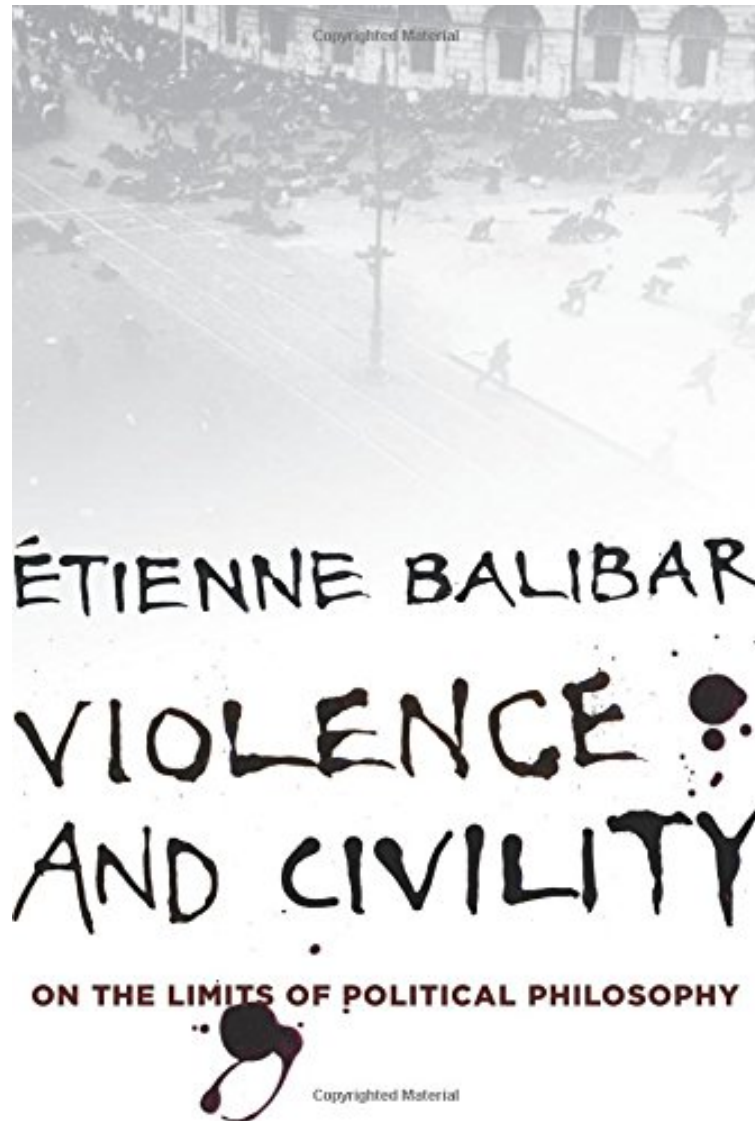


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## Violence and Civility: On the Limits of Political Philosophy (The Wellek Library Lectures)

*tienne Balibar*

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18.Mb

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## On the Limits of Political Philosophy (The Wellek Library Lectures):

In *Violence and Civility*, Étienne Balibar boldly confronts the insidious causes of violence, racism, nationalism, and ethnic cleansing worldwide, as well as mass poverty and dispossession. Through a novel synthesis of theory and empirical studies of contemporary violence, the acclaimed thinker pushes past the limits of political philosophy to reconceive war, revolution, sovereignty, and class. Through the pathbreaking thought of Derrida, Balibar builds a topography of cruelty converted into extremism by ideology, juxtaposing its subjective forms (identity delusions, the desire for extermination, and the pursuit of vengeance) and its objective manifestations (capitalist exploitation and an institutional disregard for life). Engaging with Marx, Hegel, Hobbes, Clausewitz, Schmitt, and Luxemburg, Balibar introduces a new, productive understanding of politics as antiviolence and a fresh approach to achieving and sustaining civility. Rooted in the principles of transformation and empowerment, this theory brings hope to a world increasingly divided even as it draws closer together.

Contemporary political thought has had little success moving from the empirical to the theoretical. This is what Balibar does so well in *Violence and Civility* by working with the concept of Gewalt, the conflation of power and violence. (Donald M. Reid, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) Nothing could be more of our moment than violence, which is to say that nothing is more in need of a proper and strenuous philosophical treatment. That's what you have in this erudite and brilliantly unpredictable book. (Bruce Robbins, author of *Perpetual War: Cosmopolitanism from the Viewpoint of Violence*) *Violence and Civility* offers both a probing philosophical exploration of the relationship of violence to politics and a political philosophy of 'anti-violence' responding to the structural and overt violences of capitalist modernity. Balibar's philosophical archive is extensive and deep; he thinks with Hobbes, Spinoza, Hegel, Weber, Luxemburg, Lacan, Derrida, and, of course, his beloved and inexhaustible Marx. Braided together by his singular philosophical imagination and passion for justice, Balibar's subtle readings result in nothing less than revolutionary political theory for the twenty-first century. (Wendy Brown, University of California, Berkeley and author of *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*) There is no better diagnostician of the enigmas and aporiae of our political condition than Étienne Balibar. His great strengths lie in confronting paradoxes and contradictions that shape contemporary forms of governance and states of subjection. *Violence and Civility* is an exploration of the extremities of historical experience, reconfiguring the place of politics and proposing new forms of representation. This fine work extends his remarkable engagement with 'Equaliberty' and reveals the drama of dialectical practices that drive the lifeworlds of global transition. (Homi Bhabha, Harvard University) Balibar is one of the most rigorous thinkers of contemporary politics... Balibar's reflections in *Violence and Civility*, as elsewhere in his work, are subtle and at times profound. (Notre Dame Philosophical Society) About the Author Étienne Balibar is emeritus professor of philosophy at Paris X Nanterre and emeritus professor of comparative literature at the University of California, Irvine. He is currently professor of modern European philosophy at Kingston University, London, and visiting professor at Columbia University. His books include *The Philosophy of Marx* (1995); *Spinoza and Politics* (1997); and *Equaliberty: Political Essays* (2010). G. M. Goshgarian has taught at universities in the United States, Armenia, Germany, and France, and he is the author of *To Kiss the Chastening Rod*. He has edited and introduced *Le marxisme en philosophie* by Louis Althusser and has translated four other books by Althusser into English. His recent translations from Armenian and German include Zabel Yessayan's *In the Ruins*, Hagop Oshagan's novel *Remnants: The Way of the Womb*, and Boris Groys's *On the New*.