



Case Against the Democratic State: An Essay in Cultural Criticism (Societas)

Gordon Graham

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The history of the last two hundred years is a story of the immense and relentless growth of the State at the expense of other social institutions. We are now so familiar and accepting of the State's pre-eminence in all things, that few think to question it, and most suppose that democratic endorsement legitimizes it. The aim of this essay is to present a sustained and compelling argument against both presumptions. It contends that the gross imbalance of power in the modern State between ruler and ruled is sorely in need of justification, and that democracy simply masks this need with an illusion of popular sovereignty. Although this is an essay in cultural criticism whose argument should be fully accessible to the general reader, it is written from within the European tradition of political philosophy from Plato to Rawls. Gordon Graham is Regius Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of Aberdeen and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

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