



Deforming American Political Thought: Ethnicity, Facticity, and Genre

Michael Shapiro

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By affirming the relativity of the American historical imagination, political theorist Michael J. Shapiro offers a powerful polemic against ethnocentric interpretations of American culture and politics. *Deforming American Political Thought* analyzes issues that range from the nature of Thomas Jefferson's vision of an egalitarian nation to the persistence of racial inequality. Shapiro offers a multifaceted argument that transcends the myopic scope of traditional political discourse. *Deforming American Political Thought* illustrates the various ways in which history, architecture, film, music, literature, and art provide approaches to the comprehension of diverse facets of American political thought from the founding to the present. Using these seemingly disparate disciplines as a framework, Shapiro paints a picture of American political philosophy that is as distinctive as it enlightening. Shapiro explores the historically vital role of dissenting points of view in American politics and asserts its continuing importance in today's political landscape. Exploring such diverse works as slave narratives, contemporary films, genre fiction, and blues and jazz music, Shapiro reveals that there have always been dissenting voices casting doubt on the moral purpose and exceptionalism of the American mind. An unprecedented inquiry into American politics, *Deforming American Political Thought* will surely serve to reinvigorate discussions about the essence of American political thought.

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