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Kurt Warner

False Idols

How Diversion is Destroying Democracy

CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL SCIENCE

In "False Idols: How Diversion is Destroying Democracy," Kurt Warner delivers a compelling critique of the ways in which modern-day "bread and circuses" erode democracy and critical thinking. With a penetrating gaze, sharp insights, and a nod to the past, this book navigates through various facets of contemporary culture—celebrity worship, sports, politics, art, and media—highlighting how these diversions contribute to the degradation of democratic engagement, human communication, and civic responsibility. "False Idols" is an eye-opening read that not only identifies the problems but also provides a framework for understanding how these diversions operate and affect us. Kurt writes lyrically and with sobering urgency. The book is a vital contribution to contemporary discourse and is highly recommended for anyone concerned about the state of democracy and critical thinking in the modern world.

Lisa Loomis
Dartmouth College

About the author

Kurt Warner, LMSW graduated summa cum laude with a bachelor's degree in English literature from King's College in Pennsylvania and graduated with a master's degree in social work from Binghamton University. He won both of the English awards in his class and has been published in the King's College literary magazine. Warner has been published in the academic journal 'Disability in Society'. He has also been published in a book entitled 'Same Time Next Week: True Stories of Working through Mental Illness'. His book, 'Utopia Realized: In Search of a Just Society', is under contract. His book, 'Victory in Every Fall: The Antaeus Approach to Overcome Disabilities' is also under contract. He was the writer for the Mental Health Association of Cortland County. He is currently working as a psychotherapist with individuals struggling with mental health issues.

Summary

The ancient Roman poet and satirist Juvenal stated that people were distracted by "bread and circuses" rather than engaged in their civic duty. Juvenal argued these bread and circuses, or basic needs and entertainment, consumed the thoughts and lives of the average Roman no matter what was happening in the Republic around them. The powerful political forces in society used many different forms of distraction to enable them to do what they wanted unimpeded by the masses. 'False Idols: How Diversion Is Destroying Democracy' picks up where Juvenal left off. The book is a journey through contemporary America and it illustrates how the concept of "bread and circuses" is as powerful and as relevant now as it was in the days of ancient Rome. It examines the deliberate distractions that are created by the cultivation of false idols. The distractions include the adoration of celebrities and parasocial interactions, the economic culture and the implicit belief systems contained within it, sports and the adoration of athletes, the political system and structure, the art, music, and literature we spend our time listening to and watching, the internet and social media that occupies so much of our time, and the video games that occupy the minds and much of the lives of so many people. As long as everybody is chasing and distracted by these bread and circuses, they are willfully negligent to the goings-on in the very fabric of the social network that is of our society, government, and country. The more negligent they become, the more the democracy continues withering and dying. This book systemically deconstructs a modern society that seems designed to consistently pull us away from rather than draw us toward the creation of a better existence for all.

January 2025 | Hardback 236x160mm | 164 Pages | ISBN: 979-8-8819-0084-7

SUBJECTS Sociology, Philosophy, Political Science

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