



The End of the World and Other Teachable Moments: Jacques Derrida's Final Seminar (Perspectives in Continental Philosophy (FUP))

Michael Naas

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The End of the World and Other Teachable Moments follows the remarkable itinerary of Jacques Derrida's final seminar, "The Beast and the Sovereign" (2001-3), as the explicit themes of the seminar namely, sovereignty and the question of the animal come to be supplemented and interrupted by questions of death, mourning, survival, the archive, and, especially, the end of the world.

The book begins with Derrida's analyses, in the first year of the seminar, of the question of the animal in the context of his other published works on the same subject. It then follows Derrida through the second year of the seminar, presented in Paris from December 2002 to March 2003, as a very different tone begins to make itself heard, one that wavers between melancholy and an extraordinary lucidity with regard to the end. Focusing the entire year on just two works, Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe and Martin Heidegger's seminar of 1929-30, "The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics," the seminar comes to be dominated by questions of the end of the world and of an originary violence that at once gives rise to and effaces all things.

The End of the World and Other Teachable Moments follows Derrida as he responds from week to week to these emerging questions, as well as to important events unfolding around him, both world events the aftermath of 9/11, the American invasion of Iraq and more personal ones, from the death of Maurice Blanchot to intimations of his own death less than two years away. All this, the book concludes, makes this final seminar an absolutely unique work in Derrida's corpus, one that both speaks of death as the end of the world and itself now testifies to that end just one, though hardly the least, of its many teachable moments.

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