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The Postmodern Condition of Impatience

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INTRODUCTION

According to Emmanuel Levinas: the “modern world has forgotten the virtues of patience” (DF 155).

In this paper, I argue that Levinas is issuing an ethical injunction that also implies an existential problem. To ‘forget about patience’ is a mistake that has shaped our modern (and now global) sociality. This ‘amnesia’ for patience arises out of a mistake in our understanding of responsibility; the foundation for which is not only ethical, but existential. The changing quality of our perception of the passing of time and the progressive collapse of our capacity to ‘take time,’ I would argue, signals this existential crisis. The pursuit of freedom and individual autonomy has neglected the articulation of ethico-existential responsibility in a way that has become unchecked and unjustified. I would also argue that the problem of impatience cannot be resolved by traditional virtue ethics. I think there must be an effort to interrogate the structures that give us this problematic sense of time and of value. Our general and growing lack of patience is not merely social or psychological; rather, embedded in our impatience is an indifference to alter-existence, accelerating an inhumanity toward those others who cannot keep up with the pace of a globalizing economy. So, I ask: How may we restore a working concept of patience in a form that is also appropriate to the modern, globalizing world? How are we to counter the direction and progression of this impatience, this forgetting to take time?

The path that I will be looking to develop, in order to assess the socialized problem of impatience and to develop an appropriate phenomenological idea of patience, will deviate from a more traditional discussion that might have drawn from normative ethics. Here, I will be borrowing from an ethics of alterity as argued by Levinas, assuming his argument that ethics is primarily an existential phenomenon and, impatience, as an issue of ethics can be approached phenomenologically. This phenomenological approach to ethics, as a first philosophy and as a metaphysics, is a “calling into question of the same ... brought about by the other” so that, the “strangeness of the Other, his irreducibility to the I, to my thoughts and my possessions, is precisely accomplished as a calling into question of my spontaneity, as ethics” (TI, 43).

At the core of Levinas’ approach is a special attention for the ways in which there may be violence done to the other, especially the vulnerable other. This ethico-existential approach is always tentative and, hence, wary of ontology – the reduction of alter-existence to the self-same. According to Levinas, violence does not consist so much in injuring and annihilating persons as in interrupting their continuity, making them play roles in which they no longer recognize themselves, making them betray not only commitments but their own substance, making them carry out actions that will destroy every possibility for action (TI 21).

Because of the many manifestations of our general impatience, (psychologically, culturally, politically, economically), and especially since, as I think is the case, this impatience has gone global, the roots of this phenomenon can be found in the modern idea of self and world. Impatience, to be read not just as a bad habit or character flaw, is also a phenomenon that is characteristic of a failure in the Cartesian model of mechanized nature combined with the unjustified imperatives of free market growth. Impatience, phenomenologically speaking, aggresses ethical possibilities, causing us to betray the very substance of otherness.

II. THE PHENOMENON OF IMPATIENCE

Teresa Brennan makes an argument in *Exhausting Modernity* regarding the speed of the globalizing economy and explains how the drive to replace space with speed is rooted in the desire for and dominance of capital accumulation. The capitalist drive, as it goes global, saps us of our energies – *exhausts* us – to a degree that we cannot regenerate ourselves biologically or ecologically. She describes the result of this acceleration with a pointed example, Take the giant, airy American strawberry. Genetically recombined for improved size, and grown in degraded soil, it looks great and tastes ... like nothing. ... It is a symptomatic postmodern commodity: seeming wonderful, yet it has literally less substance, and hence less value (2000, 120).

As she argues it, the increasing speed of acquisition causes the co-opting of space and distance for the sake of accelerated production, so that, “this fantastic temporal pressure affects all aspects of capital’s circulation and production ... as a measure of profit” (121). Profit is generated by this accelerated pace with which we produce and accumulate global capital, at the same time lessening the substance and value of goods. In this way, speed replaces goodness.

Brennan asks about the “price paid” for this kind of production. She describes it as a Pyrrhic victory over space. As free trade advances globally, “time for human and natural reproduction and regeneration decreases” so that, fundamentally, “natural time” loses out to the “speed of acquisition altogether” (2003, 142). The cost of our efforts to synthesize international markets, to develop new markets and create new capital is levied on those who are at the periphery of these endeavors. The ‘other,’ then, in this context means those parts of the social and natural world that have not conformed or cannot conform to the globalizing economy. The terrain of this alterity is located in the marginalization of existence that has been made to bear and embody the stresses from this speed of acquisition and loss of time. Brennan argues that the “genesis of capitalism ... involves the exploitation of the middle ground, especially in relation to trade, specialization and distance” (143). Trade and specialization become modes of exploitation and, more importantly, through this collapsing of distance, now mark how we have become engaged in an existential distortion – deforming our spatial and temporal relations with the world. From the economic point of view, we can still find the markings of this excluded and overburdened alter-terrain. When “economic theories ... exclude environmental factors” and treat them as “externalities,” mainstream economic theories become exploitive insofar as they exclude these “externalities.” Brennan argues that economic theories justifying capital accumulation unjustly “work ... provided they exclude the sphere of reality or reproduction, and they do not work whenever that sphere irrupts into their world of human space and human time” (2003, 144-45). If we translate this into the question of the other, we can argue the exploitive

character of this endeavor for exponential free markets is in that there is no 'room' for the sphere of reproduction in the globalizing marketplace, written off as the terrain of "externality." The consequence of this exclusion of reproductive spatiality and temporality is a "metabolic imbalance." This imbalance manifests in our overuse and long-time abuse of the land as a limitless resource, in the mechanization of labor and by the employment of technologies designed only for accelerated production. The sheer rapidity of mass production and deregulated global trade is a source of profit, and, to this degree, we have also rode roughshod over all the forms of reproductive time.

I would argue that we need to account for the real costs of this postmodern imperative for speed beyond the economic interests for overall or long-term productivity. This again leads us to the ethical terrain of what we mean by substance and value. As we conquer the limitations of space and distance, Brennan also argues that we simultaneously "diminish and degrade nature and human health or energy. This is general or absolute damage" (2003, 145). The consolidation and concentration of short-term demands as it becomes a global form of economic sociality, saps value from those things that take time. The relations and activities that do not meet the commodifying pace of a globalizing marketplace begin to take on the quality of extraneousness – left as marginalized and devalued. Any surplus of time, as we collapse the natural burdens of spatiality and distance, is returned to the demands that serve mass consumption; anything that, by its nature, *takes time*, is superfluous and, hence, becomes relatively meaningless.

With global domination, economically and socially, we have begun to think we have won out over the constraints and obstacles of nature. Technology succeeds in giving us the power of gadgetry; so that, an overwhelming part of cultural creativity goes into technological innovation and literacy of the smaller and the faster, serving the demands of speed. Vandana Shiva laments this usurpation of our creative energies for the sake of technological innovation, which presently is dominated by cultural and scientific institutions designed for privatizing benefit and profit. The effect of the Western efforts to patent and claim ownership over forms of life and indigenous knowledge, as a new wave of colonialism, also disables intergenerational knowledge – cultural and ecological knowledge passed down from one generation to another. I borrow her example of the neem tree. The local and indigenous knowledge about the use and benefits of the neem tree, knowledge passed down from one generation to the next, was halted and 'claimed' by a corporation looking to patent its biochemical properties. The generations of time it took and was invested in this cultural knowledge was stolen in a matter of years (1997, 69-73).

The virtue allotted to speed in cooperation with our intolerance for distance is an outgrowth of our postmodern condition of impatience. The synchronicity of modern life has been shaping our bodies, codifying our intersubjective relationships, and institutionalizing the 'normalcy' of this pace. At this rate, we have become blind to the ethico-existential distortions this pace has on the natural body and on the natural world, at most acknowledging (only recently and anthropocentrically) some of the obvious consequences of environmental degradation. Commerce has worked on us and the natural world in ways that have become irreparable – so that, literally, we mark nature in a way that cannot be reversed – we speed it up until it breaks down. We script our environment for our economic interests affixing it to and fixated by the present-tense and the productive so that the short-term, profit-based interests become permanent fixtures against any natural impermanence, much less human finitude. Analogously, Brennan reads this as a war we are waging against the land, the sea, and the atmosphere as well as the other conditions of life (2003).

And the overall demands of a life of convenience and comfort have begun to take a real toll on the capacity of nature (including the body) to regenerate itself. Commercial culture has succeeded in making us psychologically and socially *good consumers*, as long as we can keep up. We are left with very little of our own resourcefulness. The effect of the growing commodification of speed is the marginalization of other life-tempos. If we compare ourselves with other cultures not marked by or at least interpreting differently the path of globalization, we find that there is still room for patience elsewhere. The work of patience, where we take time out to care, heal or repair, when it does not exclude, exploit or marginalize, can then take on a diversity of socio-political expression. In order to re-appropriate (or at least resuscitate) the idea that patience is a real-world, vitalizing virtue, we may yet need more diagnostic work to get to the heart of the problem.

III. ON EXISTENTIAL TEMPORALITY

The objectification of nature, born from the Cartesian model of mechanized matter in relation to the monocular *cogito*, developed by modern psychology and political theory as the foundation for enlightened self-interest, assumes that experience is a relation between the conscious life of the self and a world of ‘things.’ As Shiva puts it, “there is a growing recognition that the Western paradigm of mechanistic reductionism is at the root of ... ecological and health crises and that non-Western systems of knowledge are better adapted to respect life” (1997, 69). The pace of modernity has set the stage for a pattern of activity that dominates and subverts natural rhythms – being both environmentally unsound and unjust to the living conditions required for reproduction (specifically marginalizing women and children). The drive for speed has ‘tipped the scales’ in favor of the position of enlightened self-interest to the disadvantage of most other ways of living. My concerns with the modern pace and the distortive quality of our impatience are with the facts that this pace is implicitly unsustainable and that it, in practice, homogenizes life-activity.

In the spirit of the phenomenological tradition, and to speak more directly to the ethico-existential problem of impatience at hand, I will need to return to Levinas. He argues against the legacy of ontological intentionality, which grants epistemic priority to the kinds of knowledge that preserve thought only in its return to the self. He argues: “The very evolution of Western thought” is the work of synthesizing and comprehending, an effort to gain freedom from an open-ended obligation to alterity while preserving oneself in the “satis-faction of knowing” (EN 137). In order to get at the ethico-existential injunction embedded in our postmodern condition of impatience, to see this as a problem stemming from existential temporality, I turn first to Heidegger.

Heidegger questions Descartes’ view of Being as extension [*extensio*], such that “being is equated with constant presence-at-hand” (BT 128-129). Descartes’ mechanistic interpretation of matter posits the things of the world in terms of leveled-down possibility; the substance of the world is known to be only by way of its hardness and resistance (130). This ontic view of Being – the effort of directing all thought toward object-knowledge – prioritizes a relation to presence, and, for Heidegger, this “kind of Being ... is essentially inappropriate to entities of Dasein’s character” since the “‘essence’ of Dasein lies in its existence” (67). On the other hand, with an ontological interpretation of Being, as a ‘being for which its own Being is an issue’ (32), Dasein

manifests its struggle with the meaning of Being out of a time-reckoning. This time-reckoning, opens possibility up to Dasein and a mode of Being that engages existential possibility. To quote at length:

If temporality makes up the primordial meaning of Dasein's Being, and if moreover this entity is one for which, in its Being, this very Being is an issue, then care must use 'time' and therefore must reckon with 'time'. 'Time-reckoning' [*Zeitrechnung*] is developed by Dasein's temporality. The 'time' which is experienced in such reckoning is that phenomenal aspect of temporality which is closest to us. Out of it arises the ordinary everyday understanding of time. And this understanding evolves into the traditional conception of time (BT 278).

That is to say, through authentic interpretation, Dasein discloses time to be *ready-to-hand as a reckoning with time*, as part of the equipmentality of the world. The experience of time is not merely matter of calculation but rooted in existential projection. As existentially structured by Care, Dasein can also be directed to a "call" in which it can dis-close and dis-cover itself in relation to both the 'datability [*Datierbarkeit*] and significance' of time (BT 474). The time and space of the world come from this "specific kind of *making-present* which makes measurement possible" (470) – a relation of Dasein to the world in terms of its possibilities. In the everyday world, ordinary Dasein uses the equipment it manufactures (*ready-to-hand*) in order to measure time while leveling off and making present-to-hand an inauthentic mode of time-reckoning. There is an important 'fore-sight' that belongs to the authentic interpretation of existence for Dasein and, for Heidegger, is fundamentally *futural* in character, appropriate because it is already conditioned in terms of its potential to envision existential possibility. The experience of ordinary everyday time as part of the everyday world, calculated and present-at-hand, leaves Dasein in a 'situation,' where time can then be taken away and lost (463). With this loss, the possibility of making the measurement of time ready-to-hand – *zuhanden* – as in 'finding the time,' becomes impossible, for fallen Dasein is no longer free to envision existential possibility.

Heidegger defends a counter-position to Cartesian Being by asking for a more ontologically appropriate access to thinking about Being. He suggests that our experience of the 'things' of the world is rooted in our temporal condition. I think this allows for an opportunity to envision the problem of impatience as an issue rooted in our existential temporality. Much like the interpretive distortions of *das Man*, as engendering an inauthentic mode of Being, it is a distortion in our interpretation of the natural world that leads to a mode of existence that misappropriates temporality and our fundamentally temporal condition. Our temporality conditions experience such that we are able to recognize and engage existence beyond the projection and assumed relation with the things of the world. Heidegger gives us an illustration of the fundamental temporality by challenging our notion of clock time.

Consumed by and concerned with the ordinary everydayness of the world, Dasein for the most part defines itself within the context of the world-project, limited to a mode of existence reduced to the ordinary course of time according to the day-to-day (BT 466). In this inauthentic, everyday position, Dasein finds its relation to Being reduced to an *ontic* interpretation which prevents it from understanding itself in relation to any other mode of Being. Thus lost to the existential possibilities of a temporal and fundamentally futural relationship to Being, "*Dasein knows fugitive time in terms of its 'fugitive' knowledge about its death*" (ibid.). On the other hand, the reward for heeding the call of authenticity is a "Resoluteness" regarding one's

ownmost possibilities which “constitutes the loyalty of existence to its own Self” (443). Resolute Dasein becomes free to find and make *ready-to-hand* the time. Heidegger argues that:

[The] temporality of authentic existence remains distinctive in that such existence, in its resoluteness, never loses time and ‘always has time.’ For temporality of resoluteness has, with relation to its Present, the character of a *moment of vision* ... One’s existence in the moment of vision temporalizes itself as something that has been stretched along in a way which is fatefully whole in the sense of the authentic historical *constancy* of the Self. This kind of temporal existence has its time *for* what the Situation demands of it, and it has it ‘constantly’ (463).

But ordinary Dasein is always losing time or running out of time, because it lives according to “fugitive time” – a projection of time that flees from the possibility of death. An ordinary temporalizing Dasein is so fallen and absorbed by worldly concerns such that *a clock gives Dasein the time*. The *ready-to-handedness* of the clock, as Dasein gives it meaning, as equipment in the context of its concerns, is covered over by the present-to-hand, so that, in its everydayness, Dasein relies on the clock to give it meaning.

So, if we carry this interpretation of existential temporality to the question of ethics, Heidegger offers less than Levinas. Although Heidegger’s ontological interpretation of ‘Care’ demands that an authentic interpretation of existence must ‘reckon’ with time, Levinas states, “Time is patience itself” (GDT 7). Levinas finds Heidegger’s ontological account of existence mistakenly *neutral* to the ethical quality of human existence, if not also inhuman when it comes to his idea of Dasein, as a self-same project directed toward death (particularly my own). Heidegger has it so that Dasein’s temporality is a project of appropriation and resoluteness in the face of ultimate existential possibility. For Heidegger, *time is mine to make (and to take)*, to become equipment in the project of my ownmost possibilities. Levinas, concerned with the exclusivity of this ontological interpretation of existence, attempts to address the imperialism inherent in this account of temporality. Levinas defends a deformalization of time, such that time is marked by the interruption of the selfsame by the Other – when the excluded other comes in upon me and disrupts the ordinary course of events.

We fix ourselves to the present in our intentionality; we commit ourselves to here and now the more we flee from demands of the other. Levinas finds concern with this emphasis on intentionality:

Modern philosophy since Descartes – despite all its variations – has preserved this ... framework ... structures [that] mark thought to itself, the identity of the identical and the non-identical in consciousness of self recognizing itself as infinite thought, “without other” (EN 137).

Rooted in the Cartesian *cogito*, thought is consistently re-framed in terms and for the sake of the “first person present” (EN 137). All else falls into a synchronicity with the locus of the *cogito*. Levinas argues that,

A philosophical motif in which time is subordinated to eternity, to a present which neither passes nor can be gone beyond, ... governing the dispersion of the empirical timeless ideality which exists unmoving above the immediate temporality of human patience. ... as if, in the notion of presence ... a privileged mode of time were associated with the very birth of knowledge in representation, thematization or intentionality (137-138).

How do we become uncaring, if not also calloused, to a sense of time as a sensibility for patience? Levinas defines violence so that it is the “guise of beings who affirm themselves ‘without regard’ for one another in their concern to be,” neglecting the “possibility of one-for-the-other, that constitutes the ethical event” (EN xii). In ‘making time’ for the other (in which the pace is no longer set simply out of the desire for what may be mine, centered on my interests and my satisfaction), the possibility of patience as a phenomenon, as the occasion of an ethical event, becomes an intelligible possibility. So again, to follow Levinas, “goodness is *other* than being ... The exceptional, extra-ordinary, transcendent character of goodness is due to just this break with being and history. To reduce the good to being, to its calculations and its history, is to nullify goodness” (OTB 18). This exceptional goodness means an openness to the diachrony of finitude (against the synchronicity of socio-economic life) and a tolerance for the impermanence of natural existence; the exception would allow us to suspend economic and social time, for sake of the excluded other, for the visitation of exteriority upon the selfsame.

IV. PATIENCE AS A PHENOMENOLOGICAL VIRTUE

A phenomenological concept of virtue implicitly contains a critique of virtue ethics and the traditional arguments that base their concepts on assumptions about human nature and individual agency. As Levinas argues it: “in patience the will breaks through the crust of its egoism and as it were displaces its center of gravity outside of itself, to will as Desire and Goodness limited by nothing” (TI 239). There is also an implicit problem with the substantiveness and value we have granted on the natural world when we ask about our capacity for and the content of the virtue of patience. Could a phenomenological interpretation of nature help in the construction of a more appropriate virtue in response to the postmodern condition of impatience?

It seems to me that we can most appropriately begin to address the phenomenon of impatience with a counter-suggestion. If our postmodern impatience is built on the modern assumptions about nature and time, can we perhaps propose a return to nature, altering the metronome of our life-activity? The passing of time on ecological terms contains markers that are significantly distinct from our familiar historical, economic and social markers. If we are seeking out a more appropriate idea of time, and looking to break from the clock time of everyday life (its pace, its obscene demands on the body and the natural world) perhaps we could look more ‘nostalgically’ for the way in which we had more originally set the pace for social and economic life – the calendrical motions of the heavenly bodies (rooted in the sky), the agrarian seasons (rooted in the land), generational time (rooted in family and kin). The post-modern response here, the meaning of patience, then, ought not to be aligned with personal choice-making, or as a mode of conduct, or as a kind of passive, political impotence. It must be considered in terms of the exceptional goodness that “breaks” or at least takes a break from the socio-economic forces that exhausts nature and exploits the powerless.

If patience is to be considered “natural” at all, for a new and more powerful meaning in the world today, we may need to liberate it from the legacy of virtue ethics and allow it to be re-evaluated with phenomenological insights. If, as I’ve suggested here, impatience is rooted in the phenomenon of time-perception and temporality, and patience is the work of more properly aligning ourselves with a rhythm more indigenous to the natural world while also being part of building sustainable practices, then this approach can free patience from its traditional

connotations. Patience remains inappropriate to contemporary life and economic globalization as long as it remains theological (an attitude in relation to the will of God) or sexist (simply belonging to the passive constitution of women). Taking clues from the pace of the natural world, we can find a better and more appropriate parallel with the patterns of patient work and 'living patiently'. We even might say that the only future meaning for the virtue of patience must be ecological if not also feminist because patient work can free up possibilities not available without the work of phenomenological interrogation.

And, as a final point, there is an underlying intention behind my exposition of our postmodern impatience. As it has been argued here, the link between the growing demands of speed and the loss of time with existential temporality has been made in order to liberate the many ways we have come to exclude reproductive existence for the sake of productivity. In this way, patience is not really a virtue today at all; recognized as only passive mode of Being compared to the forces of the market and irrelevant to the work of global productivity. Despite the effects of its aggression and violence on the natural world, patience remains an effeminate posture in comparison to the more valued virtues of expediency, efficiency, and convenience. In order to liberate patience from these connotations, as either passivity and a lack of agency or as, more properly, a 'womanly' virtue, there needs to be sufficient defense that the work of patience is necessary and may in fact be a salve to the damage we have already done by usurping the self-regenerative power of nature and of women. Following the model of Levinasian ethics, patience is a virtue to the extent to which it contains an infinity of demand, "*The infinity of responsibility denotes not its actual immensity, but a responsibility increasing in the measure that it is assumed ... the more I am just the more guilty I am*" (TI 244). Impatience is fundamentally an existential problem of irresponsibility insofar as we have avoided our indebtedness to nature; patience, if it is a return to the pace that has already been set by nature, will already contain an address (response-ability) for what had been pushed to the margins. Even as we are called to patience, we may still need to reckon with the dominance of the imperialistic desires to maintain permanency and presence against all the ways in which existence is a *passing event*, finite and vulnerable.

Endnotes

Emmanuel Levinas, *Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism*, (Sean Hand, trans. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990). Hereafter noted as DF.

A draft of this paper was read at the Spring 2008 meeting of the Long Island Philosophical Society. The challenge I make here to virtue ethics I develop elsewhere and, therefore, is only suggested in this paper. I would like to thank Glenn Statile, Howard Ponzer, Art Gianelli and Dominic Balestra for their comments.

From *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*. (Alphonso Lingis, trans. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969). Hereafter noted as TI.

Teresa Brennan, *Exhausting Modernity: Grounds for a new economy* (NY: Routledge, 2000). She actually outlines the "Pyrrhic victory of space" in another text, *Globalization and Its Terrors: Daily Life in the West* (NY: Routledge, 2003), pp. 141-142.

Brennan argues this middle ground as classic Marx and is the between the points of production and exchange, between distribution and consumption (Brennan 2003, 143).

As it regards labor, “The technologies employed in setting the pace ... go faster, much faster than their human adjuncts, whose presence slows things down. Automation, or the replacement of human beings by machines, speeds up those aspects of production that human presence has slowed down. The fewer the humans need for production to take place, the more rapid the industry” (Brennan 2003, 19).

Vandana Shiva, *Biopiracy: The Plunder of Nature and Knowledge* (Boston: South End Press, 1997). She defends the nonprofit motives behind other kinds of cultural and creative innovation, pp. 10-11.

There have been up to 70 patents on the neem tree. Some have also been revoked, as in the case of W R Grace’s patent. See BBC News, 11 May 2000 (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/745028.stm>).

From Levinas’ *Entre Nous: Thinking of the Other*. (Michael B. Smith and Barbara Harshav, trans. New York: Columbia University Press, 1998). Hereafter noted as EN.

From Martin Heidegger’s *Being and Time*. (John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, trans. NY: Harper Collins Publishers, 1962). Hereafter noted as BT.

He states, “Hardness gets taken as resistance. But neither hardness nor resistance is understood in a phenomenal sense, as something experienced in itself ... For Descartes, resistance amounts to no more than not yielding place – that is, not undergoing any change in location.” On this point, Heidegger furthers this problem of ‘hardness’ for Being with permanence, “The idea of Being as permanent presence-at-hand not only gives Descartes a motive for identifying entities within-the-world ... it also keeps him from bringing Dasein’s ways of behaving into view in a manner which is ontologically appropriate” (BT 130).

Zeitrechnung can also be translated as an ‘era.’ *Rechnung* can be translated not just as a ‘reckoning,’ but also as a ‘calculation’ or as an ‘accounting’ in the arithmetic senses.

“Being futural, as a possibility of Dasein as specific, gives time, because it is time itself. Thus simultaneously it becomes visible that the questions of ‘how much’ time, ‘how long’ and ‘when’ – to the extent that futurity is authentically time – that this question must remain inappropriate to time. Only if I say that time authentically has no time to calculate time is this an appropriate assertion.” From Heidegger’s *The Concept of Time* (William McNeill, trans. Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 15E. Hereafter noted as CT.

Datability is ecstatic-horizonal relationship between every now which the temporality of Dasein brings to the present. It is “the most primordial way of *assigning a time*” (BT 459-461), whereas “*Significance* belongs to the structure of the ‘now’” (474).

Heidegger discusses at length the meaning and origin of the “clock” in relation to time in BT §80 as well as in the lectures before *Being and Time*. Note: CT 4E-5E and 14E-15E.

Levinas’ *God, Death and Time* (Bettina Bergo, trans. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000) is noted as GDT.

Heidegger on this point: “In terms of that with which inauthentically existing Dasein concerns itself it first computes its history. In so doing, it is driven about by its ‘affairs’. So if it wants to come to itself, it must first *pull itself together* [*zusammenholen*] from the *dispersion* and *disconnectedness* of the very things that have ‘come to pass.’ ... it is only then that there at last arises from the horizon of the understanding ... the *question* of how one is to establish a ‘connectedness’ of Dasein” (BT 441-442). For Levinas, the deformalization of time resists this pulling together of Dasein (‘for the sake of itself’) in that the passing of time is a

movement *toward* (the other) rather than *forward* (to the futural and to nothingness). We cannot ascribe the meaning of the passing of time to a movement of abstract Being or totalize this movement into a progression with a finality or an end. The deformatization of time is to avoid the remnants of the degradation in the human intrigue, “a vocation [that] is set up that goes beyond the limited and egoistic designs of the one who is only for-himself and who washes his hands of the misfortune and offenses that did not begin in his present time” (GDT 175). It is “a relationship with a past that was never present. This is the investment, or *investiture*, of a being who is not for-itself but *for all being*. Therein lies his dis-inter-estedness ... or *conatus essendi!*” (ibid).

Levinas’ *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence* (Richard A. Cohen, trans. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1981) noted as OTB.

I want to take note of a comment made by Heidegger regarding this marking of time, “[By] dating in terms of environmental events ... we know ... astronomical and calendrical time-reckoning. Such reckoning does not occur by accident, but has its existential-ontological necessity in the basic state of Dasein as care” (BT 464).