

First published in German in 2009, *The Second Birth of Human Beings*, by the distinguished political philosopher Tilo Schabert, is a masterpiece of fundamental reflection on human freedom, power, and bodily existence. Whereas the origin of politics is usually identified with the formation of societies here Schabert argues that human existence is a political one from its very beginning in bodily birth. There are figurations of power in human existence in this fact alone, such as numbers, time, thought, eros, the body. And it is these figurations of power that are the forces which render the life of humans political.

The book studies them and hence the presence of politics in the existence of humans *prior* to the establishment of societies and the political institutions and processes shaping human societies. It is shown that the world into which we are born imposes on humans the need for government. Their bodies teach them politics. The human experience of being "subjects to government" starts with the experience of their existence. However, through this experience, humans also learn that within the figurations of power that form their existence they can institute their own government, with the given political forces in their life. They can initiate their "second birth," a civilization of politics whose own essential figuration of power will be freedom. Into the world which they did not build they can insert a world of which they are the builders. In a cosmos thoroughly political ("God is a politician", Schabert says), they become, through governments of their own, co-creators.

This immensely learned and profound book establishes Schabert as a direct intellectual descendant of Hannah Arendt, Eric Voegelin, and Leo Strauss. Now available in English, this book will be essential reading for political and social philosophers.