THE STATE OF SOVEREIGNTY
Lessons from the Political Fictions of Modernity
Peter Gratton

Following up on the fables and stories surrounding political sovereignty—once theological, now often nationalist—Peter Gratton’s *The State of Sovereignty* takes aim at the central concepts surrounding the post-9/11 political environment. Against those content to conceptualize what has been called the “sovereign exception,” Gratton argues that sovereignty underwent profound changes during modernity, changes tracked by Rousseau, Arendt, Foucault, Agamben, and Derrida. Each of these thinkers investigated the “fictions” and “illusions” of claims to sovereign omnipotence, while outlining what would become the preeminent problems of racism, nationalism, and biopower. Gratton illustrates the principal claims that tie these philosophers together and, more importantly, what lessons they offer, perhaps in spite of themselves, for those thinking about the future of politics. His innovative readings will open new ground for new and longtime readers of these philosophers alike, while confronting how their critiques of sovereignty reshape our conceptions of identity, freedom, and selfhood. The result not only fills a long-standing need for an up-to-date analysis of the concept of sovereignty but is also a tour de force engaging readers in the most important political and philosophical questions today.

**Peter Gratton** is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Memorial University of Newfoundland and the coeditor (with John Panteleimon Manoussakis) of *Traversing the Imaginary: Richard Kearney and the Postmodern Challenge*.  

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