



Beasts and Gods: How Democracy Changed Its Meaning and Lost Its Purpose

By Roslyn Fuller



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Democracy is sold to us on its ability to deliver equal opportunity, and to give every citizen an equal voice. Yet time and again we see that this is not the case: power and spoils alike flow to the few, while the many are left with no recourse. What is wrong with democracy?

Nothing, says Roslyn Fuller: what we have simply *isn't* democracy—it's a perversion of it, created by poorly designed electoral systems, weak campaign laws, and broad limitations on participation and representation at nearly every level. Backing her argument with copious empirical data analyzing a wide variety of voting methods across twenty nations, Fuller makes her conclusion irrefutable: if we want true democracy, we have to return to the philosophical insights that originally underpinned it, and thoroughly reexamine the goals and methods of democracy and democratic participation. A radical, damning, yet at the same time fiercely hopeful work, *Beasts and Gods* aims to reconfigure the very foundations of modern society.



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Editorial Review

Review

"*Beast and Gods* is a timely and provocative look behind the cliches of western politics. It recognises that government of the people, by the people, is not what our current democracies feel like to most of their citizens. Fuller returns to the roots of democracy in classical republican practice and rediscovers the sources of the renewal that is urgently required. Her optimism makes this not just a challenging book but a heartening one."

(Irish Times)

"*Beasts and Gods* provides a fascinating contrast between democracy in theory and democracy in practice. It deconstructs the assumptions underlying representative democracy, and debunks the fiction that modern elections are "free and fair." This provocative book draws on lessons from ancient Greece, while advocating direct democracy by decoupling economics from politics."

(Marjorie Cohn, Thomas Jefferson School of Law)

"Every now and then modern society throws up someone who questions its most cherished myths. The how and why of it deserves a book in its own right. Fuller is one such, and in this work she takes on a holy cow, democracy, that the West loves to believe it invented (like all good things). She is a young scholar, but gifted with the right intuition, attitude, and talent to take it on, full frontal, from A to Z. As such the book is a refreshing and highly timely, tour de force, putting both conventional apologetics and hoary critiques to shame. It dares us to rethink the myth, and perhaps even to, finally, infuse some real content to it - before we are all entrapped in an irreversible oligarchy."

(Rajani Kanth, Harvard University)

"A visionary thought experiment . . . guaranteed to make you think differently about the trillion dollar bureaucracies we call democracy today."

(Forbes)

About the Author

Roslyn Fuller is a research associate at Waterford Institute of Technology and legal correspondent for *Russia Today*.

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