



The God Who Deconstructs Himself: Sovereignty and Subjectivity Between Freud, Bataille, and Derrida (Perspectives in Continental Philosophy)

Nick Mansfield

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No topic has caused more discussion in recent philosophy and political theory than sovereignty. From late Foucault to Agamben, and from Guantanamo Bay to the 'war on terror,' the issue of the extent and the nature of the sovereign has given theoretical debates their currency and urgency. New thinking on sovereignty has always imagined the styles of human selfhood that each regime involves. Each denomination of sovereignty requires a specific mode of subjectivity to explain its meaning and facilitate its operation. The aim of this book is to help outline Jacques Derrida's thinking on sovereignty - a theme which increasingly attracted Derrida towards the end of his career - in its relationship to subjectivity. It investigates the late work *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason*, as not only Derrida's fullest statement of his thinking on sovereignty, but also as the destination of his career-long interest in questions of politics and self-identity. The book argues that in Derrida's thinking of the relationship between sovereignty and subjectivity - and the related themes of unconditionality and ipseity - we can detect the outline of Bataille's adaptation of Freud. Freud completed his 'metapsychology,' by defining the 'economic' nature of subjectivity. In Bataille's hands, this economic theory became a key to the nature of inter-relationship in general, specifically the complex and shifting relationship between subjectivity and power. In playing with Bataille's legacy, Derrida connects not only with the irrepressibly outrageous thinking of philosophy's most self-consciously transgressive thinker, but with the early twentieth century scientific revolution through which 'energy' became ontology. As with so many of the forebears who influenced him, Derrida echoes and adapts Bataille's thinking while radically de-literalising it. The results are crucial for understanding Derrida's views on power, subjectivity and representation, as well as all of the other key themes in late Derrida: hospitality, justice, otherness and the gift.

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