

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY COLLOQUIUM SERIES

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BIOGRAPHY

John Protevi is Phyllis M Taylor Professor of French Studies and Professor of Philosophy at Louisiana State University (USA). His most recent books are *Political Affect: Connecting the Social and the Somatic* (2009) and *Life, War, Earth: Deleuze and the Sciences* (2013) both with University of Minnesota Press. He is also editor of *A Dictionary of Continental Philosophy* (Edinburgh and Yale, 2005). Research papers and course materials are available at www.protevi.com/john.

Human Nature: Between Anthropology and Philosophy

ABSTRACT

In this talk, I work at the intersection of anthropology and philosophy to produce an ethical normative standard we can derive from an evolutionary account of human nature: *act such that you nurture the capacity to enact repeatable active joyous encounters of positive sympathetic care and fair cooperation for self and others without qualification*. This ethical standard is a hortatory ideal rather than full-fledged moral imperative and avoids the naturalistic fallacy as I am only claiming consistency of the standard with evolved human nature, and not that it is true because it is so derived. In trying to get people to enact active joyous encounters for self and others "without qualification" we are working to arrange social life to expand the scope of a basic orientation of human nature for care and cooperation and not trying to intensify a mere cultural constraint on a deep and primary natural impulse to violent competition. We have indeed evolved anger control mechanisms needed for social life, per the "Human Self-Domestication Hypothesis," but the fear of social punishment brought about by punishing would-be dominators is not the sole root of conscience.

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