



The Book of Dead Philosophers

Simon Critchley

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Starting from the premise that philosophers' deaths have been as interesting as their lives, Simon Critchley pulls readers in with quirky stories of how philosophers died and then confronts the big themes - in this case, what 'a good death' means and how to live with the knowledge of death and free from what he calls 'delusions and sophistries'. The book consists of short, sometimes very short, entries on various philosophers, cataloguing the manner of their demises and linking this to their central ideas. These entries would run from a couple of sentences in the case of the Pre-Socratics or minor Medievals and Moderns, up to a paragraph or indeed short essays of about 800 words in the case, say, of Socrates, Seneca, Rousseau, Kant and Nietzsche. Some of the entries would be rather pithy and, hopefully, witty. The book would be framed with an Introduction, and a long concluding chapter on philosophy and death where I would seek to defend what I have already said about the ideal of the philosophical death as a way of denouncing contemporary delusions and sophistries, what Francis Bacon saw as the Idols of the Tribe, the Den, the Market-Place and the Theatre (incidentally, Bacon died in a particularly cold winter in London in 1626 from a cold contracted after trying to stuff a chicken with snow as an experiment in refrigeration). '

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