



The Purest of Bastards: Works of Mourning, Art, and Affirmation in the Thought of Jacques Derrida (American and European Philosophy)

David Farrell Krell

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The “deconstruction” that is commonly seen to be the method of Derrida’s philosophy has an inescapably negative connotation. To counter this view of Derrida’s thought as basically destructive, David Farrell Krell invites readers to understand how it may instead be seen as fundamentally affirmative—just as Nietzsche’s philosophy, so allegedly nihilistic, is at heart a call for tragic affirmation, in *amor fati*.

But, while affirmative, Derrida is also engaged in a thinking of mourning, which he views as the promise of memory—a fragile yet vital promise that binds past and future. The book explores what mourning means in Derrida’s writing and how the labors of mourning and affirmation are mediated by works of art. Thus the book engages many different areas of Derrida’s work, from the classic texts of deconstruction to the more recent meditations on art and mourning.

"This chance [affirmation without issue] can come to us only from you, do you hear me? Do you understand me? . . . And me, the purest of bastards, leaving bastards of all kinds just about everywhere." This passage from Derrida’s *La Carte postale* nicely encapsulates what David Farrell Krell wants to convey about Derrida’s thought—its astonishing mix of negativity and affirmation in his labors of mourning.

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