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Jacques Derrida, “Preface: Veni,” in *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), x-xv

Initial commentary upon two lectures presented in summer 2002.

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x

- Poem by La Fontaine detailing the parable of the wolf and the lamb. Of special note is the phrase “The strong are always best at proving they're right.”

xi

- Derrida asks what political narrative “might today illustrate this famous morality”
- Does this mean that force overpowers law?
 - Or, conversely, “that judicial reason itself, includes a priori a possible recourse to constraint or coercion and, thus, to a certain violence”
 - Kantian interpretation
 - Represents neither the view of the wolf nor the lamb
- Asks if we still belong to this “genealogy” of force vs. law
- Who bestows the rights?
 - Schmitt defines this as the sovereign
- The two essays here (*Rogues*) echo one another

xii

- After a riff on the theme of Echo and Narcissus, Derrida posits that the underlying theme of this work is that
 - “one does not see *coming* what remains *to come*, the *to-come* turns out to be the most insistent theme of this book”
- “these lectures seem to invoke a certain *reason to come*, as *democracy to come* – in the age of so-called globalization or *mondialisation*”
- “One of the most visible guiding threads for such an analysis would be the huge, urgent, and so very difficult question, the old-new enigma, of *sovereignty*, most notably nation-state sovereignty – whether it be called democratic or not.”

xiii

- Queries what happens when concepts of sovereignty are put to work in the fields of “technoscience, international law, ethico-juridical reason, political practices and rhetorical strategies”
 - Also, “political”, “war” and “terrorism”
 - Situation not created by 9/11 which “media-theatricalized the preconditions [...] of this situation”
- Reflects on the term Rogue State
 - “a state that respects neither its obligations as a state before the law of the world community nor the requirements of international law, a state that flouts the law and scoffs at the constitutional state or state of law”
- The US is the strongest power, so this is where the right of the strongest is going to be played out

xiv

- A fragile distinction is being proposed between “sovereignty” and “unconditionality”
 - Both terms “escape absolutely, like the absolute itself, all relativism”
 - At some points, in these notions are affected by “what or who comes, by what happens or by who happens by, by *the other to come*, a certain unconditional renunciation of sovereignty is required a priori”
- The unforeseeable nature of this coming event means that it is perceived as a “*weak force*”
- “It thus also exceeds, without contesting its pertinence, the useful distinction between “constative” and “performative.””
- “The common affirmation of these two lectures resembles yet again an act of messianic faith – irreligious and without messianism”
- On Khora
 - “which means *locality* in general, spacing, interval”
 - An existence “before”
 - Which receives, rather than “belonging to that which it gives way”

xv

- “No politics, no ethics, and no law can be, as it were, *deduced* from this thought. [...] But should we then conclude that this thought leaves no trace on what is to be done – for example in the politics, the ethics, or the law to come?”
- “the call for a thinking of the event *to come*, of the democracy *to come*, of the reason *to come*. This call bears every hope, although it remains, in itself, without hope.”

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