**2020 AP Unit X – The Natural Contract**

**Science, Nature, Ethics and Politics 11:00am – 12:30+ pm**

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| April  13 M | Serres & Latour: Conversations 1  • Science & Ethics  • Language & Storytelling  • Reason & Literature  Michel Serres: The Natural Contract 1  War, Peace; Climate; Wager; War | Serres and Latour: Conversations on Science, Culture, and Time: <https://monoskop.org/images/f/ff/Serres_Michel_Latour_Bruno_Conversations_on_Science_Culture_and_Time.pdf>  Hiroshima pp. 15 – 17 (3)  Ellipsis pp. 24 – 25 (2)  Science pp. 50 – 51 (2)  Michel Serres: The Natural Contract:  <https://monoskop.org/images/d/d0/Serres_Michel_The_Natural_Contract.pdf>  Natural Contract 1: pp. 1 – 7 |
| 14 T | Michel Serres: The Natural Contract 2  War and Violence; Law & History; Competition; We | Natural Contract 2: pp. 10 (all) – 20 |
| 15 W | Michel Serres: The Natural Contract 3  Knowing, Beauty, Peace | Natural Contract 3: pp. 20 – 25 + Nietzsche’s “The Madman” (below): <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/nietzsche-madman.asp> |
| 16 Th | Michel Serres: The Natural Contract 4  Time and Weather, Peasant and Sailor, Long Term and Short Term, The Philosopher of Science, War (Once Again), Reversal, The Jurist: Three Laws Without a World, Declaration of the Rights of Man, Use & Abuse: The Parasite, Equilibria, The Natural Contract | Natural Contract 4: pp. 27 – 40 |
| 17 F | Michel Serres: The Natural Contract 5  The Political, Of Governing, History (Anew), The Religious, Love | Natural Contract 5: pp. 40 – 50 |
| 18 Sa | Serres & Latour: Conversations 2  Michel Serres: The Natural Contract 6  Casting Off for the Last Time (Facing Death), Palo Alto (A Premonition), Anne (A Scene of Death), Sequel Beyond the Grave, Earth Ho!, In Distress | Serres and Latour: Conversations: <https://monoskop.org/images/f/ff/Serres_Michel_Latour_Bruno_Conversations_on_Science_Culture_and_Time.pdf>  Wisdom & Morality pp. 170 – 177  Natural Contract 6: pp. 97 – 98 and 111 – 124 |

**Natural Contract: pp. 1 – 7**

In the Goya painting, Battle with Cudgels, two men are beating each other with sticks. Who is the third character in the painting?

Is art history a valid means of seeking truth?

Which of the philosophers that we have studied would most vehemently reject the idea that we can learn about truth by looking at paintings?

Which of the philosophers that we have studied would agree with Serres that the study of the Goya painting is a valuable means of accessing truth?

If the first step towards humanization is a rejection of the slaughter which is glorified in the tales celebrating Achilles, what, for Serres, is the second step towards humanization? (use your own 12 words or less)

The poet, Alexander Pope stated that “the proper study of mankind is man” – Do you agree or disagree?

Serres notes that our media is obsessed with violence between people (in horror movies, and TV series like CSI, 24, and Law and Order) – but also notes that our media utterly ignores what?

Give an example of a way in which “those things that never interested anyone, from now on thrust themselves brutally and without warning into our schemes and maneuvers.” (p. 3)

Explain: “Global history enters nature; global nature enters history…” (p. 4)

Do not use the words “global, enters, nature, or history”.

In his chapter on “Climate”, who or what does Serres say caused the high pressure zones over Europe and North America in 1988 or 1989?

What are the legitimate areas of climate science skepticism or doubt?

What wager does Serres say we must make? Aside from the topic of the wager (global climate destabilization vs. God) in what way does Serres’ wager differ from Pascal’s:

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|  | We are Innocent | We are Responsible |
| We are Saved |  |  |
| We are Destroyed |  |  |

What, for Serres, is the problem of short-term solutions?

When we study history, what do we still ignore?

**Natural Contract pp. 10 (all) – 20**

Explain the difference between subjective war and objective violence?

Why does this distinction even matter?

How should the Holocaust be classified in terms of SW and OV?

Who or what is the third player on the square (p. 10)?

Who is the new victim of human warfare, according to Serres?

Discuss: “Once victorious, the Earth is now a victim.” (p. 11) How was the Earth once victorious? How is it now a victim?

Discuss p. 12 “a certain history comes to an end when the efficacy of objective violence, which is tragic in a new way, and involuntary, replaces the useless vanity of subjective wars…”

For Hegel, the end of history is achieved through the elimination of war. What, for Serres will bring about the end of history? (pp. 11 – 12) 12 words or less

Serres says that war is “legal” (p. 8, 13). What does he mean by this?

Serres invokes three Roman gods: Jupiter, Quirinus, and Mars. What does each one represent and how does each one protect us from violence?

Discuss: “Suddenly we are returning to the most ancient times, whose memory has been preserved only in and through the ideas of philosophers who theorize the law, times when our cultures, saved by a contract, invented our history, which is defined by forgetting the state that preceded it.” (p. 14)

Pages 14 – 15 call for a new law, noting there is no law for objective violence. What would this new law be? How would it be written?

How is it that Quirinus and Hermes both restrain and perpetuate objective violence (as does Mars)?

What point is Serres making by discussing the view of Earth at night?

Draw a 2 x 2 box on their papers and place the 6 following terms in proper position (special reference to pp.5, 11, 16, and 20)

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| Warring Nation #1 | Earth | Objective Violence |
| Warring Nation #2 | Humanity | Subjective War |

**Natural Contract pp. 20 (all) – 25**

(do not worry about references to Roman Gods)

Rephrase the first sentence from “Knowing” (pp. 20 -21)

[Discuss – how does this differ from or agree with Kant’s idea of knowledge?]

[Discuss – who is excluded from the contractual agreement of the sciences?]

[Discuss – “In science, law anticipates fact as subjects precede the object; but fact anticipates law as object precedes subject.” (p. 22) cf. Thomas Kuhn]

[Discuss – epistemology: study of knowledge; theodicy: understanding the relationship between God and evil;

Define Epistemodicy (used on pp. 22 – 23)

[Discuss – “the worldwide world today offers the painful face of mutilated beauty.” (p. 24)]

Discuss – “Epistemology and esthetics… astounded Kant and Einstein…” (p. 24)

When Serres laments the gap between the rational and the real (p. 24), he is really lamenting, in economic terms, the proliferation of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

The disconnect between the real (material world) and our rational (scientific, political, social) world results in what?

[Discuss – “Beauty demands peace; peace depends on a new contract.” (p. 25)]  
  
[Discuss – “Since the death of God, all we have left is war.” (p. 25)

**Natural Contract pp. 27 – 40**

Time & Weather; Peasant & Sailor; Long Term & Short Term; The Philosopher of Science; War (Once Again); Reversal; The Jurist: Three Laws Without a World; Declaration of the Rights of Man; Use & Abuse: The Parasite; Equilibria; The Natural Contract

What has distinguished the daily life of the majority of 20th/21st century citizens of the first world from the majority of the generations of humanity which preceded them (especially such as in ancient Greece)?

What does Serres find ironic about the working conditions of 20th/21st century climatologists and geographers?

What are the “three contemporary powers” according to Serres? (list them)

For Serres, what is the principle problem with contemporary news media?

What ironic element does Serres note about contemporary peace-time economics? (

In three words or less, what’s the best way to gain control of the salad bowl at dinner?

The principal limitation (and problem) Serres sees with the Social Contract and Natural Law (unalienable rights) is… (12 words or less)

For Serres, what is the most important thing which we (humanity) needs to learn to dominate and master? (12 words or less)

Serres’ complains that the Declaration of Independence and the Declaration of the Rights of Man use the phrase “All men” but really mean….

What must the parasite become?

**The Natural Contract, pp. 40 – 50**

There are at least two reasons why The Odyssey serves as a better analogy for our current situation and the Natural Contract than does The Iliad. Give two of these reasons.

Three totalities: what are the three? Why are they totalities? How are they connected?

[Explain what Serres means when he says “Cybernetics is back”.]

[Does the politician need to become more of a scientist or does the scientist need to become more of a politician?]

What practical, functional role does physical Science have in establishing and maintaining the Natural Contract? (12 words or less)

For Serres, what is the opposite of being religious? (1 or 2 words)

Serres articulates two laws of love, each of which has two dimensions (components or modes). What are these two dimensions/modes?

Explain what Serres means when he says, “There is nothing real but love, and no other law.”

**The Natural Contract pp. 97 – 98 and 111 – 124**

Casting Off (The Port of Brest); Casting Off for the Last Time (Facing Death); Palo Alto (A Premonition); Anne (A Scene of Death); Sequel Beyond the Grave; Earth Ho!; In Distress

In the opening scene with Adam, Eve, and the apple, what do they create with the apple? What happens to the apple? How does this relate to our entire civilization?

In the opening paragraph of “Casting Off for the First or Last Time?” Serres describes two different worlds: “this world” and “the world beyond”. What are the reigning principles of these two worlds? How are they distinct from each other? How are they related to each other?

Explain without using any of the words in the following phrase: “Beauty never enjoys the right to err.” (p. 113) Hint: think of fetal development.

What does Serres see as the function of Death? (cf. pp. 114, 118)

What does Serres see as the function of education (*ex-ducere*)?

Explain the following quote in 12 words or less: “Death vivifies life, which dies from lack of death.”

In one word and one word only, what is the common bond shared between the Chinese woodcutters and the daughter who held her dying mother? (Hint: it’s not “death”.)

Why does Serres view Hiroshima and Nagasaki as potentially great opportunities?

How is it that we must become the “mother of our old, dying mother”? (p. 122)

What does the final line mean?

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| **THE MADMAN by Friedrich Nietzsche**  Have you not heard of that madman who lit a lantern in the bright morning hours, ran to the market place, and cried incessantly: "I seek God! I seek God!" -- As many of those who did not believe in God were standing around just then, he provoked much laughter. Has he got lost? asked one. Did he lose his way like a child? asked another. Or is he hiding? Is he afraid of us? Has he gone on a voyage? emigrated? -- Thus they yelled and laughed.  The madman jumped into their midst and pierced them with his eyes. "Whither is God?" he cried; "I will tell you. *We have killed him* -- you and I. All of us are his murderers. But how did we do this? How could we drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon? What were we doing when we unchained this earth from its sun? Whither is it moving now? Whither are we moving? Away from all suns? Are we not plunging continually? Backward, sideward, forward, in all directions? Is there still any up or down? Are we not straying, as through an infinite nothing? Do we not feel the breath of empty space? Has it not become colder? Is not night continually closing in on us? Do we not need to light lanterns in the morning? Do we hear nothing as yet of the noise of the gravediggers who are burying God? Do we smell nothing as yet of the divine decomposition? Gods, too, decompose. God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him.  "How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? What was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives: who will wipe this blood off us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it? There has never been a greater deed; and whoever is born after us -- for the sake of this deed he will belong to a higher history than all history hitherto."  Here the madman fell silent and looked again at his listeners; and they, too, were silent and stared at him in astonishment. At last he threw his lantern on the ground, and it broke into pieces and went out. "I have come too early," he said then; "my time is not yet. This tremendous event is still on its way, still wandering; it has not yet reached the ears of men. Lightning and thunder require time; the light of the stars requires time; deeds, though done, still require time to be seen and heard. This deed is still more distant from them than most distant stars -- *and yet they have done it themselves*.  It has been related further that on the same day the madman forced his way into several churches and there struck up his *requiem aeternam deo*. Led out and called to account, he is said always to have replied nothing but: "What after all are these churches now if they are not the tombs and sepulchers of God?"  [Source: Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* (1882, 1887) para. 125; Walter Kaufmann ed. (New York: Vintage, 1974), pp.181-82.] |