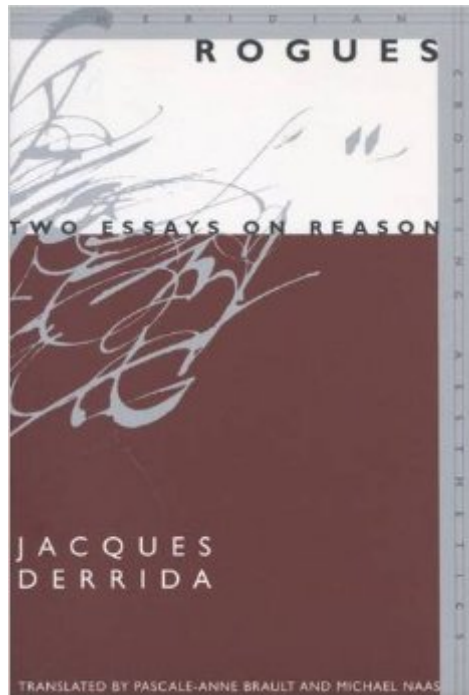


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Rogues: Two Essays On Reason (Meridian: Crossing Aesthetics)



Synopsis

Rogues, published in France under the title *Voyous*, comprises two major lectures that Derrida delivered in 2002 investigating the foundations of the sovereignty of the nation-state. The term "l'état voyou" is the French equivalent of "rogue state," and it is this outlaw designation of certain countries by the leading global powers that Derrida rigorously and exhaustively examines. Derrida examines the history of the concept of sovereignty, engaging with the work of Bodin, Hobbes, Rousseau, Schmitt, and others. Against this background, he delineates his understanding of "democracy to come," which he distinguishes clearly from any kind of regulating ideal or teleological horizon. The idea that democracy will always remain in the future is not a temporal notion. Rather, the phrase would name the coming of the unforeseeable other, the structure of an event beyond calculation and program. Derrida thus aligns this understanding of democracy with the logic he has worked out elsewhere. But it is not just political philosophy that is brought under deconstructive scrutiny here: Derrida provides unflinching and hard-hitting assessments of current political realities, and these essays are highly engaged with events of the post-9/11 world.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Most basically, this book is a study of the notion of democracy. Most basically, Derrida's point is that any enactment of a democratic political regime must in some fundamental ways undermine the very principles of democracy upon which it is founded. Democracy thus only and always exists in and as

this tension between its idea and its realization. This tension cannot be "corrected" but instead defines the very terrain of political judgment and responsibility. This is one of Derrida's most accessible writings--an excellent companion to the essay "Force of Law," which is also quite accessible and which also deals with the tension between idea and realization that defines the political realm. *Rogues* is also a quasi-commentary on Plato's *Republic*, evident in its explicit discussion of the "decline of states" from Book VIII, but also from its ongoing allusions to the themes and text of the *Republic*. Michael Naas's *Derrida From Now On* and Leonard Lawlor's *This is Not Sufficient* both offer commentaries on this text which would be helpful to someone studying the text.

This book displays just how clear, articulate, and direct Derrida can be at times while dealing with a topic that readers can easily understand as relevant to contemporary times and the narrow sense of politics readers often bring to criticize Derrida's texts. Still, this still is a very solid piece of philosophical and social thought and one that can lend meaningful insights into the politics of Derrida's earlier works (e.g. *Differance*, *Post Card*). That said, there are some off-the-cuff moments in here that are perhaps a bit soft and a critical reader may find perturbing. It's not the most philosophically rigorous or tight work by Derrida, but such tends to be the nature of lectures and interviews. Nonetheless, if one wants to see what Derridean thinking brings when confronting the issues of nation states in a "post-9/11 world" (and that's an odd construction in itself) then this book is a must-read.

If you are in to Derrida, political science, contemporary political philosophy, understanding the contemporary political landscape, and notions of a new Democracy to come - this is a must read.

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