



Persons and Things: From the Body's Point of View (Theory Redux)

Roberto Esposito

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What is the relationship between persons and things? And how does the body transform this relationship? In this highly original new book, Roberto Esposito - one of Italy's leading political philosophers - considers these questions and shows that starting from the body, rather than from the thing or the person, can help us to reconsider the status of both.

Ever since its beginnings, our civilization has been based on a strict, unequivocal distinction between persons and things, founded on the instrumental domination of persons over things. This opposition arose out of ancient Roman law and persisted throughout modernity, to take its place in our current global market, where it continues to generate growing contradictions. Although the distinction seems to appear clear and necessary to us, what we are continually witnessing in legal, economic, and technological practice is a reversal of perspectives: some categories of persons are becoming assimilated with things, while some types of things are taking on a personal profile.

With his customary rigour, Roberto Esposito argues that there exists an escape route out of this paradox, constituted by a new point of view founded in the body. Neither a person nor a thing, the human body becomes the decisive element in rethinking the concepts and values that govern our philosophical, legal, and political lexicons.

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