

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

Étienne Balibar



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In this impassioned argument, Étienne Balibar boldly confronts the insidious causes of violence, racism, nationalism, and ethnic cleansing worldwide. Through a novel synthesis of theory and empirical studies of violence drawn from contemporary life, Balibar tests the limits of political philosophy to formulate new, productive conceptions of war, revolution, sovereignty, and class. Using the pathbreaking thought of Derrida as a starting point, Balibar designs 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). Through a lively engagement with Marx, Hegel, Hobbes, Clausewitz, Schmitt, and Luxemburg, Balibar advances a new understanding of politics as antiviolence and a fresh approach to achieving and sustaining civility. Rooted in the principles of transformation and empowerment, Balibar's versatile theory brings hope to a world increasingly divided by difference even as it draws closer together.

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