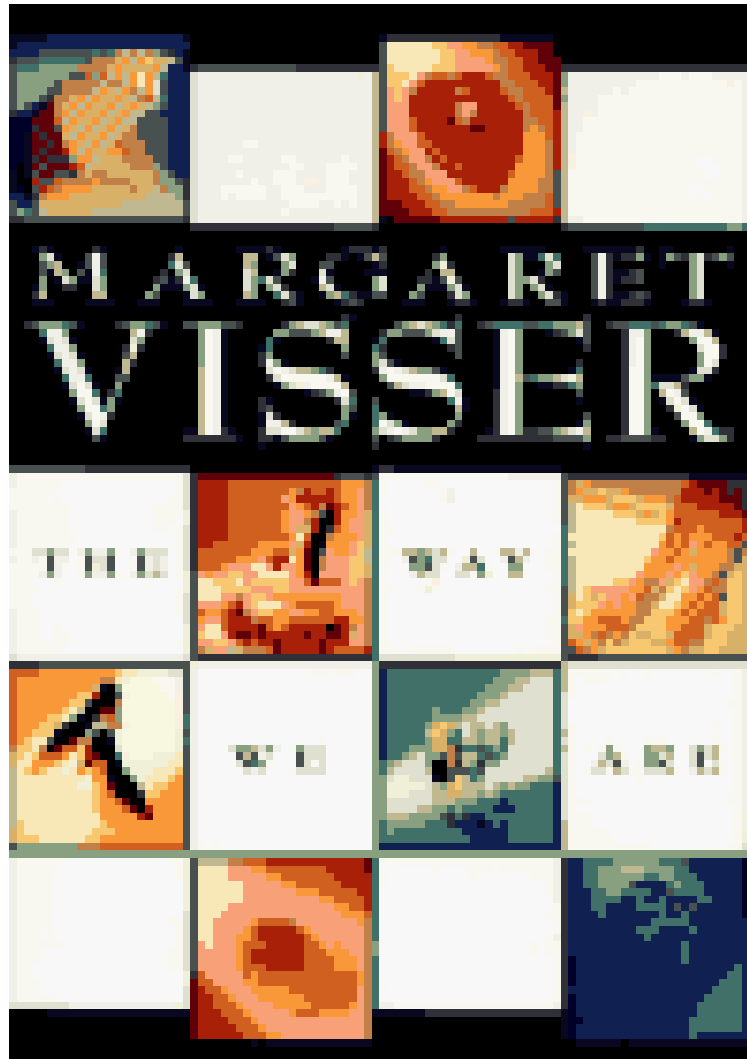


The Way We Are

Margaret Visser

**Download PDF | ePub | DOC | audiobook | ebooks*



 Download

 Read Online

#2641291 in Books 1996-03Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.25 x 6.00 x 1.25l, 1.30 #File Name: 0571198856305 pages | File size: 30.Mb

Margaret Visser : The Way We Are before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Way We Are:

13 of 13 people found the following review helpful. This isn't rocket science...By Jennifer Tzivia MacLeod, author of the Seven Day Manuscript Machine and Writing the Bible for Kids...but it is good, clean, fun urban anthropolgy. Whether she's looking at gloves or stockings or wigs or the way we eat our food, Margaret Visser's essays are always light-hearted journeys through things we'd otherwise take for granted.Other reviewers here have said this book is useless, since the information Visser collects is available elsewhere. That may be true, but what she does is bring it all together and present it in a uniformly enjoyable fashion.I, for one, don't want to pend years sifting through all the

sociology, anthropology and history texts that Visser has, just to unearth the "trivial" tidbits she brings to light. So I'm just grateful that she does all the dirty work, and happy for books like hers that I can flip through in my spare time. 6 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Very Enjoyable! By A Customer Perhaps you ought to be a Visser fan before opening this collection of short newspaper essays -- Much Depends on Dinner is a complete delight. It's definitely a light read, don't take it too seriously, each essay is highly digestible and quietly thoughtful. 3 of 18 people found the following review helpful. WHAT A WASTE OF TIME By A Customer I really hated this book...in fact, I didn't finish it. I found the author to be pretentious and trying way too hard to be cute and witty. I found she drew no conclusions, and think if you want to read funny observations about life, read Jerry Seinfeld's book, or Bill Cosby or Ray Romano. This was a waste of both the author and the reader's time.

FEATURING NEW ESSAYS This marvellous collection of over 60 pithy essays inspired by Vissers column in Saturday Night magazine explores the cultural significance of everyday objects and phenomena such as jelly, high heels, beards, the colour red, tap-dancing and the Easter Bunny.

From Publishers Weekly Award-winning Toronto author Visser (*Much Depends on Dinner*) packs a wealth of intriguing information into this collection of witty essays. All but one of the deceptively short pieces were originally published in Saturday Night magazine and have as their subject matter quite commonplace objects and activities of everyday life. Visser's forte is to take the ordinary and turn it into the extraordinary by providing a cultural history of its evolution (each piece has a bibliography). The practice of showering, for example, was considered dangerous and became habitual only in the last 40 years, after central heating. Until the 1900s, when they established themselves as "professionals," doctors and lawyers accepted tips in the same manner that waiters and hairdressers do today. The concept of paid vacations has its roots in 1920s fascist Italy, where workers were ordered to take time off to exercise their bodies. An insightful volume that will delight both fans and newcomers to Visser's writing. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Visser, a Canadian author and columnist, has won awards for her previous books, including *The Rituals of Dinner* (1991), and has acquired a loyal following in the U.S. In this collection of pithy essays, Visser treats us to the full range of her shrewd powers of observation and skilled articulation. Nothing is too small or too commonplace to elude Visser's keen eye and mind. In fact, she finds that paying sustained attention to "small, humble, taken-for-granted objects and demeanors" reveals the underpinnings of society's shifting attitudes and values. Visser analyzes our food preferences, fashion choices from high heels to blue jeans to suntans, and the etiquette of everything from blushing to kissing, tipping, and spitting. She also discusses the differences between floorsitters and chairsitters, the origin of valentines, the evolution of Santa Claus, and the institutionalization of paid vacations. Visser's perfect, exhilarating prose turns on a dime as she negotiates complex twists and hairpin turns of thought with poise and grace. Donna Seaman From Kirkus s Visser moves on from the culture of food (*The Rituals of Dinner*, 1991, etc.) to the "anthropology" of everyday life, with a series of little essays that originally appeared in the Canadian weekly Saturday Night. It is only appropriate that someone whose introduction to North America 31 years ago was a flying mustard packet should be writing on ordinary things and events. In her introduction, Visser asserts that "clues can be found to our culture's suppositions" from an exploration of such randomly chosen but ubiquitous phenomena as baked beans, tipping, and Santa Claus (a particular favorite who turns up in several essays). Drawing on a combination of history, philology, anthropology, and sharp observation, Visser comments wittily on parades ("one of the few Dionysiac outlets still sanctioned by society as a whole"), the Easter Bunny, the invention of vinegar (whose name derives from the French for "sour wine"), and spitting. Not surprisingly, given that her two previous books dealt with food history and lore, the essays on food and eating are the strongest ones here; an offering on the ingestion of organ meats is particularly clever and laughter-provoking. These essays (each of which is followed by a bibliography) were clearly not intended for consecutive reading, and sitting down with the book for long periods of time is not recommended. Read in large clumps, the essays begin to pall, and a tendency to the pedantic, which in smaller doses is relieved by Visser's warmth and humor, in larger swallows becomes almost overwhelming. The result is a book to be dipped into at random and in short bursts. Reminiscent of, but not as clever as, Roland Barthes's *Mythologies*. -- Copyright 1996, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.