Awakening Communicative Justice: Attending to the Precariat

Ronald C. Arnett

Chair and Professor, Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, PA

Keywords:

Precariat, Emmanuel Levinas

Emmanuel Levinas situated justice within phenomenological attentiveness to the unseen and unknown neighbor, to those not at the table of decision-making (Levinas 1993: 122ff.) Levinas's conception of justice dwells beyond proximity and immediacy of personal engagement. Justice requires focus *Outside the Subject*. For Levinas, both ethics and justice attend to the unseen, with the former focusing on an immemorial echo of ethical responsibility and the latter considering those not present at the table of decision making. I turn to Levinas's work *Outside the Subject* in order to understand our responsibility to those not at the center of power and influence. One such emerging category that necessitates acts of justice is characterized with the notion of the "precariat." Guy Standing[1] emphasizes three essential coordinates that define this emerging social characteristic: (1) part-time employment; (2) lack of full-time connection to professional identity; and (3) rejecting full-time employment by choice, or pursuing multiple temporary jobs by necessity. After outlining Standing's insights

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[1] Guy Standing is a professor of economic security at the University of Bath; he is the author of fourteen books and the current co-president of the Basic Income Earth Network. His works include *Russian Unemployment and Enterprise Reconstructing: Reviving Dead Souls* (1996), *Global Labour Flexibility: Seeking Distributive Justice* (1999), *Beyond the New Paternalism: Basic Security as Equality* (2002), and *Work After Globalisation: Building Occupational Citizenship* (2009).

on the precariat, I examine Levinas's *Outside the Subject*, looking for ways to address this increasing social reality of disparity between persons.

The Precariat

The conception of the precariat that guides this work follows the insights of Guy Standing in *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class* and *A Precariat Charter: From Denizens to Citizens*. Standing's scholarship is both descriptive of the economic environment and prophetic about the consequences of disregarding the plight of the precariat. Standing's perceptions on the precariat sketch an emerging social class created by an insecure economic and labor environment, which became pronounced during the 2008 financial crisis.[2] The precariat does not fit neatly into typical categories of a "squeezed middle class" or an "underclass" or the "lower working class"; this emerging social unit has a "distinctive bundle of insecurities" generated by a fragile global financial environment (Standing 2011: vii). Standing contends that we are facing the beginning of the end of a pro-liberal economic model based solely on growth and market competition (Standing 2011: vii) We are dependent upon a flexible labor market with insecurity and risk placed increasingly on workers and their families, which has given rise to a "global precariat." This developing social group is formed by a strategic use of economic insecurity in order to gain market flexibility for those seated at the table of decision-making (Standing 2011: 1).

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[2] On September 15, 2008, the DOW had dropped 500 points and the American International Group (AIG) had lost $1.1 trillion in assets. Albert D. Halm-addo, *The 2008 Financial Crisis: Death of an Ideology* (Pittsburgh, PA: Dorrance Publishing, 2010), 1.

Standing recounted events of May Day[3] in Milan, Italy, on May 1, 2001, which included a demonstration consisting of 5,000 protestors that "marked the first stirrings of the global precariat" (Standing 2011: 1). Four years later, in 2005, on that same day, there were over 100,000 protestors. Importantly, the protests were not composed of the usual "ageing trade unionists" but of young demonstrators (Standing 2011: 1). By 2008, the Euro May Day protests were "dwarfing the trade union marches" (Standing 2011: 2). On into 2014, as reported by Sebnem Arsu and Ceylan Yeginsu, May Day protests happened in major cities around the globe (*New York Times*, May 2, 2014). This movement is thoughtful and finds intellectual support in a variety of camps concerned about the displacement of persons for gains in corporate flexibility. A number of prominent intellectuals have addressed issues related to precarity:

> Their [Euro May Day protestors] intellectual heroes [are] Pierre Bourdieu (1998), who articulated precarity, Michel Foucault, Jürgen Habermas, and Michael Hardt and Tony Negri (2000), whose *Empire* was a seminal text, with Hannah Arendt (1958) in the background. There were also shades of the upheavals of 1968, linking the precariat to the Frankfurt School of Herbert Marcuse's (1964) *One Dimensional Man* (Standing 2011: 2).

Standing considers the precariat "globalisation's child." (Standing 2011: 5). This new social group is marginalized within a world of "informal" and "temporary" financial associations, requiring people to live on the margins of established class structures and institutions (Standing 2011: 6f.).

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[3] May Day, also known as International Workers' Day, is celebrated on May 1st and commemorates the work of the working class. See Steven Laurence Danver, ed., *Revolts, Protests, Demonstrations and Rebellion in American History*, vol. 1 (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, LLC., 2011), 589.

The precariat is a "*class-in-the-making"* composed in contrast to four different economic groups (Standing 2011: 7). First, there is an "elite" group of global citizens, who are "absurdly rich" (Standing 2011: 7). Second, the "salariat" are part of the stable and full-time employed, hoping to make their way to the elite (Standing 2011: 7). Third, a smaller group of "proficians" combines professional and technician-oriented workers, who are often independent and provide consulting skills (Standing 2011: 7). Finally, there is a shrinking group called the "old 'working class,'" who historically engaged in manual labor and relied upon "labour movements" (Standing 2011: 8). Beyond and underneath these groups is a considerable less financially sheltered social group, the precariat, who live in a world of insecurity and inequality.

The term "precariat" was first used in the 1980's by French sociologists to describe "temporary or seasonal workers" (Standing 2011: 9). The insecurity of the precariat comes from an inability to build a genuine "work-based identity"; they lack labor security (Standing 2011: 9). Income, work, and social and personal identities become precarious in a situation composed of constant vulnerability that is void of solidarity within a given labor community. The precariat forms a new set of migrants, termed "urban nomads." (Standing 2011: 12). One of the moral tasks of the twenty-first century is to assist the precariat in reclaiming "work that is not labour and leisure that is not play" (Standing 2011: 13). Standing works within a lineage of thinkers that contend that there is increasingly less opportunity to work and engage

in leisure that builds something of durable value. Identity arises from what we create and sustain.

In his second major work on the precariat, *A Precariat Charter: From Denizens to Citizens*, Standing states that such a class of persons is closer to denizens than citizens. Standing defines a full citizen as having the following rights within a given community: (1) civil, (2) political, (3) cultural, (4) social, and (5) economic. Standing then differentiates the citizen from a denizen, who has limited and temporal rights. In England during the Middle Ages, a denizen was considered an outsider who secured temporal economic rights via the king or the king's appointee. Such temporal rights were less than those of the citizen; they could be withdrawn instantly. The contemporary use of the term denizen is tied to the work of Tomas Hammar (1994),[4] who connected the term to migrants. The denizen has "in-between" status, neither a citizen nor a complete stranger (Standing 2014: 8). Unlike the citizen, the denizen has no rights of participation in the polis and little time for leisure. Standing (2014) cites the work of John Ruskin (1819–1900), whose book *Unto the Last* (1860) discusses a freedom of work that is opposed to alienated labor demanded by another (*cf.* Standing 2014: 12). The denizen dwells solely in the realm of alienation – demanded labor.

Today's denizens are citizens who have lost economic security, resulting in a pragmatic loss of their rights. Denizens have temporary jobs and are chronically under-employed. Their part-

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[4] Tomas Hammar is Professor Emeritus of Political Science at the University of Stockholm and served as Director of the Center for Research in International Migration and Ethnicity from 1983-1994.

time jobs cloak the real numbers of persons in this status.[5] The precariat might also work within "call centres" that attend to customers, without creating something of lasting value (Standing 2011: 16). Standing stated that at the university level, we must familiarize students with a potential future; they might become the next generation of precariat workers. Standing suggested that students are being trained to assume such a role with the emphasis on internships and marketable skills that might assist them in their negotiation of an environment composed of insecure labor; they are encouraged to prepare for an uncertain future with nothing of lasting value (Standing 2011: 16).

The precariat has no choice but to live solely in the present. This consciousness reshapes salariat members as they drift into the status of precariat; the longer one is unemployed, the more one becomes "deskilled," which makes the return to the salariat unlikely (Standing 2011: 17). Often in a precariat world, one is "uptitled," given a designation that shields observation from the fact that the job is a "nowhere direction" position (Standing 2011: 17): "For instance, the French now give cleaning ladies the prestigious title, *techniciennes de surface*" (Standing 2011: 17); such descriptions fail to match a person's work, generating conceptual, personal, and social confusion.

Those within the precariat are unable to control the impact of technology on their lives; they are forced into environments of "multitasking," which demands shifting through a large array

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[5] April 2013 statistics from the United States Department of Labor indicate that the unemployment rate has reached a four-year low of 7.5%. However, the number of "involuntary part-time workers," workers who are employed part-time due to economic reasons, has increased by over 278,000, reaching nearly 7.9 million persons.

of trivial data (Standing 2011: 19). "Precariatisation" emerges whenever technologies permit one to make a living while bypassing reflection, contemplation, and thoughtfulness as one grapples with "information overload." (Standing 2011: 19). The precariat lives within a house of insecurity that is constructed by "anger, anomie, anxiety, and alienation," which gives rise to antagonism, envy, and resentment situated within an anomie of directionlessness and passivity of despair (Standing 2011: 19). Anxiety yields a life of ongoing insecurity and a lack of "existential trust,"[6] which disconnects the precariat from co-workers and "social memory" (Standing 2011: 12). The precariat understands this unreliable moment, refusing to grant credence to the words of religious and secular feel-good motivational speakers who peddle another version of Pangloss's optimism (cf. Vltaire 2009/1759).

The precariat refuses to be fooled by a new wave of positive thinking. Barbara Ehrenreich recalled how the United States in the 1860s suffered through two positive-thinking quacks, Phineas Quimby (1802–1866) and Mary Baker Eddy (1821–1910), who established a "New Thought Movement."[7] Ehrenriech traced this movement through modern businesses that rely on motivational conferences intent on keeping workers smiling and not complaining. A good team player must be positive and submissive. Posturing and offering a pretense of a smile becomes a pragmatic defense of one's integrity. The demand to smile invokes Dietrich

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[6] Maurice Friedman (1972), in response to Martin Buber's discussion of "existential mistrust," signifies the need for increased "existential trust." (*cf*. Friedman 1972: 318ff.).

[7] The New Thought Movement occurred in the U.S. in the 19th century. The mind-healing movement, based on metaphysical and religious presuppositions, takes many forms with no established means of practice. At its core, New Thought implies healing or oneness with the world (*cf*. Ehrenreich 2010; Dresser 1919).

Bonhoeffer's contention that when met with a wicked question, the only true response is a lie, making the only truthful answer necessarily false (Bonhoeffer 1949).

Why is the Precariat is Growing?

The era of globalization, from 1975 to 2008, led the world's economy to become "disembedded" from institutional roots found within a given community or society (Standing 2011: 26). We began to "commodify" every aspect of life, from education to labor to the family (Standing 2011: 26). In the 1970's, trade was a small part of the national income of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which was established in 1961 with the mission to "promote policies that will improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world."[8] Today the OECD includes 34 member countries[9] and a budget of 347 million EUR. Trade has such a strong presence that it regularly places the needs of a given people on the back burner. The emergence of China and India as economic powers signaled risk for many who entered the world of international trade; China's GDP in 2011 amounted to $11.44 trillion, and India's GDP in 2011 amounted to $4,515 trillion, resulting in a "Chindia" effect (Standing 2011: 27). For 40 years, Japan was the second largest economy in the world. In 2005, the Gross National Product (GNP) of China overtook Japan and is now

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[8] OECD, "Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development," accessed November 21, 2012, http://www.oecd.org/
[9] The member countries of the OECD include Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, and United States.

on the way to surpassing that of the United States.[10] Commoditization increased outsourcing,[11] flexible labor relations, an increasing emphasis on part-time and temporary workers,[12] and a corporate view that long-term employment is an outdated form of "sentimentality" (Standing 2011: 33). Occupations are codified, with 20 percent of them requiring some form of license. Corporate managers are required to maximize profit and contractualize relations with a growing short-term work force. The world of work and stability of labor connections are shifting rapidly in this historical moment.

Emine Fidan Elcioglu (2010), in "Producing Precarity: The Temporary Staffing Agency in the Labor Market," contends that the uniqueness of this era rests with a problem shared by the skilled and the unskilled – lack of dependability of employment. Isaac Catt explains that in this era of "unemployment depression" and "employment depression" there is "a certain helplessness and hopelessness [that] permeates a society" (Catt 2012: 84). Job insecurity unites what were previously disparate groups through a common reality (Elciouglu 2010: 118). Precariousness has become "systemic" and generates "structural vulnerability" (*cf.* Elciouglu 2011: 199ff.) in an effort to extend profit margins. One description after another is proposed by supporters of this market "advancement" composed of temporary jobs; Elciouglu cites from *Instant People* "the pseudonym for the corporate office of a boutique staffing

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[10] China's 2012 GDP was 7,318,499,269,769 showing a steady increase since 2008 when the GDP was 4,521,827,288,304. The United States' GDP in 2012 was 14,991,300,000,000, showing only a very slight increase from 2008 when the GDP was 14,219,300,000,000. The World Bank, "Data: GDP," accessed May 13, 2014, http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD.

[11] The Bureau of Economic Analysis shows that the number of U.S. jobs outsourced in 2011 was 2,273,392, with 35% of Chief Financial Officers noting that their companies were outsourcing jobs.

[12] The U.S. Department of Labor statistics for 2012 report that the number of employees working part-time due to economic reasons is 8,122,000. Of those 212,000 are season/temporary workers.

company that specializes in the food and hospitality industries in a West Coast City," for example (Elciouglu 2010: 121). Organizing part time jobs finds support from the desire for profit, not from a concern for the quality of life:

> I have argued that the very infrastructure of the temp agency is premised on generating precarity for profit, so that a worker faces 'a mode of domination of a new kind' premised on the 'rational management of insecurity'. (Elicouglu 2010: 136)

The struggle is not simply for jobs; the current battle is for a life of dignity that opens possibilities for work with an identity composed of constructive and enduring characteristics. Even those with full-time jobs are pulled farther apart, disconnected from what Martin Buber (1992) called the "common center" of a community.[13] Offices are shared with multiple people in an open environment, which lessens private space. Additionally, encouraging "distant working" isolates workers from the social group. Martha Fay explored work relationships involving teleworkers or "employees performing at least part of their responsibilities remotely, outside their central organization's physical boundaries, using technology to interact. (Fay 2013: 127). Fay specifically considered the challenges of what teleworking or telecommuting employees encounter. Fay announced that in 2010, 26.2 million people engaged in telework, which has been described as "a social innovation and a form of organizational change" (Fay 2013: 127). Fay's critical examination of telework identifies the following challenges: minimized informal communication, decreased opportunities to build trust, difficulty socializing into the organizational identity, feelings of exclusion, difficulty

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[13] Ronald C. Arnett and Pat Arneson (1999) write, "Martin Buber understood dialogue as rooted in a common center of conversation between persons (…) common center is a metaphor that points to a world view distinct from an emphasis on individualism, collectivism, or psychologism." (Arnett & Arneson 1999: 128f.).

"managing impressions," and multiple obstacles facing managers related to control, "information flow," bias toward "observable performance," communicating organizational culture, and informal communication (*cf*. Fay 128ff.). Additionally, Catt (2012: 84) points to Turkle's (2011) *Alone Together*, which problematizes the technological demands in contemporary life, which has increased off-site work and creates the experiential phenomenon of being "in the same physical room but in different virtual worlds". Tertiarisation is an effort to generate flexibility and fluid labor, ending instead with a society that begins to look like a revolving factory with "society [as] an extension of the workplace." (Standing 2011: 38).

Members of the precariat often attempt to make a living from multiple workplaces;[14] others cope with wage concessions; some grapple with a loss of cost of living or forfeiture of benefits, such as loss of tuition assistance and comprehensive insurance. To compensate, some countries within the OECD tried to extend the myth of economic progress by increasing "cheap credit"; such actions resulted in the housing crisis and financial disaster of 2008 (Standing 2011: 44). Progress is no longer the mantra—unemployment has increased and is actually more severe than the numbers indicate, with many giving up the hope of finding employment and turning to multiple part-time jobs.[15] Work conditions have shifted considerably since the Second World War: "The rich world's job-generating machine is running down (…) In the 1940s, non-agricultural employment rose by nearly 40 per cent (…)

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[14] U.S. Department of Labor statistics from 2013 report that there were 6,947,000 persons holding multiple jobs in the U.S.

[15] As of April 2013, unemployment in the U.S. rests at 7.5%. The number of those persons working part-time for economic or undesired reasons increased by 278,000 from early 2013, reaching 7.9 million.

But in the 2000s, employment actually fell by 0.8 per cent. Work was not 'disappearing' but the global market was leaving American workers behind" (Standing 2011: 46f.). Pressure has shifted from private sector employment concessions to the dismissal of public employees in education and in a wide range of services.[16] The attack on employment security encompasses both the private and the public sector. At the same time, the West has attempted to prop up the economy with subsidies. "This was sure to swell the precariat (…) the Obama administration managed to enact a US$13 billion scheme in 2010 that gave companies a tax credit if they hired unemployed jobseekers. Opportunistic employers would quickly work out how to do beneficial substitutions." (Standing 2011: 55). Subsidies offer temporary artificial light for economies increasingly run by shadow economies.[17] This situation is worsened as corporations re-locate and employees are unable to do so due to family ties, creating a precariat struggling with geographical immobility. Standing reminds us that such insecurities breed social disruption within the country (Standing 2011: 58).

Who Enters the Precariat?

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[16] The U.S. Department of Labor reports that, in April 2013, unemployment among government employees is at 3.3% and that unemployment in the education and health services sector is at 4.4%.

[17] Friedrich Schneider (2012) defines "shadow economies" as all unregistered activities contributing to the officially calculated GNP, consisting of two types of activity: illicit employment and the production of goods for inner household use. Schneider's 2012 study focusing primarily on "productive economic activities that would normally be included in the national accounts but which remain underground due to tax or regulatory burdens," (Schneider 2012: 5f.) estimated that 13.9% of the GDP in 21 of the OECD countries was from shadow economies.

The precariat is a social group aware of their status; some by choice and others by forced necessity; they are an expanding social group composed of both "grinners" and "groaners" (Standing 2011: 59). The grinners take pleasure in temporary odd jobs; they have fiscal support from a former career, a spouse, or someone who keeps them financially secure. The groaners have no safety net from a past career or others willing to keep them safe, whether a spouse or parents. Both precariat groups are growing, even though they are quite different in motivation; each contributes to an increasingly insecure and temporary labor environment. Standing states that women have displaced many men in the workplace; in 2010, women held half the jobs in the United States. However, many of those jobs are part time and fit within the rubric of the precariat; in Germany and France, 80% of the part time work force is composed of women (Standing 2011: 62). Men and women are marrying later, and there is an increase in single parent and single person households.[18] Youths have historically entered precariat jobs; resentment builds as the hope of moving out of precariat employment dampens. Just as a "work ethic" is passed from one generation to another, it is likely that a precariat ethic will foster little hope of social mobility (Standing 2011: 67).

Education has historically assisted social mobility. However, we now face the first generation of Americans who are less literate than their predecessors.[19] Education, like much of the

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[18] Pew Social & Demographic Trends, "Barely Half of U.S. Adults are Married – A Record Low," Pew Research Center, http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/files/2011/12/Marriage-Decline.pdf (accessed December 29, 2014); The average age of marriage in 2011 for women (26.5) and men (28.7) has dramatically increased since 1960 when nearly 72% Americans over the age of 18 were married. In 2012, 12.2 million households in the U.S. were single-parent homes, according to the US Census Bureau.

[19] Examinations of illiteracy have changed over recent decades. Whereas prior to the 21st century, literacy was defined by a basic level of reading and writing, current literacy is defined as a person's ability "to function in a

private and public sector, seeks to maximize profits, which leads to an increasingly number of ways to bring students into a college or university as customers (Standing 2011: 72f.). Standing argues against the "intern craze" that assists the precariat class and makes employment of full time workers less necessary (Standing 2011: 75). He asserts that bouncing from one profession to another via internships makes excellence impossible. Standing contends that we become what we practice; such an understanding of education rehearses the role of precariat. With many turning to part-time employment, we can expect an inevitable battle between generations centered on the question of social security and benefits.[20]

When the United States introduced Social Security in 1935, coverage commenced at the age of 65, with the average life expectancy being 62. People now live well beyond that expectation, with an average life expectancy of 78 years (76 for men and 81 for women). In China and in India, it is now law as of 1996 that individuals are legally obligated to care financially for their parents (Standing 2011: 83). Such a law in more individualistic societies, such as the United States, is unrealistic, requiring older workers to labor longer. The implications for the next generation are obvious: they must wait for people to retire. For youths, the future seems to hold less hope, looking increasingly like an environment for a new migrant population.

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modern society" (i.e. ability to communicate via new technologies). By 1979, illiteracy rates (rates of those persons 14 or older who could not read or write in any language) in the U.S. were at 6% (Synder 1993: 9).

[20] Increasing life expectancy among women and men over the age 62, along with the amount of baby boomers expected to apply for Social Security in the coming years, the number of those on Social Security is expected to be at 75 million in 2023, nearly doubling the 39 million number from 2007 (cf. Jacobsen et al. 2011).

Migrant: Victims, Villains, or Heroes?

Migrants make up much of the world's precariat. Some are nomads and others are opportunists. Some move from country to country and others move within their own boundaries, from the hillsides to the cities. Many are undocumented workers, who are at the heart of the capitalistic effort to keep productivity up, costs down, and encourage people to purchase goods beyond their means. With United States imports from China far exceeding U.S. exports to China,[21] migrant workers function as a "shadow reserve army" of capitalism (Standing 2011: 91).

Politicians and much of the populace contend that migrant workers take opportunities away from their own citizens.[22] But capitalism welcomes temporary and cheap labor, which requires a precariat. As the precariat group becomes increasing rootless, they do so largely without rights of citizenship, becoming "cosmopolitan denizens" (Standing 2011: 94).

Migrant workers lose rights as they advance from one country to another. In the case of China, human rights are connected to a given locality within the country. According to the 2010 Human Rights Report of China, authorities within China restrict freedom of movement periodically. Rural residents continue to travel to cities to gain better employment. However, many cannot officially change their residence; cities have annual limits to the number of new

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[21] The U.S. Census Bureau reported that from January 2013 to March 2013 the U.S. received $97,208.7 million in imports from China while exporting only $28,122.6 million. See table at https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/balance/c5700.html (Accessed 24.08.2015).

[22] The Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) reported that labor polls from 2011 show that 61% of Americans feel that companies that repeatedly hire illegal immigrants should be shut down, while 82% are in favor of requiring companies to use verification methods to check immigration status before employment (*cf.* Faccini, Mayda & Puglisi 2013: 131).

residents they are permitted to admit. Competition among rural workers for residence permits is high – according to the China Labor Bulletin, there were estimated to be 262 million rural migrant workers in 2013[23] – and without the status of residence workers, migrant workers cannot gain full access to social services such as healthcare and education[24]. When workers from the countryside come into the city to join industrial capitalistic factories, their rights are lost.[25] China has built much of its nationalistic capitalistic model on labor from the rural countryside. This model is consistent with that of early stages in Western capitalistic development (Standing 2011: 105). Due to the dominance of farming in the U.S. in the late nineteenth century, labor shortages occurred within cities, causing manufacturers to pay high wages for work. Also within cities, independent craftsmen began hiring wage laborers to meet to demands of work. Opportunities to move west and acquire cheap land created a shortage of workers within cities. As more countryside residents moved into cities to gain access to high wages, the number of workers in manufacturing increased significantly in a short amount of time. Workers in the manufacturing industry in the cities jumped from 75,000 in 1810 to over 1.5 million in 1860 (*cf*. Swanson 2013: 18ff.). This migration is now happening in China. The internal migration of Chinese, from the rural to the city capital projects, is the largest in the world (Standing 2011: 109). Additionally, the Chinese government organized temporary

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[23] Statistics on Migrant Labor in China published online at: http://www.clb.org.hk/en/content/migrant-workers-and-their-children (Accessed 24.05.2015).

[24] Human Rights Report. (2011). Retrieved from U.S. Department of State, http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/eap/154382.htm (Accessed 08.01.2015).

[25] According to Standing (2011) "Denizenship has grown most in China, where 200 million rural migrants have lost rights in moving to the cities and industrial workshops that serve the world. They are denied the *hukou*, the residence passbook that would give them residence rights and the rights to receive benefits and be employed legally in their own country." (Standing 2011: 96).

transfer of labor to other countries, becoming "labor export regimes" (Standing 2011: 110). China also has the largest number of prisoners and uses them for "short term contracts" without any hope of a career (*cf.* Standing 2011:110ff.).

Standing (2011) concludes his discussion of migrants with a pithy set of observations: (1) "Migrants are the light infantry of global capitalism"; (2) "migrants are 'barely tolerated guests'"; (3) migrants are denizens without a voice; and (4) tensions continue with too much of the populace viewing this precariat group as engaged in job theft (Standing 2011: 113). There is built-in tension in the global economy between capitalism and local roots – the former looks for cheap labor and the latter hopes for a stability of life that keeps family, friends, and communities together.

Labor, Work, and the Time Squeeze

The "Global Transformation Crisis" has transformed the world of work and labor (Standing 2011: 115). The industrial revolution made discipline by the clock possible, both for work and leisure. We now live with a 24-hour clock and a global market that never shuts down. Our understanding of the clock and daylight is now under siege. Previously, the clock represented natural habits of light rhythm.

Presently, we want increasing access to one another immediately: "In Russia, the government is planning to reduce the number of time zones from eleven to five" (Standing 2011: 115). Our understanding of time has shifted from the agrarian to the industrial to "tertiary time."

Standing defines tertiary time as a result of the loss of distinction between spaces of work and home. The loss of distinctive spaces has led to a loss of a "stable time structure" (Standing 2011: 204) that has yet to be fully understood or clearly explicated by long-term practices (Standing 2011: 116).

The classic differences between work and the household were framed during the industrial age. Such discussions are increasingly out of touch with the reality of labor today, which is enacted in cafes, cars, and in the home. The tertiary workplace increases "inequality," permitting the privileged to take longer unsupervised breaks, while those in the precariat scramble with time commitments consumed by manifold jobs at multiple places. "[T]he precariat is at the risk of being in a permanent spin, forced to juggle demands on limited time" (Standing 2011: 119). Excessive labor and moving from one job to another is not good for one's health and does not generate stability within a life space.[26] Additionally, multiple jobs seldom contribute to translatable skills capable of advancing a career. One is left to tread water, unable to get anywhere—going nowhere insecurely with the hope of just remaining afloat.

The typical worker is encouraged consistently to update a resume and to sell a skill set. The precariat is counseled to update, revise, and peddle their own goods—making

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[26] The American Psychological Association (APA) found that sleep deprivation due to multiple work demands was associated with work related injuries among blue-collar workers. They also found that general stress from work proved to be a factor in the likelihood of suffering from hypertension, diabetes, back problems, and cardiovascular problems. Additionally, the APA found that those who worked multiple jobs faced stress due to the competing responsibilities of work and home life. American Psychological Association, "Work, Stress, and Health & Socioeconomic Status,", http://www.apa.org/pi/ses/resources/publications/factsheet-wsh.aspx (accessed 13.05.2014).

themselves into self-promoting pimps, prostituted laborers. Alienated labor begins in the act of constructing a story about *why I* am needed for a given temporary task. Such jobs require managed smiles in the engagement of the public – indeed, looks and appearance matter. However, youth dims, giving the precariat additional insecurity that the *make-young-industry* preys upon (Standing 2011: 123). In a precariat culture, we outsource jobs to cheap labor – overseas, to part time workers, and increasingly to the customers themselves. In order to gain some feeling of control, people search for connectivity. "Constant connectivity may not only produce the precariatised mind but, because the precariat has no control of time or a regular schedule, it is more vulnerable to the distractions and addictions of the online world" (Standing 2011: 127). Tertiary time does not reflect natural rhythms, and connectivity does not work like a home; it is akin to a Motel 6 effort that seeks to confuse a bed for the night with a home – "We'll leave the light on for you."

A Politics of Inferno

Standing asserts that the neo-liberal state is actually Neo-Darwinist and relies on competition and individual responsibility. This survival of the fittest work philosophy can turn "strugglers into misfits and villains" (Standing 2011: 132). We do not approve of those functioning in the precariat rungs of society. In 1797, Jeremy Bentham published the Panopticon papers, which outlined architectural structures for prisons so that guards could easily observe the maximum number of cells. Bentham is the father of utilitarianism, which promotes the greatest good for

the greatest number, legitimizing disdain for a minority position. Michel Foucault used Bentham's "architecture of choice" as an exemplar for "docile bodies" that result from a modern imposition of power (Standing 2011: 133). Ours is an era defined by increasingly less privacy that imposes technological "good" choices on us. Technological surveillance on the street, in the workplace, and in schools offer "[an] encroachment of panopticon apparatus into hiring, discipline, promotion and dismissal strategies of companies and organizations [, which] has been largely unchecked" (Standing 2011: 136). Citizens, particularly employees, should assume they are being watched (Standing 2911: 138).

Surveillance begins with the monitoring of "cheerfulness" that necessitates a "science of happiness" (Standing 2011: 140f.). Such an ambition gives rise to a "cult of therapy" (Standing 2011: 141) and enriches a prescription drug industry. We then demonize the precariat, who choose to take part time jobs, thereby decreasing opportunities for the regular work force, while forcing the precariat, without choice, into labor with no hope of work. Hannah Arendt understood "work" as building something of sustainable worth with effort that does not evaporate as soon as the task is completed (cf. Arendt: 1998). The precariat lives in a transient world without a legacy. Standing claims that four groups bear our disgust: "migrants," "welfare claimants," "criminals," and the "disabled" (Standing 2011: 145). Standing asserts that for too many of the privileged, the common denominator uniting the above groups is that they are takers who require surveillance. Social upheaval is invited as we dismiss growing numbers of the population.

A Politics of Paradise

Standing states that democracies must revisit the "the great trinity – freedom, fraternity, and equality" (Standing 2011: 155). Freedom requires collective engagement in the public square (fraternity) and opportunity to differentiate oneself from others on a fair playing field (equality). *Dejà vue* rhetoric of the disenfranchised precariat can invite demand for change reminiscent of neo-fascist rhetoric. Growing inequality is a recipe for societal disaster, welcoming nostalgic rhetoric propelled by labor without hope of genuine work capable of building something of worth. Precariat identity is multicultural with a common center of denial of the possibility of joining institutions that function as "communities of memory." (cf. Bellah et al. 1985). We must redistribute "economic security, time, quality space, knowledge, and financial capital" with a "basic minimum income" and recover public spaces for leisure and decision-making. If we do not do so, we risk a return to the events of the late 1930's in the West.

Kath Weston, in "Political Ecologies of the Precarious," argues that we live in a historical moment of precariousness. First, there is "nostalgia" for a labor-secure existence that constructs a "future-directed nostalgia" (Weston 2012: 432). Second, there is a precarity of the entire ecological system, a fragility of our eco-system. Third, Weston discusses a rhetoric of "apocalypse" that seemingly shapes much Christian conversation today. Fourth, precarity in the auto industry framed the last decade; few can conceptualize a "world without cars"

(Weston 2012: 432). Weston's article contends that the rhetoric of precarity has taken us to a strange point – yearning for a world without interruption, nostalgia for the Faustian bargain of progress.

Weston's plea is for us to embrace interruption as a natural part of the human condition. Uniting the terms flexibility and precarity shifts the public conversation turn to "flexicurity" (Galetto et al. 2007). The argument is that we must move from a "workerist" conception of the world that equates job access with liberty and freedom. The social alternative requires placing precarity and flexibility against a backdrop of structural assurances that keep basic services available to all and the choice of work as a human right.

Christopher Bodnar (2006) exemplifies the roots of the precariat movement in "Taking it to the Streets: French Cultural Worker Resistance and the Creation of Precariat Movement," where he examined the "intermittent cultural workers movement," which led to a national strike in France that paralyzed the industries of film and television in 2003 (Bodnar 2006: 675). Bodnar's argument is that the precariat movement found life in the acknowledgement and self-organization of "immaterial labour" (Bodnar 2006: 676). Foti describes a precarious worker as "somebody performing flexible, and taylorized, service work" where workers are at the whim of employers, often being "forced to beg and pray to keep one's job" (Bodnar 2006: 678). The precariat connects with postindustrial society in a manner akin to the proletariat in the industrial revolution. Precarity is a gathering point for a resurgence of a worker's movement. From 1970 to early 2004, contemporary with Bodnar's essay, employment fell in

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the audiovisual industry, as part time workers became nearly 30 percent of the workforce Bodnar 2006: 680). The number of intermittent workers increased 243 percent in two decades (Bodnar 2006: 681).

The "short-term contract" nature of those living within the precariat requires conversation about this emerging social group (Mattoni & Doerr 2007: 133). Precarity rests with a world no longer driven by institutional commitments and stability (Fatone 2007: 12). The lack of institutional commitment leads to "social exclusion" (Buget 2001: 50). Standing recounts a number of historical documents that became markers of human rights (Standing 2014: 128f.): 1) Cyrus Cylinder of 539 BC;[27] 2) Magna Carta in 1215,[28] signed by England's King John; 3) Charter of Forests,[29] which called for preservation of commons; 3) the English Bill of Rights of 1688–1689;[30] 4) the American Declaration of Independence, signed in 1776;[31] 5) the US Constitution of 1787;[32] 6) the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen of 1789, 7) the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948;[33] and, finally,

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[27] The Cyrus Cylinder is a clay cylinder, inscribed in ancient Babylonian cuneiform, by King Cyrus of Persia, on which he recounts his conquer of Babylon in 539 BC.

[28] The Magna Carta of 1215 was signed in a field in Runnymede, by King John in an attempt to acquiesce to the demands of the barons of England, who had rebelled against the king, and to avoid civil war. Ten weeks after the Magna Carta of 1215 was signed, Pope Innocent III rendered the document null, and civil war broke out in England.

[29] The Charter of the Forest was created during a meeting in the fall of 1217 in which the Magna Carta was reinstated for a second time.

[30] The English Bill of Rights of 1689 is one of four important historical documents that deal directly with the relationship between the royal English family and the people of England.

[31] This document, accepted and ratified by the 13 colonies, officially severed all ties to Great Britain.

[32] On May 14, 1787, in Philadelphia, PA, the Federal Convention came together in order to revise the Articles of Confederation. Through many struggles with obtaining support from all states, the Convention drafted a new set of articles that eventually became the US Constitution.

[33] Henry J. Steiner, Philip Alston and Ryan Goodman. *International Human Rights in Context: Law, Politics, Morals.* 3rd Edition. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 135–136. This Declaration was developed as

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8) the European Convention of Human Rights of 1950.[34] He also alludes in the 1830s to the Chartists[35] and the People's Charter,[36] which were drawn up by working class radicals led by artisans and craftsman (Standing 2014: 129). These documents offer a foundational history for confronting the global crisis of the precariat. Following the above history in the West, Standing offers twenty-nine articles as a beginning discussion of a precariat charter (*cf*. Standing 2014: 151ff.). Standing ends with the following assertion: We must provide a common background for human beings that minimalizes marginalization, lessens uncertainty, and offers greater opportunity for social participation and success.

Precarity leads to a life configuration of non-participation and non-acknowledgement. I now turn to Levinas's ethics of responsibility, asking how we can awaken ethics via the face of the precariat. I suggest Levinas's *Outside the Subject*, which demonstrates the face of the Other as the ethical initiator of our responsibility.

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the Commission on Human Rights, established by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations in 1946. It was adopted first by a UN Commission, and then by the General Assembly of the UN in 1948.

[34] The European Convention on Human Rights is a treaty that was opened for signatures to the Council of Europe in Rome on November 4, 1950. It was later enforced beginning on September 3, 1953. Within the treaty, the protection of the freedom of religion and belief is explicitly stated.

[35] Standing (2014: 129f.) explains that the Chartists and the Chartist movement were led primarily by "male artisans and craftsmen, and articulated by philosophical radicals." He explains that the Chartist movement was not comprised of the entire working class, but, rather, "was a struggle against ruling class interests, in favour of emerging class interests." Thus, the creation of the People's Charter helped to bring together the demands of these individuals into a coherent and cohesive consciousness.

[36] The People's Charter was drafted in 1838 by "working-class radicals." All six points of the People's Charter were political in nature, and included "universal male suffrage, equal-sized electoral districts, secret ballots, an end to property qualifications for members of parliament, pay for MPs, and annual elections for parliament" (Standing 2014: 129).

Levinas's *Outside the Subject*

The first assumption of Levinas is that the origin of ethical responses is *Outside the Subject*; this point is stressed in each of the essays that Levinas compiled:

> The French would refer to this volume as a '*recueil*' rather than as a '*collection*' or an '*anthologie.*' The first term designates a work assembled by the author: part of the meaning of the work is therefore sought in the ordering of its parts. (Levinas 1993: xv)

The essays in the volume centered on ethics initiated outside the subject span forty years, from 1948 to 1987. This ethical emphasis beyond one's own immediate grasp reminds the reader of "an order higher than knowing" (Levinas 1993: 3). It is outside the subject that responsibility for the precariat dwells, as one attends to Levinas's ethics as first philosophy. Levinas attends to the vitality of the Other, stressing not routine, but an ethical awakening that arises outside the *soi-meme,* calling *moi* into responsibility.

Levinas devotes the first three essays in *Outside the Subject* to Martin Buber. The first essay, "Martin Buber's Thought and Contemporary Judaism," is written in dialectical fashion, first articulating the unique contributions of Buber and then questioning a number of Buber's propositions. Levinas stated that Buber made Judaism philosophically applicable to a contemporary Western world. Buber disclosed Jewish spirituality to the West, emphasizing his particular take on Hasidism; Buber emphasized the importance of the "spark," the instant of the presence between persons in Meeting (Levinas 1993: 17). Gershom Scholem, "the great historian of kabbala at the University of Jerusalem," however, stated that Buber had missed the connection of Hasidism with God and abstraction, viewing it through his narrowly

existential lens (cf. Levinas 1993: 8f.). Levinas contends that Buber's interpretations resulted in an existentialist imprecision that exalted instants "transformed by fervor" (Levinas1993: 10). Buber missed a basic fact of Judaism: "resistance of Judaism to any apotheosis of man, as to any incarnation of God" (Levinas 1993: 10). Buber brought too much mystical reliance into his interpretation of scripture and his translation of the Bible. He interpreted the scriptures as if he alone was inspired and consumed by the "Holy Spirit" (Levinas 1993: 13).

Levinas stated that both Buber (1878-1965) and Gabriel Marcel (1889-1973) had emphasized the I-Thou and Meeting; they arrived at their conclusions independently. Within the sacred space of the I-Thou, one discovers a call for responsibility, which Levinas considered an ethical abstraction. In contrast, Levinas called for concrete concern for justice:

> One may wonder whether clothing the naked and feeding the hungry do not bring us closer to the neighbor than the rarefied atmosphere in which Buber's Meeting sometimes takes place. (Levinas 1993: 19)

Levinas spurned Buber's instantaneous occasions of Meeting; for Levinas, real living rests in attentiveness to what is present and absent. Justice aligns with those not at the decision-making table, requiring attentiveness to the precarity of the life of another.

Levinas, in his essay "Martin Buber, Gabriel Marcel, and Philosophy," (1978) points to a pragmatic philosophical fact: acknowledgement of another is not limited to rationality. Both Buber and Marcel emphasized dialogue as a communicative dwelling of ethics, with Buber tying dialogic instances to the particular and Marcel emphasizing the universal mystery of being that affords human beings a common history. Buber emphasized Meeting and relation.

Marcel accentuated the mystery of being that is beyond language and *a priori* to Meeting. Unlike Buber, who implied that the mere presence of the Other can invoke the possibility of an I-Thou relation, Marcel understood the importance of the intelligibility of a faith, a shared history, in the invitation of dialogue. Whether one gets to dialogue by an instance or a shared history, one is transformed by the Other, manifesting an ethics shaped by alterity. In each case, the Other must be acknowledged if one is to be transformed by the encounter. Missing the reality of precariat eclipses the call to responsibility. Without attending to the face of the Other in the precariat, ethics goes unheeded.

In the final essay on Buber, "Apropos of Buber: Some Notes," there is yet another thanking of Buber that is followed by a differentiation. Levinas affords genuine gratitude for Buber's recognition of a "saying" that bursts forth through intentionality that unites subject and object, moving from us from Cartesian *cogito*. Levinas recognizes the importance of this communicative stance, stating, "Nothing could limit the homage due him [Buber]" (Levinas 1993: 41). Then Levinas declares a clear separation between their two projects. Levinas places misery in opposition to a "confidence in progress based upon a consoling dialectic" the sacred ground of the I-Thou (Levinas 1993: 43). Second, Levinas replaces speech that calls another into responsibility with an immemorial ethical echo that demands responsibility to and for the Other. Third, Levinas critiques "reciprocity" as missing the heart of ethics as "a non-transferable responsibility" (Levinas 1993: 44). Finally, Levinas forgoes an I-Thou relation as the home of responsibility; he extends the conversation to the "third," or the

"neighbor"; for Levinas, both ethics and justice are outside the immediacy of a relational encounter. Justice, for Levinas, does not live in dialogue, but "beyond dialogue" in the realm of the not present. Responsibility dwells in a house greater than proximity of immediate relation. For the precariat, it is not consoling speech, but material concern, that shapes responsibility to and for another.

Levinas then turns to a writer who was fundamental to his ethics project in an essay titled "Franz Rosenzweig: A Modern Jewish Thinker." Rosenzweig's work has furthered Levinas's thinking about life outside the subject. The essay was written on December 10, 1964, thirty-five years after Rosenzweig's[37] death. Levinas considers Rosenzweig a great Jewish thinker who wrote in modernity, during the heyday of assimilation and a hope associated with an "interfaith society" (Levinas 1993: 49). Rosenzweig was a product of a bourgeois Jewish family; his formation was designed "practically outside of Judaism" (Levinas 1993: 50). Rosenzweig's project provided a counter to Hegel and particularly Meinecke's Hegel,[38] who underlined the importance of nationalism entwined with a Hegelian perspective. Rosenzweig turned away from Hegel's nationalism (Levinas 1993: 50). Instead, he emphasized the importance of the "particular" in his classic work, *The Star of Redemption*, which he wrote while on the Balkan front in World War I in 1917. The book was subsequently published in

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[37] Franz Rosenzweig (1886–1929), a philosopher of Jewish universality, offers a "revolt against Hegel." In *The Star of Redemption* (1921), Levinas notes, "Rosenzweig was able to return to Judaism to find a response to the crisis of modernity." His works include *It Is Time* (1917) and *On Jewish Learning* (1955).
[38] Friedrich Meinecke (1862–1954) was a leading German and Hegelian historian. Alongside Karl Jaspers, Thomas Mann and Bertolt Brecht, Meinecke was a "leading light" in German cultural constellation in the beginning of the twentieth century. Rosenzweig studied history under Meinecke at Freiburg and Berlin, and used Meinecke's writing on Hegel as support for his dissertation (*cf*. Clark 2006: 1).

1921. Neo-Hegelians thought the work was more theological than philosophical, even though the word "religion" does not appear in the text (Levinas 1993: 50ff.).

Like Nietzsche, Rosenzweig detested a "consoling" religion. Rosenzweig had theological and practical justification his position; he endured a nine-year illness that had paralyzed him and eventually killed him at the age of 43 (Levinas 1993: 51ff.). Rosenzweig was the Jewish version of Kierkegaard, calling for clarity of response as a unique being of "irreducible singularity." (Levinas 1993: 55). In attending to the particular, the universal is disclosed. Rosenzweig's dialectic of human responsiveness lives in three contexts or modalities: 1) "creation," God's immemorial presence; "revelation," the response of the human to the neighbor in love; and 3) "redemption," a continual movement toward the neighbor without a return to eternity. Ethics rests with us: "Man is the mediator of redemption" (Levinas 1993: 59). Uniqueness of response emerges from a single person's action in the "community of the faithful" who in collective prayer must be heard by God.

Rosenzweig and Levinas emphasized a phenomenological understanding of the sociology of the Church that situates the "Wandering Jew" in community, which made it possible for Israel to survive ongoing acts of "disintegration" and "expulsion" (Levinas 1993: 59ff.). Rosenzweig rejected "totality" in favor of the "particular" that offers a glimpse of the universal through a redemption that lives through love of the neighbor that expects no reciprocal action. Following the assertion of Rosenzweig, responsibility for the precariat does

not commence with consideration of another's utility, but rather with the enactment of our own responsibility for the Other.

Levinas then presented an essay on "Jean Wahl: Neither Having or Being," which explicates Henri Bergson's "metaphysical intuition," which Wahl understood as evoking both grand ideas and attentiveness to everyday considerations.[39] Wahl sought a connection between the metaphysical and the concrete, "*vers le concret*" (Levinas 1993: 71). Wahl's work centered on the history of philosophy; he examined ideas that evolved in response to concrete issues and questions. Philosophy was not a game of totality and abstraction for Wahl; it was an ongoing conversation with the tangible: "The pluralism of philosophy does not signify a regrettable fragmentation of a totality, but that multiplicity of modes of transcendence called persons" (Levinas 1993: 77). Wahl did not seek totality or complete elucidation; he was more concerned with glimpses of insight as he met darkness. For him, knowledge is discerned in the "dark light" of the particular. The metaphysics of philosophy does not eradicate darkness; it submits to the dark light that keeps dialogue going. Wherever there is temporal insight, the metaphysical lives, often found in moments of concrete meeting of doubt and darkness. The hope of knowledge is not to bring forth great light, but rather rests with temporal courage to walk in darkness, discerning a glimpse of truth that leads one from the unknown and to insight via the concrete particular. Our task is to meet individual persons and events, providing a

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[39] Jean Wahl (1888-1974) founded the Collège Philosophique in Paris in 1946. Wahl's philosophy places the 'metaphysical experience' within the arts and poetry. Wahl's work examined historical and contemporary philosophy. Levinas credits Wahl with brining classical philosophical questions "back to life" (*cf.* Levinas 1993: 67ff).

unique response that suggests metaphysical intuition without embracing the false caress of an absolute universal Truth. Wahl would address the issue of the precariat without assuming that final answers are possible; continual responsibility must engage changes in and with particularity.

Levinas then responds turns to another member of his dissertation evaluation committee, which had consisted of Jean Wahl, Vladimir Jankélévitch[40], and Merleau-Ponty,[41] whose untimely death made his participation impossible. Levinas replied to Jankélévitch as a poet while recognizing that he, Levinas, was committed to prose – recounting their mutual interest in Bergson. Jankélévitch was captivated by rhythm; he was a musicologist, which connected him to Bergson's research on duration. In his book devoted to Bergson, *Henri Bergson,* Jankélévitch submitted that duration manifests itself in ethics via "a generosity without recompense, a love unconcerned with reciprocity" (Levinas 1993: 87). Jankélévitch understood the interplay of duration and ethics as guided by "dis-interested-ness;" (Levinas 1993: 87) he accepted an ethical fact that life must be lived as if each moment depended upon one's own responsibility.

Jankélévitch frames an ethics of duration that does not cease; there is no time for temporal applause for one's actions. Ethics dwells without audience and end; an ethics of duration does

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[40] Vladimir Jankèlèvitch (1903–1985) was a French philosopher and Musicologist who taught at the Collège Philosophique where, Levinas notes, students and non-students gathered to hear his lectures. Jankèlèvitch's work continued in the tradition of Henri Bergson's work of duration (cf. Levinas 1993: 84ff.).
[41] Maurice Merleau-Ponty's (1908–1961) work places the "original incarnation of mind [*esprit*] in which Nature reveals its meaning in movements of the human body" thus presenting the "felt as feeling" (cf. Levinas 1993: 96ff.).

not cease. One lives out of a non-payable obligation. Reciprocity of benefit must give way to responsible attentiveness for the Other that can only be enacted by oneself. Jankélévitch points to unending concern for the Other, which includes the precariat, not because of temporal use value, but because of an ethical obligation without end.

In Levinas's "The Meaning of Meaning," he rendered a response to a Heideggerian perspective that centered a conference on Heidegger and Theology, which took place on July 24, 1979 at the *Collège des Irlandais*. Numerous Heideggerians asked whether a biblical tradition was necessary any longer if one accepted a pre-Socratic conception of Being. Levinas, on the other hand, asked about a good beyond Being, a meaning constituted by a transcendence that is "older than," suggesting the immemorial call of ethics. The face demands an ethical response, unceasing responsibility for the neighbor that unites one to an immemorial sense of meaning: "A meaning, I say, beyond what man can be and show of himself: the face is meaning of the beyond. Not sign or symbol of the beyond; the latter allows itself to be neither indicated nor symbolized without falling into the immanence of knowledge" (Levinas 1993: 94). When one turns to philosophical and theological abstraction, one misses the meaningful and invites isolation due to an ultimate denotation that leads to "religious wars" (Levinas 1993: 95). Ethics dwells in the immemorial, demanding concrete action that is responsible to the Other. Signification of the meaningful does not dwell in self-originated action, but is performed in ethical responsibility called forth by the face of the Other.

Levinas frames a response to insights that emerge from Merleau-Ponty's creative and sophisticated reading of Husserl's *Ideen II*, a manuscript Husserl did not publish; it was issued from the Husserl Archives in Louvain in 1952 as part of the Husserliana series (Nenon 1996: ix). In "*On Intersubjectivity: Notes on Merleau-Ponty*," Levinas frames the vitality of embodied phenomenology, accentuating the importance of "sensibility" and the flesh in his reading of Husserl's second volume of *Ideen*. The intersubjective connection between persons emerges from the co-presence of touch and sensibility within embodied perception: "'I borrow myself from the other; I make him out of my own thoughts: that is not a failure in the perception of others, it is the perception of others.'" (Levinas 1993: 100). Touching simultaneously involves being touched, a position in contrast to "Cartesian dualism" (Levinas 1993: 102). This embodied perspective points to the "spirituality of the social," which emerges when the routine of being is disrupted and shifts understanding to a realm "otherwise than being" (Levinas 1993: 102f.). Merleau-Ponty's embedded phenomenological is carnal; yet it is not tied to the One, but attentive to a sociality of multiplicity—the co-present reality of touching and being touched. As one attends to the particularity of the precariat, one gathers insight into one's own self – such is the co-present nature of sensibility.

Levinas continues with an emphasis on the body and phenomenology with "In Memory of Alphonse de Waelhens," who was well known for his interpretation of Jacques Lacan and Merleau-Ponty. Levinas was a friend of Waelhens prior to World War II and admired his work on both Merleau-Ponty and Lacan. Alphonse de Waelhens contended that Lacan's work

was a genuine extension of Freud and rejected the assertion that one can do research on psychoanalysis with the use of an "empirical method." Levinas stated that Waelhens moved from philosophy to psychoanalysis as he acknowledged mental illness as the "tortuous journey of the human" into sensibility (Levinas 1993: 106).

In honor of Waelhens, Levinas offered the following comments on Merleau-Ponty and sensibility. Levinas stated that the living flesh, the body, is conditioned by sensibility that is prior to a subject-object distinction. Sensibility emerges in proximity, calling us to attend to the neighbor. "Appresentation," for Husserl, and as understood by Merleau-Ponty, assumes co-presence; understanding the "not present" is vital in making the present known. For instance, it makes little sense to talk of dark without light and vice versa – each assumes the other. Levinas uses the term precariousness in describing the turning toward the thing itself in appresentation, which leads one to the particular that is beyond itself already. For Levinas, the appresentation of the Other makes a co-present claim on me – the son calls forth the father. The precariat claims me.

Levinas then turned to the question of "The Rights of Man and the Rights of the Other" as an exemplar of what happens when co-presence is absent. Levinas revisits the emerging conception of rights in the Renaissance that were emboldened in the eighteenth century with the assumption that the rights of man are universal, *a priori,* as well as irrevocable and inalienable. Levinas then asks what happens when such rights are withheld by a totalitarian regime and when they are disrupted by and/or dependent upon technological progress.

Levinas counters with a discussion of the rights of the Other, which meets and answers the mockery of human rights in a totalitarian society. The rights of the Other compel responsibility and burden, leaving me obligated. Rights centered on others commence with responsibility particular to me. Levinas reminds us of a fundamental and profound sense of rights that originates in the face of the Other, not in abstract demands for my rights. Responsibility for the precariat begins with attentiveness to the face of the Other.

The next essay, "The Strings and the Wood: On the Jewish Reading of the Bible," gives weight to ongoing centuries of biblical criticism tied to the Jewish faith that engages the critical with listening to and for the sacred. "Persons and communities who are crossing the desert of Crisis" find the highest virtues in the "secrets of Proximity" (Levinas 1993: 126f.). This sense of proximity is immemorial; the *Talmud* explores "ancient newness," which understands the scriptures as "harmonics of the *said*[, which] resonate" whenever one meets the particular the face of the Other – the immemorial emerges in the *saying* of the face of the Other. In the darkness of the said awaits a revelatory saying that calls forth an ancient responsibility: I am my brother's keeper, which is the heart of the revelatory sacred text. In the said of statistics about the precariat, one hears a saying that calls for responsibility. Responsibility is called forth, not imposed.

In *Time and the Other* (1987), *Existence and Existents* (1991)*,* and *Otherwise than Being* (1978), Levinas critiqued rhetoric as an expression of imposition upon the Other. In "Everyday Language and Rhetoric without Eloquence," we discover Levinas's entrance into

communication that is otherwise than convention. Levinas revisits Plato's concern about rhetoric and Aristotle's hope. Levinas's argument rests largely with Plato's questioning of rhetoric and the danger of eloquent use of metaphorical language that distances the speaker from the thing itself. Levinas cites Husserl's return to the thing itself and the manner in which eloquence is subordinated to the everyday, to the neighbor, and to proximity of persons and events. The ethical announces a call for responsibility that emanates from the concrete face of the Other, resisting the rhetorical abstraction of eloquence. The precariat do not necessitate eloquence of speech—rather, the precariat require articulacy of everyday action that assists living conditions.

Levinas continues his underscoring of language in the next essay, "The Transcendence of Words: Michel Leiris's *Biffures."* Levinas writes of the corrections or shifts in the fork in the road that Leiris provided. Leiris began as a surrealist under the leadership of André Breton,[42] who celebrated unconscious freedom: "It is not the privilege of genius. Non-sense is the most evenly distributed thing in the world. But in Brenton's first manifesto there was a naïve confidence in the clandestine and miraculous energies of the Unconscious" (Levinas 1993: 144). Leiris then vacated this perspective as he acknowledged the value of consciousness that "crosses out," keeping the temporal and the ambiguous relevant to everyday life. The presence of the Other teaches, as does the revelatory presence of the ordinary. Without an impulse to cross out, one does not envision the novel or the "not yet." One need not limit

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[42] André Breton (1896–1966) is a French writer and poet. His works include *Manifestos of Surrealism* (First published 1924).

oneself to the unconscious to discern the ambiguous; one finds an ambiguous command in the face of the Other played out in everyday concrete life. In the reality of commonplace underemployment of the precariat, one finds a reason for attentiveness to and for the Other.

The final essay represents the title of this collection, "Outside the Subject." Levinas reviews Husserl's project as a rejection of psychologism that conflates idealism with the "I." Husserl's phenomenological reduction was an effort to reclaim objectivity, the uniqueness of the thing itself. Levinas's project, however, begins with a unique Other whose face awakens responsibility, and in so doing, the Other transforms the subject—calling forth a "subject outside the subject" (Levinas 1993: 156). Moreover, the face generates "an awakening to the indescribable 'pure I' of transcendental constitution, recovered by the phenomenological reduction." (Levinas 1993: 158). Levinas's stress on ethics outside the subject begins with alterity that moves the subject beyond self and, in so doing, continually transforms the identity of the self, which is constituted within a response to an immemorial ethical call. Levinas describes an ethic demanded of us by the Other; without the Other, the call of an immemorial ethic remains mute. Without attending to the face of the precariat, not just as an abstract category, the call of the Other brings forth an immemorial echo and responsibility.

Levinas: Ethics and the Precariat

Essays in *Outside the Subject* dwell within a common hermeneutic—ethics begin with attentiveness to alterity, to radical Otherness. Focusing on the precariat in response to

Standing's books awakens the reality of increasing disparity between persons. The following material revisits Levinas's stress on *saying* that frames the *said,* which further encourages attentiveness to *saying* again.

1. *Rejecting instantaneous meeting* guides Levinas's response to Buber, reminding us that there is no special space for ethics.

2. *Dialogue requires a shared history*; education matters—the stories we learn and interpret awaken or silence our ability to hear the saying of an ethical call for to responsibility.

3. *Justice does not dwell in dialogue*, but in active concern for the disadvantaged and those not present at the table of conversation.

4. *Redemption lives in love for the neighbor, a responsibility without return or end*; the doing of ethical responsibility is contrary to the demand for unending applause.

5. *Beware of the false caress of artificial light*; genuine light begins in darkness that marks authentic illumination as trustworthy.

6. *Ethics of duration do not cease*; obligation continues long after an immediate crisis is seemingly resolved.

7. *Ethics mediates* between an immemorial ethical call and the immediate face of the Other.

8. *Sociality is a co-present multiplicity;* without the Other there is no sense of self.

9. *The Other claims me*; the son makes the father, the student constitutes the teacher….

10. *Inadequacy of human rights;* ethics live in the rights of the Other, not in one's own demands.

11. *In darkness of the said, revelatory saying is possible*; one hears the call for responsibility in moments of interruption that respond to the said.

12. *Face of the Other is the* par excellence *of eloquence*; the Other calls forth responsibility that begins with listening to and for an ancient voice.

13. *The concrete dwells* in ambiguity and temporality.

14. *Outside the subject* is an immemorial echo that calls forth a subject beyond the subject, constituting a "derivative I" that responds to a unique responsibility.

The *said* of *Outside the Subject* repeatedly reminds readers how we might address ethical demands for those within the precariat. Levinas's project rejects the hope of making people better and nobler. Such an agent-centered effort concentrates on the "originative I" that assumes the duty to care for another; instead, Levinas describes an "I" held in obligation to an immemorial call to assist the Other. The care of a "derivative I" is not motivated by a humanistic magnanimity; Levinas's project begins with listening to an immemorial voice of ethics. My colleague Lisbeth Lipari is correct—ethics begin with listening to a voice that is not uttered, but never ceases; ethics commences with listening to an immemorial echo.[43]

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[43] Lisbeth Lipari, "Listening Otherwise: The Voice of Ethics," *The International Journal of Listening*, *23*, no. 1 (2009): 44–59.

Additionally, this non-humanistic ethical call dwells outside the subject and requires institutional change. The question of the precariat is not a person-to-person conflict, but one that rests in the misshapen souls of too many institutions within the West that seek to place risk at the foot of the worker – the precariat is expected to the risk. Levinas's project has no end. The precariat must be addressed, and with such response, the obligation revives. Levinas leaves us with responsibility for listening to an immemorial echo, building institutions of worth and understanding that the demand for obligation to the Other is forever new. Levinas would suggest that *the face of the precariat is a demand for yet another ethical awakening of human responsibility—reminding us of an immemorial echo that never absolves our sense of burden and obligation for the Other.*

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