



Homer Simpson Ponders Politics: Popular Culture as Political Theory

Joseph J. Foy

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It is often said that the poet Homer "educated" ancient Greece. Joseph J. Foy and Timothy M. Dale have assembled a team of notable scholars who argue, quite persuasively, that Homer Simpson and his ilk are educating America and offering insights into the social order and the human condition.

Following *Homer Simpson Goes to Washington* (winner of the John G. Cawelti Award for Best Textbook or Primer on American and Popular Culture) and *Homer Simpson Marches on Washington*, this exceptional volume reveals how books like J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter*, movies like *Avatar* and *Star Wars*, and television shows like *The Office* and *Firefly* define Americans' perceptions of society. The authors expand the discussion to explore the ways in which political theories play out in popular culture. *Homer Simpson Ponders Politics* includes a foreword by fantasy author Margaret Weis (coauthor/creator of the *Dragonlance* novels and game world) and is divided according to eras and themes in political thought: The first section explores civic virtue, applying the work of Plato and Aristotle to modern media. Part 2 draws on the philosophy of Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Smith as a framework for understanding the role of the state. Part 3 explores the work of theorists such as Kant and Marx, and the final section investigates the ways in which movies and newer forms of electronic media either support or challenge the underlying assumptions of the democratic order. The result is an engaging read for undergraduate students as well as anyone interested in popular culture.

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