

2015

Economies of Violence

John Protevi
protevi@lsu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/french_pubs



Part of the [Anthropology Commons](#), and the [Continental Philosophy Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Protevi, John, "Economies of Violence" (2015). *Faculty Publications*. 1.
http://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/french_pubs/1

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Department of French Studies at LSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of LSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact gcoste1@lsu.edu.

ECONOMIES OF VIOLENCE

Institute for the Arts and Humanities
Pennsylvania State University
Distinguished Visiting Professor Lecture
April 7, 2015

John Protevi
Phyllis M Taylor Professor of French Studies
Professor of Philosophy
Louisiana State University

I am deeply honored to speak before so many friends and colleagues at the university that has played such a great role in my life. My thanks go to the Institute for the Arts and Humanities and its director Michael Bérubé, to the departments co-sponsoring the visit, and to Jeffrey Nealon, who put in many hours proposing and then organizing the visit.

I'd like to speak today about "Economies of Violence." In *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze and Guattari write of the differences among imperial States, juridical States, and what they melodramatically call "war machines": "Violence is found everywhere, but under different regimes and economies" (Deleuze and Guattari 1980: 529; 1987: 425).

A regime or economy of violence would be the pattern of approved and disapproved violent *and peaceful* (violence-avoiding, conflict-resolving and mitigating) acts and responses characteristic of a particular social system. I'll exclude what Johanna Oksala (2012) calls "ontological violence" (that which chops up the world, taking this as that, the very form of discursive thought) and "instrumental violence" (the application of force after a political decision-making process, e.g., going to war after a debate). Economies of violence, on the other hand, just are an aspect of social systems, intertwined with political (decision-making), cultural (sense-making), and productive / distributive ("economic") patterns.

I want to shift the focus away from the preoccupation of political philosophy and political theory – the constituted state and its others (domestic criminals, foreign enemies, marginal terrorists) – to look the economy of violence inherent in the practice of "statification" – the ongoing process of producing the state form of social relations as it intersects various non-state socialization practices. ("Statification" is the ugly translation of *étatisation*, but at least it's better than "statizing").

So in a formula, I want to broaden political philosophy / theory to include concerns often confined to anthropology. I will follow Deleuze and Guattari, and some of their anthropological sources on "societies against the state," Pierre Clastres (1974 / 1989; 1980 / 1994; see also Abélès 2014) and Marshall Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (1972), and a very good recent book by Guillaume Sibertin-Blanc, *Politique et État chez Deleuze et Guattari* (2013). In addition, James Scott's *The Art of Not Being Governed* (2009) will be in the background here, as will Christopher Boehm's *Moral Origins* (2012).

Now wait a minute, comes the objection, who says political philosophy / theory ignores statification? Doesn't social contract theory concern statification? Yes, but in the mode of

justification. I want here to look at empirical processes of statification. Asking in the mode of justification if there is "more" or "less" violence in any one State or non-State social form begs the question of the homogeneity of "violence" across social forms allowing its quantitative calculation. Studying economies of violence requires a qualitative study of the social form in which it is embedded: what is the form of life that the economy of violence is producing and reinforcing?

It's precisely the fact that social forms are wider than the state that compels us to study the economy of violence of statification as a mode of struggle in a field of socialization. Statification as a process has an economy of violence, a meta-economy if you will, distinct from the economies of violence of constituted State and "primitive" societies.

That is to say, we will distinguish "secondary violence" (police and courts within a state) from "primary violence" (statification) (Sibertin-Blanc 2013: 60-63). Now "primary" here has two senses, a virtual or topological sense and an actual or chronological sense. Virtually, the violence of statification is prior to the violence of constituted States. Actually or chronologically, there was a first statification in the aftermath of the "Neolithic Revolution," the enslavement of non-State peoples by imperial state conquest, turning foragers, hunters, or horticulturalists into peasants. (Here I'm following the hardcore thesis of Clastres, Deleuze and Guattari, and Scott, denying any gradualism or willing transformation, any peaceful transition from non-State to State through a developmental process. The agonies of the agricultural peasantry are such as to require force: the proof of the necessity of external force lies in the avoidance of, and flight from, States by non-State peoples.) The imbrication of both virtual and actual senses of the "primary violence of statification" is what makes so challenging reading Nietzsche in the *Genealogy* (1967) and following the grappling with *Gewalt* by Kant (1965; discussion in Protevi 2001, Ch 7, and Lesch 2014), by Benjamin (1986; see also Lesch 2014), and by Derrida (1990).

Now talking about the "primary violence" of the statification process does not imply that foragers were peaceful and had violence thrust upon them by the state. Nor, on the other hand, does it imply that "primitive" non-State societies are a "war of all against all," and that statification is on the whole a pacification, a quantitative reduction in violence. All societies have an economy of violence (which includes conflict-avoidance, mitigation, and resolution practices); it's just that, as we will see, not all economies of violence aim at territorial enhancement and enslavement; that is to say, not all violence is State war.

Technically speaking, for Deleuze and Guattari all social forms are more or less tenuous patterns of processes tending toward different social forms. So you can have a concrete social assemblage in which the statification process more or less dominates other practices tending toward the "primitive" non-State via flight, rebellion, and so on. It's even more complex than that as there are other socialization processes than statification and primitivization, but let's focus on them in this talk.

In the talk, I'll take the core of violence as intentional bodily harm on a non-consenting other, but that leaves us with two border cases: "torturous" initiation rites (to which initiates consent), and shunning, ostracism, and exile (non-bodily, but forms of "social violence.") These forms need to be included to discuss the anti-state and anti-war economy of violence of non-State socialization practices. Topologically, in ongoing episodes of statification and "primitive accumulation," and chronologically, in terms of nomadic forager

bands as they serve to resist the institution of the first imperial States of the Neolithic Revolution, with their large-scale agriculture by a peasant or slave class.

What Deleuze and Guattari bring to the table is a wide-ranging materialist ontology, so that we can use the same basic concepts of self-organizing systems in both natural and social registers (Protevi 2009, 2013). So we have to be interdisciplinary: anthropology, political philosophy, developmental systems theory biology, and child development psychology. The ontology here is DeLandeian / Deleuzian: we deal with multiplicities qua dynamic interacting processes in multiple temporal bio-social and somatic registers with critical takeoff points. 1) Temporal: evolutionary, ontogenetic, and inter-generational. 2) Bio-social: group dynamics, family dynamics, and individual / caretaker dynamics. 3) Somatic: neural-endocrinological patterning. Now there are loops here through DST (Developmental Systems Theory) and epigenetics: the patterning we talk about is not so much (though it doesn't exclude) genetic changes as DNA sequences as it is gene expression pathways.

This framework enables me to couple the "politic" to the "body," to connect the social and the somatic. Basically, Deleuze lets us go "above," "below," and "alongside" the subject. That is, "above" to geo-eco-politics, "below" to bio-culture, and alongside to social-techno assemblages. We live at the crossroads: singular subjects arise from a "crystallization" or "resolution" of a distributed network of natural processes and social practices. This is "posthuman turn" if you will, but it's posthuman in wanting to see humans as bio-cultural, distributed, and so on.

So, the forecast of the paper: after a discussion of the anthropological consensus (more or less! – if you think philosophers are contentious, you should read some anthropology!) of social forms, we can theorize the resistance to statification by analyzing the economy of violence of non-state practices. As we will see, those non-state economies of violence are not necessarily that of war, as Clastres supposes. Thus, as Boehm shows, not all anti-state violence is physical (there is also ostracism and exile), nor is it organized as war (vendetta is an anti-war practice). I'll conclude by posing the "Spinoza question" – how does statification induce prosocial allegiance to its patterns (its form of desiring production)? – and by a few remarks on the notion of human nature lurking at the margins here.

SOCIAL FORMS

Following Clastres and Scott, I will mostly talk about non-state vs State socialization processes. These are not teleological stages; States are not the "mature" form of social life; there may have been chronological succession when the first State fell upon the foragers and horticulturalists, but for Deleuze and Guattari this is just the historical instantiation of virtual social processes which form a non-chronological or topological field but which are actualized when processes hit thresholds; contemporary non-state peoples are not "living fossils"; non-state socialization processes are in fact positive mechanisms for preventing state formation.

NON-STATE SOCIETIES. Nomadic forager bands and sedentary horticulturalists. Deleuze and Guattari's terminology is confusing: Deleuze and Guattari use the term "savage" or "primitive" for both nomadic forager bands and for sedentary horticulturalists. They also use "nomad" for the Steppe nomads, who are anti-State more than "pre-State" as are the nomadic forager bands. I'll maintain their use of the term "primitive" though of course the

concept of "non-state society" is more acceptable, as it eliminates the lingering evolutionism of the term "primitive."

Nomadic forager bands. If we use linear dating the nomadic forager band is "pre-state" in the sense that it is the social form for the vast majority of human life, prior to the Neolithic Revolution which brought states, urbanism, and agriculture. Nomadic forager bands are egalitarian / acephalic. There may be a gendered division of labor, but there is no specialization within genders. There is a prestige gradient relative to prowess, but group discussion is the decision-making process; there is rhetoric and persuasion, but no top-down command.

Sedentary horticulturalists have chiefs; they do not command, though they do have perks and must show their prowess in warfare. These are discussed by Pierre Clastres in *Society against the State* and *Archeology of Violence*. Think of the Brazilian society described by Montaigne in "Of Cannibals."

Clastres's discussion in "Society Against the State," of "subsistence economy" and "imperial State slavery" is important and deserves some time here.

Euro-prejudice: subsistence = constant scramble at eDeleuze and Guattarie of starvation / dissolution / war with others. Society does all it can just to let its members get a minimum survival. YET, we also see in first-contact narratives complaints about the "laziness" of natives: they do what they need and then lounge about. So it's an odd kind of "subsistence" if natives were healthy (they weren't on edge of starvation) and had plenty of leisure (they weren't always scrounging for scraps).

So primitives have all the time they would need to develop surplus if they so desired. They refuse to produce useless excess: they produce for their needs. In fact, they do produce a surplus: that is then consumed in festivals when outsiders arrive and / or neighbors are invited. So primitives refuse "work"; they have leisure and affluence (Deleuze and Guattari cite Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics*).

Here we can see initiation rites (*Anti-Oedipus* Chapter 3) as part of the anti-state mechanisms preserving the political positivity of "primitives": you are obligated to distribute production in a way that prevents personal property / hoarding, and requires "dépense."

I mentioned the odd position of initiation rites in an "economy of violence." Even though they can be "torturous", they are "voluntary," or better, key elements in social desiring-production. You are constituted by your desire to distribute to others and consume what they give you. So for Clastres: initiation rites inscribe the "Anti-One" group law; they are hence *anti-state* mechanism – as is, for him, war. Deleuze and Guattari see them as anti-exchange or anti-"economy" practices ("economy" for them presupposes State homogenization and comparison of land, labor, money.) Initiation rites produce "mobile blocs of debt" (should be "obligation"), and hence are anti-state. Initiation ensures saturation of social field with always-unequal relations and "anti-production" that prevents stock. (Again, Deleuze and Guattari cite Sahlins and immediate consumption in AO.)

Now this must be distinguished from Nietzsche's claims about the torture of "debtors" in Essay 2 of the *Genealogy* (1967). Nietzsche is criticized by David Graeber in *Debt* (2011) as projecting atomized individualism backwards, as the first personal relation, prior to any organized society, as opposed to merely being what happens in state society. Obligations in non-state society are not oriented to restoration of pre-contract individuality as are "debts."

STATE SOCIETIES are the last social form we want to discuss here. Can't be too rigorous; I'll rely on an everyday notion of specialized labor and hierarchical relation; command is the major form of decision-making. In particular there is a distinction between agricultural producers and military specialists in early imperial States.

So the real question for Clastres, and for Deleuze and Guattari, is the emergence of the State, the State-event, or statification as that which destroys SWS. It's impossible to conceive an internal mutation of the economy leading the way; primitives would have to desire to change, but their whole way of life produces a different form of desire (Deleuze and Guattari's desiring-production visible here). For Clastres and Deleuze and Guattari, "economics" as production / distribution is not autonomous from social relations in primitive society. You don't have a job that is independent of your family relation: what you produce and how you distribute / consume is determined by your family relations, and that is your desire. (Remember that "desire" for Deleuze and Guattari is not about lack but about flows and breaks: you desire that flows be produced and channeled in a particular pattern.)

So statification must be an external political force that imposes economic transformation. Statification creates exploitation; it doesn't merely enforce it. That is to say, we can't see State as mere instrument of pre-existing ruling / owning class. If there were a prior difference in force allowing an exploitative class, why bother constructing a State to wield force that already exists?

Similarly, if the State protects pre-existing private property, how does that arise in primitive society dedicated to refusing private property? (Contra Rousseau's fable beginning Part 2 of the *Discourse on Inequality* [1997], no one was *fooled* by the first claim to private property!) The primitives know that private property introduces inequality, because the entirety of their social machine is dedicated to producing and reinforcing material equality (pass around produced goods, consume excesses) and the desire for equality: (prosocial affective investment: you feel good when you produce and consume in a network).

Again, what is the mystery of the emergence of the State? In fact Clastres can't determine the conditions for emergence of State; he can only state the conditions of its non-emergence (Sibertin-Blanc 2013).

This is where Sibertin-Blanc lets us see what Deleuze and Guattari are doing with their notion of the Urstaat, the "Ur-State" and the "auto-presupposition" of the State: it needs a surplus to feed its specialists but it needs specialists to produce and other specialists to monitor and confiscate that very surplus. This is a rewriting of Wittfogel (1957), who himself rewrites the Marxist "Asiatic mode of production." The State is not the instrument of

a pre-existing dominant class: it is itself the direct organization of society enabling surplus production which it then immediately appropriates; it is therefore itself what produces the dominant and subordinate classes. It is to address this problem of auto-presupposition that Deleuze and Guattari have recourse in *Anti-Oedipus* to Nietzsche's idea of the break into history of the immediately arriving conquerors.

V. Gordon Childe touches on the problem of speed of the imposition of the State. At the beginning of Chapter 7 of *Man Makes Himself* (1936), after the description of the Neolithic Revolution, which brings together village sedentarization and agriculture, he writes of "Second Revolution" of urbanism, militarization, and statification:

A second revolution transformed some tiny villages of self-sufficing farmers into populous cities, nourished by secondary industries and foreign trade, and regularly organized as States. Some of the episodes which ushered in this transformation can be discerned, if dimly, by prehistory. The scene of the drama lies in the belt of semi-arid countries between the Nile and the Ganges. Here epoch-making inventions seem to have followed one another with breathless speed. (1936: 105).

We can at this point cautiously start to pull apart differing historical instantiations of the factors of the State complex of urbanism, militarism, and agriculture. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari [1987: 428n; 440] themselves cite Jane Jacob's [1970] speculations on Çatalhöyük on the precedence of trade-based urbanism to agriculture, or better, the urban origins of agriculture. There is now the recent "Big Gods" hypothesis taking up the tangled question of military and religious power (Norenzayan 2013). According to Norenzayan's reading of the very early Göbelki Tepe site, its temple construction required large-scale cooperation yet is seemingly independent of centralized military power, hereditary / dynastic power transfer, coerced labor – all of which obtain in the classic imperial State (of whatever geographical size).

Deleuze and Guattari will end up with a topological approach in *A Thousand Plateaus*, avoiding the aporias of the auto-presupposition of the origin of State from an evolutionist position. Sibertin-Blanc shows how Deleuze and Guattari replace Clastres's mysterious "presentiment" of the state by the primitives with an analysis, in the "Apparatus of Capture" chapter of ATP, of the mechanisms of "anticipation / conjuration": the limit vs threshold distinction allows them to analyze always existing tendencies and the virtual thresholds that would require changing the assemblage. Thus statification for Deleuze and Guattari relies on a multiplicity in which the differential processes (limit vs threshold) are control of land, labor, money. It's very important to note that once Deleuze and Guattari make the shift to the topological analysis of socialization processes that statification is not once and for all. For them, as for Scott in *The Art of Not Being Governed* there are anti-state and statification processes always happening.

ECONOMIES OF VIOLENCE

We can classify economies of violence using 4 main categories (intra- and inter-group and identified and anonymous violence). Each main category can be subdivided into non-state and state societies, and further into individual acts and group response.

INTRA-GROUP IDENTIFIED VIOLENCE:

Non-state: individual acts: fights, murder. Group response of ostracism, exile, or "capital punishment."

We have also to account for tolerated infanticide and geronticide in the economy of violence of forager bands; these don't warrant group punishment (Hrady 2009). Infanticide and geronticide are aimed at maintaining mobility / nomadicism / anti-sedentary, whereas ostracism, exile, and group retributive killing are aimed at maintaining equality / immanence / anti-state.

We can note in passing that Clastres and Deleuze and Guattari focus on anti-state mechanisms and don't mention the classic feminist thesis that the Neolithic Revolution, bringing stratification, urbanism, and agriculture also brings patriarchal concern with control of female sexuality / reproduction in service of population growth and hence shift to intolerance of infanticide.

Now according to Christopher Boehm, *Moral Origins* (2012) the nomadic forager economy of violence has an *anti-state* effect: it prevents centralized power of the big man. Boehm is an expert in ethnography of contemporary nomadic foragers. He cautions against the "living fossil" view, yet attempts cautious extrapolation to pre-State social existence.

State: Individual acts of violence are coded as crime, calling forth group response of police and criminal justice. This is the drama of the *Oresteia* in which the state takes the "legitimate use of violence" away from families. As we have seen, Deleuze and Guattari call police and courts within a state "secondary violence," in order to distinguish it from the primary violence of stratification as the enslavement of non-State peoples by imperial state conquest; secondary violence, that of the constituted juridical State, occludes primary violence, turning it "divine."

INTRA-GROUP ANONYMOUS VIOLENCE:

Non-state: This is a void category for nomadic foragers; everyone knows everyone else in the group.

State society: Individual act: again this is crime, something like "mass murder" or "domestic terrorism." Group response: Official: police, justice system. Civil society: lynching, jail-breaks

INTER-GROUP IDENTIFIED VIOLENCE:

Non-state: Individual acts: personal fights, murder. Group response of permitted vengeance targeted to murderer. Sometimes the murderer is killed by his own kin and then the corpse presented to the victim's family; this is quite clearly an anti-war gesture. Very important: According to Boehm, vengeance is an *anti-war* process; it prevents escalation to anonymous inter-group violence. So for Boehm, forager economies of violence are (intra-group) anti-State, and (inter-group) anti-war.

State: once again, crime, with response either trial *in situ* or extradition.

INTER-GROUP ANONYMOUS VIOLENCE or WAR: Here we will be more fine-grained, adding a category for chimpanzee inter-group raiding, nomadic foragers, sedentary horticulturalists, and state societies.

CHIMPANZEES engage in border raids, ambushing members of neighboring bands who are caught too close to the border. Does this deserve the name "war"? Would "raid" or "ambush" be better?

Brian Ferguson (2014) proposes a Human Impact Thesis (basically territorial infringement) to account for contemporary evidence of chimpanzee inter-group raids.

What to do about the relatively peaceful bonobos? Frans DeWaal and Frans Lanting (1998) point out, against the thesis of the biological continuity of "war" from chimps to humans, that relatively peaceful bonobos are just as genetically related to us as chimps. Wrangham and Peterson, *Demonic Males: Apes and the Origins of Human Violence* (1996), however, point to female coalition-building in bonobo society as preventing inter-group violence by male-coalitions. But I think the focus on eco-social difference is not going to be male (chimps and men) vs female (bonobos) but 1) egalitarian foragers (anti-state and anti-war) vs 2) sedentary horticulturalists (anti-state war) vs 3) hierarchical agriculturalists (imperial statification via territorial and slave-producing war).

Demonic Males equivocates between "war" and "violence" (war is a very specific form of violence) and conflates "war" and "border raid" — which they in turn assimilate too quickly to chimpanzee coalitionary killing (Kelly 2005). (In particular, if you define war so as to include revenge raiding then you lose the Boehm thesis that vendetta is anti-war.) They are right that we have to look to eco-social multiplicity, but they overlook "techno" as one dimension (Kelly, PNAS on era of defensive advantage due to adoption of javelins). In sum, *Demonic Males* isn't sufficiently careful in examining forms of human social organization. Specifically, it doesn't investigate egalitarian forager anti-war societies (whose anti-war practices include violence AND peace) because for them all stories of anti-war societies are myths, not ethnography.

NOMADIC FORAGER BANDS. There is a vigorous debate as to whether nomadic forager bands engage in warfare (Keeley 1997; Otterbein 2004; Patou-Mathis 2013; Bowles and Gintis 2011; Fry 2007 and 2013a and 2013b). We have dealt with complaints about the biological continuity thesis above. Here we can simply note that with regard to archeology that Brian Ferguson (2013a) questions the archeological evidence used by Pinker in *Better Angels* (2011). There just aren't that many (or any) pre-State multi-body graves with violent marks on the skeletons. You need multi-body sites because no one denies individual killing, either the murder, or the anti-state "capital punishment" group response, or the anti-war vendetta response in inter-group violence.

Napoleon Chagnon's study (1988), producing theses on war as evolved adaptation, is very controversial, with critics (Albert 1989; Ferguson 2001) and defenders. Criticisms: Social structure: the Yanomami are tribal / sedentary horticulturalist, thus generalizing to nomadic foragers is a questionable move (Fry 2007). History:

Ferguson (1995) traces the centuries-long history of relations between the Yanomami and the Brazilian state. Age: did Chagnon account for the fact that the average age of his killers was @40 and the non-killers @20 (Albert 1989)? If not, then age would be a clear factor in reproductive success. Social status: did Chagnon account for "headman" status? Not all headman are killers, but they all do produce more children than average. Mortality: did Chagnon account for the total overall reproductive success of all who attempted warfare? If he didn't account for the low success of those killed early in their war career then he has biased his study in favor of those who survived. The term "unokai": this is a technical point having to do with how the term "killer" is earned.

Ethnography (summarized in Boehm, *Moral Origins* [2012]) of contemporary foragers shows multiple anti-war mechanisms, including toleration of inter-group vengeance. Raymond Kelly's social structure analysis (*Warless Societies and the Origin of War* [2000]) claims that foragers lack the "logic of social substitution" enabling war qua anonymous group violence. (This would be consistent with Boehm and vengeance as personalizing and hence anti-war.)

In his 2005 PNAS article Raymond Kelly sketches a geo-eco-techno-social multiplicity that results in a period of "intrinsic defensive advantage." Geo: defenders know their territory and can hold ambush positions. Eco: low population density meant defenders can flee if needed. Techno: throwing spears allow inflicting damage on invaders w/ low risk to defenders. Social: invading parties would be non-specialists; defenders would have throwing skills developed in hunting. Kelly concludes by mentioning development of positive peace-seeking inter-group mechanisms (diplomacy, feasts, contests). For Kelly, it's a shift to state military specialization that allows strikes at the home camp that shifts the balance and allows state territorial acquisition and enslavement warfare.

My take-away point for the work on the economy of violence of pre-State nomadic forager bands: with a universal war anthropological perspective, you assume hostility is the default setting for inter-group relations, and war is women-capture (acquisition of reproductive resources: here is economization of evolution). But this is not a rigorous historical materialism; peace-seeking mechanisms are just as materialist as war. In fact, they allow more efficient resource exploitation: the two sides are not afraid to exploit to the border of their territories, as they would be if border raids were frequent.

SEDENTARY HORTICULTURALISTS are non-state, but they do practice war. In fact, Clastres thought war was an *anti-state* process. Despite war command, chiefs have no civil authority, no power to command. Chiefs would have to continually prove their valor in war but precisely the high mortality rate would prevent their consolidation of power enabling command relations rather than persuasion, and preventing nepotism. The political positivity of non-State societies for Clastres consists in having the locus of political power be the tribe itself (1989: 207) such that it exercised "absolute and complete power over all the elements of which it is composed" (1989: 212).

There is a notion of "ritual warfare" (discussed in order to be dismissed in Otterbein 2004) we would have to confront here in a more full discussion. Agreed-upon battles that are actually loose collections of individual insults and weapon-launching, often ending with the first casualty. Some have even talked about the

ritual aspect of many Greek inter-polis battles, which never resulted in territorial conquest and enslavement – the Spartan conquest of the helots being the exception proving the rule.

So for Clastres the chief serves the tribe and his function is to resolve conflicts via oratory. Remember that an economy of violence includes practices that avoid violence. So the chief has to persuade people in conflict to calm down, and to emulate harmonious ancestors.

By the way, Clastres provides here an implicit critique of Nietzsche's "morality of custom" as laid out in Essay 2 of the *Genealogy*. Non-state societies aren't unthinkingly devoted to dead repetition of customary practices. Custom must always be interpreted and applied to current circumstances. The eloquent rhetoric of the chief in guiding dispute-resolution will appeal to the examples of the virtuous ancestors. But there's nothing mechanical here: chiefs can be more or less eloquent and persuasive in their appeals to "the way we've always done things."

STATE SOCIETIES practice territorial warfare using military organization and disciplinary training to enable killing behavior (Protevi 2009 and 2013; on the difficulty of enabling that killing behavior, see Grossman 1996 and Collins 2008).

Sibertin-Blanc reminds us that there's always an undecidability in the notion of Ur-staat as theory of State form: Deleuze and Guattari's work is both materialist history of an apparatus of power (rewriting of, e.g., Engels, *Origin of the Family ...*) and analysis of historical desire / collective subjectivation / group fantasy (rewriting of, e.g., Freud, *Totem and Taboo*) (Sibertin-Blanc 2013: 16)?

That is, from the Deleuzo-Guattarian perspective at the time of *Anti-Oedipus*, the problem of statification is how to reorient desiring production from primitive immanent horizontalism (saturation of social field by always unequal obligations or "mobile blocs of debt") to barbarian transcendent hierarchical center (infinite debt owed to emperor – this is a "real" debt, quantitatively measured and hence qualitatively different from non-quantitative obliged). This is the problem of desire Clastres never solved: he could show primitive machine wards off the State by production of desire for war-prestige in the chiefs, as well as desire for equality and free time by everyone, but could never show how it became desire for the State. That was always a mystery to him, and is why he was fascinated by Étienne de la Boétie, *Discourse on Voluntary Servitude* (2012), especially its subtitle: "Against the One," which he took to be an instance of "political metaphysics" (Clastres 1994: 93-104).

THE SPINOZA QUESTION

In *The Evolved Apprentice* (2012) Kim Sterelny claims there has been an over-estimation of difficulty of cheater detection in small groups. (Hence he is not a supporter of Machiavellian Intelligence theories alone; in fact, cheater detection is less demanding than coordinating cooperation [2012, 7-10].) The real issue is how does cooperation in complex tasks work? His answer, apprenticeship, is fascinating in its own right, but what I want to concentrate on here is the way in which at the end of his book Sterelny poses the question of functionalism, or if you prefer, the Spinoza question: why do people go along with hierarchies when they are at the bottom – or at least not at the top?

Granted, then, that the supreme mystery of despotism, its prop and stay, is to keep men in a state of deception, and with the specious title of religion to cloak the fear by which they must be held in check, so that they will fight for their servitude as if for their salvation, and count it no shame, but the highest honour, to spend their blood and their lives for the glorification of one man. (Spinoza 2002, 389-90 [TTP, Preface])

Let me return to the Big Gods thesis of Norenzayan (2012). How can the State (top-down, centralized violence forcing agricultural labor) instill prosocial behavior in transition from nomadic foragers? There can't simply be only external monitoring and terrorizing punishment, as there are limits to capillary power. That is, local officials, if they are far enough away from the imperial capital, are prone to "corruption" aka self-aggrandizement, but that very distance means they may also then be weak enough to be overthrown and / or be helpless to prevent flight (again, Scott is key here). Here we see a geo-techno-social multiplicity: imperial "force projection" to reinforce tribute / terrorize holdouts depends on terrain / mode of transport / reliability of information / discipline of local authorities and soldiers.

There has to be a way of inducing internal motivation for following the new patterns of social flows and breaks, that is, in the terms of *Anti-Oedipus*, the new desiring production that is now coded in terms of sending surplus to the social machine focused on the transcendent figure of the Emperor rather than web of obligations saturating an immanent social field with excess quickly consumed in feasting. To meet this need, Norenzayan posits "Big Gods," that is, the Eye in the Sky. Forager societies have collective monitoring: they are so small everyone knows who is a good hunter / gatherer / child-care-provider / peace-maker / defender. This small-scale social monitoring needs to be replaced or at least supplemented.

Huebner and Sarkissian (forthcoming) summarize Norenzayan: 1) outsourcing social monitoring to moralizing Big Gods; 2) developing rituals to build and signal commitment; and 3) creating practices to exploit in-group favoritism and tribal psychology. The transition to Big Gods allows central power to handle the secularization transition. In addition, Huebner and Sarkissian point to three other forms of "mutual accountability," so we need to widen "hypothesis space" of forms of social power that allow large-scale anonymous societies.

My takeaway is that the inducement of patterns of motivation is an ongoing field of socialization practices: it's never a clean break between collectivity and atomization; it's a "molecular" field of constant interaction.

Sterelny points to Richerson and Boyd 2005: how do small group cooperation and emotional commitment allow hierarchies to function? (There is a lot here about the proximal motivations of soldiers: the "band of brothers" phenomenon.) Richerson and Boyd distinguish what they call the family emotions (nepotism) from the tribal emotions (groups or prosocial). So how do hierarchies work with people with group or "tribal" prosocial emotions?

Top-down control is generally exerted through a segmentary hierarchy that is adapted to preserve nearly egalitarian relationships at the face-to-face level...The

trick is to construct a formal nested hierarchy of offices, using various mixtures of ascription and achievement to staff the offices.... Selfishness and nepotism [family emotions] ... degrade the effectiveness of social organizations. (Richerson and Boyd 2005: 232-33)

But I think Deleuze and Guattari, in their *Anti-Oedipus* moment, would say that Richerson and Boyd don't give fascist – or even just plain old authoritarian emotional commitment – enough credit here. People will also directly emotionally invest in hierarchies as such (vertically, if you will), not just horizontally to peer groups.

These investments of an unconscious nature can ensure the general submission to a dominant class by making cuts (*coupures*) and segregations pass over into a social field, insofar as it is effectively invested by desire and no longer by interests. A form of social production and reproduction, along with its economic and financial mechanisms, its political formations, and so on, can be desired as such, in whole or in part, independently of the interests of the desiring-subject. It was not by means of a metaphor, even a paternal metaphor, that Hitler was able to sexually arouse the fascists. It is not by means of a metaphor that a banking or stock-market transaction, a claim, a coupon, a credit, is able to arouse people who are not necessarily bankers. And what about the effects of money that grows, money that produces more money? There are socioeconomic "complexes" that are also veritable complexes of the unconscious, and that communicate a voluptuous wave from the top to the bottom of their hierarchy (the military-industrial complex). And ideology, Oedipus, and the phallus have nothing to do with this, because they depend on it rather than being its impetus. For it is a matter of flows, of stocks, of breaks in and fluctuations of flows; desire is present wherever something flows and runs, carrying along with it interested subjects—but also drunken or slumbering subjects—toward lethal destinations. (Deleuze and Guattari 1977, 103-104).

CONCLUSION: HUMAN NATURE

Throughout my work, I address human nature as bio-cultural. Each one of us is a "body politic" that connects the social and the somatic. I avoid the extremes of social constructivism and genetic determinism by claiming we inherit a disposition to prosociality as a minimal human nature that gets fine-tuned by culture. In a formula, our human nature has evolved to be so open to our nurture that it becomes second nature.

Cross-culturally convergent child-rearing practices allow prosociality as emotional investment in social patterns produced and reinforced by complex cooperative altruism. Thus the Spinoza question will have to address child development psychology.

Theories of human nature are a political battleground, and we cannot be intimidated by the cheap cynicism and blustering scientism of the right. For too long, the left adopted social constructivism to fight racist and sexist constructions of human nature. But in the meantime the neoliberal right has distanced itself from old-fashioned racism and sexism to put forth a version of human nature as the individualist, competitive, utility maximizing rational agent, an agent they claim is the result of natural selection in ultra-Darwinian competition. But their monopoly on biological discourse is overthrown by new research; we have to have the

courage to claim that current evolutionary biology and developmental psychology shows that human nature is prosocial in its default setting.

In fact, you need to turn things around. Elinor Ostrom (2005) has a fine article on "Policies that Crowd Out Reciprocity and Collective Action," in which she shows that models that presuppose a population of rational egoists fail to account for "strong reciprocators" (those willing to undergo costs to punish non-conformity involving third parties). But you can produce rational egoists if you design policies assuming need for external motivation. So it's not really that you have to socialize individuals; what you need to do is have policies that atomize the prosocially oriented.

Similarly, in their overreaching claim to be the inheritors of the classical liberals, neoliberals open the door to rehabilitating the theory of moral sentiments proposed by Adam Smith and David Hume. The political challenge of the new view of human nature is to extend the reach of prosocial impulses beyond the in-group, protect them from the negative emotions, and build on them to genuine altruism. (Thanks to Len Lawlor and others, I am aware that this expansion is what Bergson denies is possible in the *Two Sources*.) All this is not to deny the selfish nature of the basic emotions of rage and fear (Panksepp 1998). The key to a fruitful left approach to human nature is studying how such selfish, negative emotions are manipulated, or, more positively, how a social order can be constructed to minimize them and to maximize positive affects. I hope I can contribute to that project.

WORKS CITED

Abélès, Marc. 2014. *Penser au-delà de l'Etat*. Paris: Belin.

Albert, Bruce. 1989. Yanomami 'violence': inclusive fitness or ethnographer's representation? *Current Anthropology* 20.5: 637-640.

Benjamin, Walter. 1986. Critique of Violence. Trans. Edmund Jephcott. In Peter Demetz, ed., *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*. New York: Schocken Books: 277-300.

Boehm, Christopher. 2012. *Moral Origins: The Evolution of Virtue, Altruism, and Shame*. New York: Basic Books.

De la Boétie, Étienne. 2012 [c. 1548]. *Discourse on Voluntary Servitude, or "Against One."* Indianapolis: Hackett.

Bowles, Samuel and Gintis, Herbert. 2011. *A Cooperative Species: Human Reciprocity and Its Evolution*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Chagnon, Napoleon. 1988. Life histories, blood revenge, and warfare in a tribal population. *Science* 318: 636-640.

Childe, V. Gordon. 1936. *Man Makes Himself*. London: Watts.

Clastres, Pierre. 1974. *La Société contre l'état*. Paris: Minuit.

Clastres, Pierre. 1980. *Recherches d'anthropologie politique*. Paris: Seuil.

Clastres, Pierre. 1989. *Society Against the State*. Trans. Robert Hurley and Abe Stein. New York: Zone Books.

Clastres, Pierre. 1994. *Archeology of Violence*. Trans. Jeanine Herman. New York: Semiotext(e).

Collins, Randall. 2008. *Violence: A Micro-sociological Theory*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Darwin, Charles. 2004 (1871). *The Descent of Man*. New York: Penguin.

Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Félix. 1972. *Anti-Œdipe*. Paris: Minuit.

Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Félix. 1977. *Anti-Oedipus*. Trans. R. Hurley, M. Seem, and H.R. Lane. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Félix. 1980. *Mille Plateaux*. Paris: Minuit.

Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Félix. 1987. *A Thousand Plateaus*. Trans. Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Derrida, Jacques. 1990. Force de Loi: Le "Fondement mystique de l'autorité. Trans. Mary Quaintance. Force of Law: The Mystical Foundation of Authority. *Cardozo Law Review* 11: 919-1045.

De Waal, Frans and Lanting, Frans. 1998. *Bonobo: The Forgotten Ape*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Ferguson, Brian. 1995. *Yanomami Warfare: A Political History*. Santa Fe: School for American Research Press.

Ferguson, Brian. 2001. "Materialist, cultural and biological theories on why Yanomami make war." *Anthropological Theory* 1: 99-116.

Ferguson, Brian. 2013a. Pinker's List: Exaggerating Prehistoric War Mortality. Chapter 7 in Fry 2013b.

Ferguson, Brian. 2013b. The Prehistory of War and Peace in Europe and the Near East. Chapter 11 in Fry 2013b.

Ferguson, Brian. 2014. Anthropologist Finds Flaw in Claim That Chimp Raids Are "Adaptive" <http://blogs.scientificamerican.com/cross-check/2014/11/25/anthropologist-finds-flaw-in-claim-that-chimp-raids-are-adaptive/> (accessed 28 March 2015).

Fry, Douglas. 2007. *Beyond War: The Human Potential for Peace*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Fry, Douglas. 2013a. War, Peace and Human Nature: The Challenge of Achieving Scientific Objectivity. Chapter 1 in Fry 2013b.

Fry, Douglas. ed. 2013b. *War, Peace, and Human Nature: The Convergence of Evolutionary and Cultural Views*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Graeber, David. 2011. *Debt: The First Five Thousand Years*. New York: Melville House.

Grossman, David. 1996. *On Killing*. Boston: Little, Brown.

Hrdy, Sarah. 2009. *Mothers and Others: The Evolutionary Origins of Mutual Understanding*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Huebner, Bryce and Sarkissian, Haygop. Forthcoming. Commentary on Norenzayan. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*.

Jacobs, Jane. 1970. *The Economy of Cities*. New York: Vintage.

Kant, Immanuel. 1965. *The Metaphysical Elements of Justice*. Trans. John Ladd. London: Macmillan, 1965.

Keeley, Lawrence. 1997. *War Before Civilization: The Myth of the Peaceful Savage*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Kelly, Raymond. 2000. *Warless Societies and the Origin of War*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Kelly, Raymond. 2005. "The Evolution of Lethal Intergroup Violence." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science* 102.43: 15294–15298, doi: 10.1073/pnas.0505955102

Lesch, Charles. 2014. Against Politics: Walter Benjamin on Justice, Judaism, and the Possibility of Ethics. *American Political Science Review* Vol. 108, No. 1 (February): 218-232.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1967 [1887]. *On the Genealogy of Morals*. Trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage.

Norenzayan, Ara. 2013. *Big Gods: How Religion Transformed Cooperation and Conflict*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Oksala, Johanna. 2012. *Foucault, Politics, and Violence*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

Ostrom, Elinor. 2005. Policies that crowd out reciprocity and collective action. In *Moral Sentiments and Material Interests: The Foundations of Cooperation in Economic Life*, ed. Herbert Gintis, Samuel Bowles, Robert Boyd, and Ernst Fehr, 253-275. CambridgeMA: MIT Press.

Ottebein, Keith. 2004. *How War Began*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press.

Panksepp, Jaak. 1998. *Affective Neuroscience*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Patou-Mathis, Marylène. 2013. *Préhistoire de la Violence et de la Guerre*. Paris: Odile Jacob.

Peterson, Dale and Richard Wrangham. 1997. *Demonic Males: Apes and the Origins of Human Violence*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Pinker, Steven. 2011. *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined*. New York: Viking.

Protevi, John. 2001. *Political Physics: Deleuze, Derrida, and the Body Politic*. London: Athlone Press.

Protevi, John. 2009. *Political Affect: Connecting the Social and the Somatic*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Protevi, John. 2013. *Life, War, Earth: Deleuze and the Sciences*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Richerson, Peter and Boyd, Robert. 2005. *Not By Genes Alone: How Culture Transformed Human Evolution*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. 1997. *The Discourses' and Other Early Political Writings*. Ed. Victor Gourevitch. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sahlins, Marshall. 1972. *Stone Age Economics*. Chicago: Aldine-Atherton.

Scott, James C. 2009. *The Art of Not Being Governed*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Sibertin-Blanc, Guillaume. 2013. *Politique et État chez Deleuze et Guattari*. Paris: PUF.

Spinoza, Benedict. 2002. *Spinoza: The Collected Works*. Trans. Samuel Shirley. Ed. Michael L. Morgan. Indianapolis: Hackett.

Sterelny, Kim. 2012. *The Evolved Apprentice: How Evolution Made Humans Unique*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press.

Wittfogel, Karl. 1957. *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Wrangham, Richard, and Peterson, Dale. 1996. *Demonic Males: Apes and the Origins of Human Violence*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.