



The City's End: Two Centuries of Fantasies, Fears, and Premonitions of New York's Destruction

Prof. Max Page

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From nineteenth-century paintings of fires raging through New York City to scenes of Manhattan engulfed by a gigantic wave in the 1998 movie *Deep Impact*, images of the city's end have been prolific and diverse. Why have Americans repeatedly imagined New York's destruction? What do the fantasies of annihilation played out in virtually every form of literature and art mean? This book is the first to investigate two centuries of imagined cataclysms visited upon New York, and to provide a critical historical perspective to our understanding of the events of September 11, 2001.

Max Page examines the destruction fantasies created by American writers and imagemakers at various stages of New York's development. Seen in every medium from newspapers and films to novels, paintings, and computer software, such images, though disturbing, have been continuously popular. Page demonstrates with vivid examples and illustrations how each era's destruction genre has reflected the city's economic, political, racial, or physical tensions, and he also shows how the images have become forces in their own right, shaping Americans' perceptions of New York and of cities in general.

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