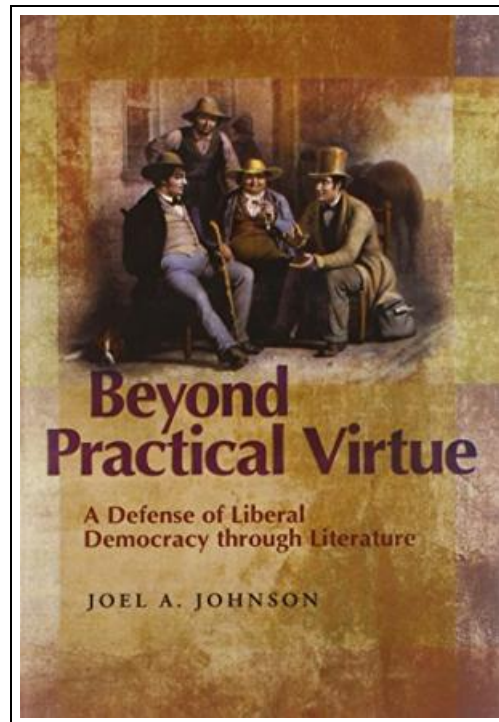


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University of Missouri Press, United States, 2007. Hardback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book. Why hasn't democracy been embraced worldwide as the best form of government? Aesthetic critics of democracy such as Carlyle and Nietzsche have argued that modern democracy, by removing the hierarchical institutions that once elevated society's character, turns citizens into bland, mediocre souls. Joel A. Johnson now offers a rebuttal to these critics, drawing surprising inspiration from American literary classics. Addressing the question from a new perspective, Johnson takes a fresh look at the worth of liberal democracy in these uncertain times and tackles head-on the thorny question of cultural development. Examining the novels of James Fenimore Cooper, Mark Twain, and William Dean Howells, he shows that through their fiction we can gain a better appreciation of the rich detail of everyday life, making the debate relevant to contemporary discussions of liberal democracy. Johnson focuses on an issue that liberals have inadequately addressed: whether people tend to develop fully as individuals under liberal democracy when such a regime does little formally to encourage their development. He argues that, though the liberal fear of state-guided culture is well founded, it should not prevent us from evaluating liberalism's effect on individual flourishing. By extending the debate over the worthiness of liberal democracy to include democracy's effect on individual development, he contends that the democratic experience is much fuller than the aristocratic one and thus expands the faculties of its citizens. Critics of American democracy such as John Rawls have sought to transform it into a social or egalitarian democracy in the European style. Johnson shows that neither the debate between Rawls and his communitarian critics nor the ongoing discussion of the globalization of American values adequately addresses the fundamental critique of democratic culture...



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