



Triumph of Ignorance and Bliss: Pathologies of Public America

James Polk

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“James Polk’s portrait of America is riveting . . . his arguments are sound and convincing. An important, fascinating book written with a strong message.”—Norm Goldman, Bookpleasures.com

It is James Polk’s belief that North Americans have largely abandoned the public sphere for the sake of individual fortune. In *The Triumph of Ignorance and Bliss*, he examines the foundations of a culture that he sees as favoring firepower over diplomacy, passions from the pulpit over rational critique, and the star appeal of media idols over the struggle with real problems. Where engaged public discourse should channel effective dissent, there is ignorance; where public outrage should ignite corrective action to oppose the status quo, there is bliss.

Polk portrays a society sidetracked by television-inspired fantasies of fame, fun, and perfect bodies; where public school systems are close to collapse; where millions live without health insurance; where tax policies openly favor the wealthiest; where corporations brazenly take control, not only of decision-making processes, but also of the very means by which issues, content, and public priorities are defined, communicated, and dealt with; where the optimism of the past has been replaced by a sense of despair and foreboding because of abuses of trust.

Deeply influenced by both the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory and twentieth-century phenomenology, **James Polk** holds a PhD in philosophy for his work on Immanuel Kant and Martin Heidegger. Other publications include essays and translations in social philosophy and comparative social history. Polk currently teaches at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

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