



Arguing the Apocalypse: A Theory of Millennial Rhetoric

Stephen D. O'Leary

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Apocalyptic expectations of Armageddon and a New Age have been a fixture of the American cultural landscape for centuries. With the approach of the year 2000, such millennial visions seem once again to be increasing in popularity. Stephen O'Leary sheds new light on the age-old phenomenon of the End of the Age by proposing a rhetorical explanation for the appeal of millennialism. Using examples of apocalyptic argument from ancient to modern times, O'Leary identifies the recurring patterns in apocalyptic texts and movements and shows how and why the Christian Apocalypse has been used to support a variety of political stances and programs. The book concludes with a critical review of the recent appearances of doomsday scenarios in our politics and culture, and a meditation on the significance of the Apocalypse in the nuclear age. Arguing the Apocalypse is the most thorough examination of its subject to date: a study of a neglected chapter of our religious and cultural history, a guide to the politics of Armageddon, and a map of millennial consciousness.



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