



Immunological Discourse in Political Philosophy: Immunisation and its Discontents (Theory, Technology and Society)

By *Inge Mutsaers*

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Given the propensity of contemporary protection measures such as counterterrorism efforts and fierce protection strategies against viral threats, as well as physical and legal barriers against migration, a number of political philosophers, including Peter Sloterdijk and Roberto Esposito, have claimed that contemporary (political) culture can be characterised by a so-called 'immunisation paradigm'. This book critically examines the intricate entanglement between biological immunological notions and their political philosophical appropriation, whilst studying the 'immunisation response' to recent viral threats, including the Swine Flu pandemic of 2009 and the lab-bred Avian flu threat of 2012, to analyse immunisation as a biopolitical strategy. Offering insights into the polarising tendencies in contemporary political culture resulting from the appropriation of immunological concepts in political thought, the author also shows how political philosophers tend to build on purely defensive understandings of immunity. As such, *Immunological Discourse in Political Philosophy* constitutes a theoretically sophisticated critique of the 'semantic trap' caused by the use of immunological concepts in political philosophy. Arguing for a more versatile and less defensive immunological repertoire, which allows for the development of alternative and less polarised forms of political debate, this book will appeal to scholars of political theory, sociology, philosophy and science and technology studies.

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Immunological Discourse in Political Philosophy: Immunisation and its Discontents (Theory, Technology and Society) By Inge Mutsaers Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #9935228 in Books
- Published on: 2016-03-16
- Original language: English
- Dimensions: 9.75" h x 6.50" w x .75" l,
- Binding: Hardcover
- 166 pages

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Review

'In Inge Mutsaers' excellent book, it is argued that political thought and action is permeated with notions such as purity, contagion, or infection. Since Aristotle, philosophers have always sensed that politics is about nothing else than the provision of immunity. Mutsaers' merit in this highly readable book is that she somehow manages to convey her profound disquiet about this state of affairs to her readership.' Rene ten Bos, Radboud University, The Netherlands 'The often tense relationship between biological and political philosophical concepts is bridged in an admirable manner in this book by an equally profound and accurate analysis of the concept of immunity. A must read for anybody interested in both political and social philosophy as in the work of Peter Sloterdijk.' Huub Dijkstra, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands 'A fine exploration into a fascinating new field where biology and philosophy meet. What is the urgency of immunological insights for modern politics and culture? Starting from ground-breaking thinkers like Esposito and Sloterdijk, Inge Mutsaers offers an original and exciting approach to this question.' Laurens ten Kate, University of Humanistic Studies, Utrecht, The Netherlands

About the Author

Inge Mutsaers completed her doctoral work at Radboud University Nijmegen, the Netherlands, and is currently an independent researcher and policy advisor to the Dutch College of General Practitioners.

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