Introduction

A Care Movement Born of Necessity

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> Measuring the importance of care for human life means recognizing that dependence and *precarity* are not accidents that happen only to "others."
> —Sandra Laugier, "The Ethics of Care as a Politics of the Ordinary"

"Precarity" is a challenging term because it both names a threat that is real and pervasive and is comprised of many elements crucial to individual being. Judith Butler describes precarity as "a politically induced condition in which certain populations suffer from failing social and economic networks of support and become differentially exposed to injury, violence, and death" (2010, 25). And what is more, in her introduction to *State of Insecurity: Government of the Precarious,* Butler makes it clear in her agreement with the book's author, Isabell Lorey, that this pervasive condition is a matter of the long haul: "Precarity is not a passing or episodic condition, but a new form of regulation that distinguishes this historical time." Precarity "has itself become a regime, a hegemonic mode of being governed, and governing ourselves" (Lorey 2015, vii). In one sense of the term, all life is precarious because, by definition, the concept of life is juxtaposed against death. To have life is to exist with the ever-present possibility of death as well as to have ongoing requirements for survival.

Ostensibly, for any living creature, death can occur at any time. Moreover, living creatures have needs for sustenance that vary, the deprivation of which can cause warranted anxiety. This volume is not a

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consideration of all varieties of precarity but rather addresses broadly construed forms of market-induced precarity. This type of precarity is not a "natural" result of existence. Rather, market-based or what we are labeling "neoliberal precarity" describes a politically fashioned reality; the precarity we see and experience results from how the complex processes of neoliberalization construe and assign value. In particular, this value is reflected in how people are organized economically and politically to distribute wealth and value in societies—a politically fraught process. And in this context, more than "the financialization of everything" is at play. As Wendy Brown has recently argued, "Neoliberalism's attack on democracy has everywhere inflected law, political culture, and political subjectivity"; understanding the terrain of precarity as well as assembling an effective resistance to the forces shaping it surely means "appreciating the rise of white nationalist authoritarian political formations as animated by the mobilized anger of the economically abandoned and racially resentful, but as contoured by more than three decades of neoliberal assaults on democracy, equality, and society" (2019, 8). Thus, although we might wish to see the purpose and efficacy of our social organizing to be the minimization of precarity for its members, the chapters in this volume suggest that dominant forms of social arrangement have increasingly failed to sustain large segments of the population; the demands of austerity are inequitably distributed as a matter of policy and not as a "natural" and thus necessary outcome of a free market. Note how both the brief Laugier ("not accidents") and Butler ("politically induced") quotes above express a concern for the intentionality of precarity.

Humans can socially organize themselves in many different ways, but a neoliberal approach favors free markets that minimize outside controls on the nature and shape of economic enterprise.[1] William Davies describes four common aspects attributed to current neoliberal thought: (1) neoliberalism attempts to build something new rather than return to any laissez-faire environment of the past; (2) neoliberal policy endeavors to privatize traditionally nonmarket institutions or disband them altogether; (3) neoliberalism solicits an active state-sponsored role in privatization; and (4) neoliberal thinking portrays inequality as a necessary by-product of the ultimate goal of high productivity—"Competition and inequality are valued positively

under neoliberalism" (2014, 310). It is the latter acceptance of inequality, and by extension precarity, combined with the social hegemony of neoliberal thinking that concern so many social observers. Extending the analysis of Michel Foucault, Wendy Brown describes emergent knowledge authority within neoliberalism as "an intensification of the market as a state of veridiction . . . the market becomes *the,* rather than *a* site of veridiction *and* becomes so for every arena and type of human activity" (2015, 67). Nothing is left untouched—a point richly illustrated by Connolly (2012, n.p.) in a passage quoted in full:

> What, then, are some of the political movements and modes of state activism supported by neoliberalism? They include, with varying degrees of support from different leaders, laws to restrain labor organization and restrict consumer movements; corporate participation on school and university Boards; favorable tax laws for investors; corporate ownership and control of the media; court decisions that treat the corporation as a "person" with unlimited rights to lobby and campaign; demands for bankruptcy laws that favor corporations at the expense of those working for them; special corporate access to state officials to maintain inequality and restrain unemployment benefits; extensive discipline of the work force; the legal defense of corporate, financial power to limit consumer information about the policies that affect them; the ear of state officials who regulate credit and the money supply; use of the state to enforce debt payments and foreclosures; huge military, police and prison assemblages to pursue imperial policies abroad and discipline the excluded and disaffected at home; meticulous street and institutional security arrangements to regulate those closed out of the neoliberal calculus; huge state budgets to promote the established infrastructure of consumption in the domains of highway expenditure, the energy grid, health care, and housing codes; state clean up of disasters created by under-regulated financial and corporate activity; and state/bureaucratic delays to hold off action on global climate change.

Thus does neoliberal capitalism dominate social truth in the way religious truth once did. Diminishing the value of living actors, market-based approaches create "winners" and "losers" without proportionately valuing the pain and suffering of those who are objectified participants. This is neoliberal precarity: a human-made insecurity

and dis-ease with micro-level implications for individual beings and macro-level significance for ecosystems. As Nancy Fraser and Rahel Jaeggi describe, "One implication is that our crisis is not only economic. It also encompasses care deficits, climate change, and de-democratization" (2018, 3).

Care Ethics

The fundamental question addressed by the authors in this volume is how those employing care theory can effectively respond to the prevalent reality of neoliberal precarity. Feminist scholarship coalesced around a concept of care ethics in the 1980s as a relational approach to morality that values context, emotion, and action over the abstract external ethical rationality that dominates Western philosophical thinking. Although still a minority position that is marginalized among some philosophers, care ethics has evolved into interdisciplinary and international theories of care. Scholars in divergent fields have found care theory a robust means of understanding human interaction and imagining a better world. Care thinking has been applied to political, economic, aesthetic, and environmental realms. Participating in new approaches to viewing existential reality in relational, non-authoritative, and postmodern ways, some scholars working in the emergent fields of performance philosophy (Thompson and Fisher 2019) and posthumanism (Bozelak) have found connection to care theory. Thus, care ethics is growing in popularity and exploration at a time when the threat of neoliberal precarity is dramatically on the rise. The juxtaposition of care and precarity is both intellectually fascinating and morally compelling.

Definition is an important consideration when it comes to "care." There have been many evils historically wrought in the name of care, thus making distinctions important. Fiona Robinson, for example, describes how colonial encounters framed oppression in terms of paternalistic care: "When care is understood as benevolence, charity, or attention to the 'victims' or the 'vulnerable' in societies, an ethic of care could serve to reinforce existing patterns of domination and dependency within and among societies and at the global level" (2011, 165). Although the precise understanding of care varies by scholar (as witnessed among our contributors), the care addressed in this

volume is generally understood as a practice of informed responsive actions on behalf of the one cared for and authentically aimed toward their growth and flourishing. Although "care" is a common term, informed responsive practices preclude a purely subjective understanding of care. In other words, just because someone labels what they are doing as care does not mean it aligns with the understanding of care theorists.

The most commonly quoted definition of care ethics is offered by Joan Tronto and Berenice Fisher:

> On the most general level, we suggest that caring be viewed as a species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, ourselves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web. (1991, 40)

This definition is true if a bit vague. One can see in this definition how care is in fundamental opposition to precarity, given that care aims for people to live "as well as possible." Caring does not neatly fit into traditional Western moral thinking and has alternatively been described as a virtue, duty, labor, practice, and/or disposition. Although "care" is a common and familiar term as a moral approach, it is profoundly complex such that it defies simple description. For example, Virginia Held offers a definition that addresses care as both practice and value:

> As a practice it shows us how to respond to needs and why we should. It builds trust and mutual concern and connectedness between persons. . . . Care is also a value. Caring persons and caring attitudes should be valued, and we can organize many evaluations of how persons are interrelated around a constellation of moral considerations associated with care or its absence. (2006, 42)

Some theorists are troubled by the lack of a clear and concise definition for care ethics. In *The Core of Care Ethics,* Stephanie Collins laments the lack of a "core slogan" (2015, 3) for care ethics in the manner that, for example, the happiness principle of creating the greatest amount of happiness for the greatest number of people is associated

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with utilitarianism. However, the quest for clarity should not come at the sacrifice of accounting for the complexity of human experience. In her exploration of care, Peta Bowden resisted the impulse to "produce a consensus, or to catch the essence of care, nor yet to unearth some hidden truth that shows that there has been implicit agreement all along about the meaning of caring." She advanced the claim "that it is precisely these kinds of aims that tend to lead understanding astray, and to cause us to overlook the complexity and diversity of the ethical possibilities of care" (1997, 183). Despite complexity, a working definition can serve as a guiding principle that clarifies a starting point for analysis. To that purpose, care can be characterized as responsive inquiry, empathy, and action. Care is always a response to the particularity of someone's circumstance that requires concrete knowledge of their situation, entailing imaginative connection and actions on behalf of their flourishing and growth. The circumstances of precarity constitute a state wherein a caring response is called for.

Another significant aspect of care theory is its feminist origins and its basis in women's experience. Feminist social theory gives care theory an attentiveness to the dynamics of power and privilege in society. Gender identity played a driving role in the development of care ethics. Although sometimes unfairly associated with gender essentialism, Carol Gilligan's (1982) originary work on care ethics highlighted masculine tendencies toward individuation and feminine propensities toward connection that initiate different dispositions toward caring relationships. In regard to today's neoliberal precarity, gender, and masculinity in particular, is not only still relevant but dramatically so. Certain manifestations of masculinity can be viewed as contributing factors to fomenting and maintaining unnecessary precarity. For example, "hypermasculinity" or "toxic masculinity" can participate in proclivities toward violence and war. Bonnie Mann argues that pervasive gender shaming creates a form of masculinity that fetishizes and fantasizes invulnerability, thereby creating a powerful sense of "sovereign manhood" that "disrupt critical cognition and moral concern" (2014, 114).

Under these conditions, going to battle and engaging the enemy are important aspects of displaying invulnerability and masculine sovereignty. Of course, war and violence are a powerful means of spreading precarity, whether it be the long-term physical and psychological

impact on the combatants who survive, family members of combatants, or those affected by collateral damage and destruction of infrastructure. Neoliberalism is strongly implicated in modern warfare, as arming and rebuilding are lucrative pursuits supported by many industries. War is not the only expression of masculinity, but it is anathema to care. An intersectional analysis reveals how precarity can impact differently privileged identities in complex ways. For example, Susanne Y. P. Choi (2018) addresses how precarious work can emasculate some men, given that their gender identity is tied up with their vocation. Nevertheless, to ignore the role of some manifestations of masculinity in the fomenting of precarity is to participate in the modern tendency to ignore the damage wrought by certain forms of manliness.

A Care Movement?

Given the forces contributing to widespread neoliberal precarity on the one hand and the rise of relational scholarship on the other, perhaps the time is ripe for social need and the scholarly reconceptualization of morality to coalesce into a care movement. History has demonstrated that ideas can lead social and political change. Intellectual movements of empathy and inclusion have cooperated with social and political activism in the past to bring about lasting social transformation. Several authors of late have observed that despite countervailing narratives, and high-profile incidents of brutality, the long-term trajectory of history demonstrates that the world is becoming more empathetic and connected (Rifkin 2009) and less violent (Pinker 2012). However, the human capacity for care requires intellectual and physical support to reach fruition. There have been periods of time when rich ideas and willing individuals have helped spark human progress toward greater empathy and understanding. Two such periods of intellectually fueled social change in recent human history include the Progressive Era and the hippie movement.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Progressivism sparked local activism and policy change in an effort to improve society on the heels of free-market capitalism's industrialization, urbanization, and labor migration. Progressive Era enthusiasts held an abiding confidence that social well-being could be improved through

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intentional organizing and action as witnessed in the social settlement movement of the time.

The corollary intellectual movement in the Progressive Era was "pragmatism" as manifested in the work of John Dewey, William James, and Jane Addams, among others. These public philosophers emphasized the centrality of human experience, pluralism, democracy, education, and social improvement. Addams exemplified the spirit of cosmopolitan hope when she described democracy as social ethics:

> We are learning that a standard of social ethics is not attained by travelling a sequestered byway, but by mixing on the thronged and common road where all must turn out for one another, and at least see the size of one another's burdens. To follow the path of social morality results perforce in the temper if not the practice of the democratic spirit, for it implies that diversified human experiences and resultant sympathy which are the foundation and guarantee of Democracy. (2002 [1902], 7)

Although sometimes naïve and manifesting its own unconscious bias, the legacy of the Progressive Era includes lasting social and political reforms such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the New Deal, environmental advances, business and economic reforms, and protections for women, children, and laborers, as well as advances by men and women of color. Ultimately, the social optimism was suppressed by the political realism of two world wars, but the influence of the period remains.

In the 1960s, another eruption of compassion and social improvement emerged in the countercultural movement that embraced peace and love as embodied in the hippie lifestyle. A reaction to unpopular and prolonged war, repressive social mores, environmental degradation, and materialism, the hippies rejected authority as manifested in age and formal social hierarchies. The countercultural movements also had an intellectual base in what became known as the New Left. Many academics such as Angela Davis, Frantz Fanon, and Herbert Marcuse influenced and were influenced by hippie ideas. For example, Marcuse (1969) described hippies as "the only viable social revolution" of the time in their rejection of materialism, war, and "competitive performances." The legacy of the 1960s includes advances in women's rights, civil rights, gay rights, and environmental advocacy. Many progressive

efforts today can trace their genealogy to the social and intellectual environment of the 1960s.

One might argue that the widespread unnecessary neoliberal precarity signals that it is time for another international social movement infused with empathy and compassion that reconnects people separated by identity-based discrimination, disparate resources, and oppressive violence. The world seems weary of social and political approaches guided by abstract hierarchical moralities that can be co-opted by concentrated power whether financial, religious, or military. Too many people have become inured to fearmongering narratives, social fractionation, and violence. Care ethics reaffirms our interconnected humanity. Perhaps care represents "the only viable social revolution" in the face of today's neoliberal precarity. Accordingly, Carol Gilligan frames care ethics as a tool for a resistance movement: "A feminist ethic of care is integral to the struggle to release democracy from the grip of patriarchy . . . A feminist care ethic encourages the capacities that constitute our humanity and alerts us to the practices that put them at risk" (2011, 177).

Chapters in This Volume

Care Ethics in the Age of Precarity is made up of eleven chapters from social and political theorists representing Canada, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, and the United States. All of the authors address how care theory can respond to precarity, especially the tenuous circumstances fomented by market-driven neoliberalism. However, each contributor takes a unique approach to the theme, often by defining terms in sometimes conflicting and sometimes congruent ways. A number of the chapters deepen current analysis of care and precarity by synthesizing and refining ideas such as vulnerability, dependency, empathy, and relational ontology. Other chapters introduce care thinking to new realms of intellectual discourse such as ethical temporality, multiverse political thinking, the role of eros, and feminist new materialist analysis by offering inquiry into the work of scholars not normally associated with care ethics.

The volume begins with one of the most prominent voices in care theory, philosopher Eva Feder Kittay, addressing precarity through the lens of her signature concern for ability. However, her chapter,

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"Precarity, Precariousness, and Disability," extends the analysis of care and precarity beyond the differently abled to the plight of the disability worker. Kittay distinguishes between precarity and precariousness: "Precarity is a socioeconomic notion and is produced in a given political economy. Precariousness is an existential condition that we all face, but it is one that I believe is intensified by disability." She implicates neoliberalism for its role in valorizing citizenship marked by independence and productivity. For Kittay, the measure of a society is how it takes care of its vulnerable members—something for which the market is ill-equipped to accomplish, particularly for those who lack resources. Kittay claims that "at the heart of all social organization is the care and protection of dependent people. All else is built around this." Accordingly, care in the face of precarity is not a social nicety or peripheral political concern but rather central to a healthy, functioning society.

In the second chapter, "Neoliberalism, Moral Precarity, and the Crisis of Care," Sarah Clark Miller pushes us to rethink what a "crisis of care" really means. After addressing the hazards of neoliberalism, Miller explores what the commonly invoked moniker "crisis of care" entails. She draws attention to two interrelated and undertheorized aspects of a crisis of care: the moral precarity of caregivers and the relational harms of neoliberal capitalism. The former describes the tension many caregivers can find themselves in knowing what the one being cared for needs but being unable to provide it. Miller finds this kind of distress to be a moral injury inflicted by neoliberalism's approach to resource allocation. The real human beings providing care who are ensnared in this predicament experience exhaustion and burnout. However, Miller finds a second stage to the moral precarity of caregivers in the damage it does to caring relationships: "Two possible forms of relational harm can result from moral injury: harm to intrapersonal relationships, or the relationships we hold with ourselves, and harm to interpersonal relationships, represented in the connections we hold with others." Sometimes, it appears that care theory is running on at least two tracks: one personal and phenomenological and the second a critical political philosophy of care. Miller links them together in her interrogation of the meaning of a crisis of care. In the conclusion, she strikes a wary note regarding social reproduction. The more neoliberal values influence practices, the more widely

inculcated is this trajectory: "The myriad ways neoliberalism exacerbates our moral precarity accumulate through the crisis of care until ultimately the very fabric of our interdependence is at stake." Care has always connoted more than normative adjudication, and Miller's cautionary tale signals how care is a necessary way of being in the face of forces that seek to divide and imperil society.

In "Vulnerability, Precarity, and the Ambivalent Interventions of Empathic Care," philosopher Vrinda Dalmiya also expresses concern that care theory is too often associated with vulnerability. Noting the international flow of care labor from the South to the North, Dalmiya's apprehension is geopolitical: "Care, grounded as it is in responses to an all-pervasive vulnerability, ends up talking past socioeconomically caused precarities." She draws upon Eva Kittay's notion of "secondary dependency" to address the precarity of those who care for the precarious. Dalmiya seeks an approach that bridges the political and the personal. Specifically, she offers "affective solidarity" that respects difference as an outgrowth of imaginative empathy that can cross borders to create political coalitions. Dalmiya is anything but romantic about the role of empathy. She cites empathetic failures, including examples of volunteer tourism, which reveal how challenging empathetic care is. Nevertheless, Dalmiya still contends that caring can be "politically transformative if its empathic moment triggers such entangled intersubjectivity." Dalmiya weaves a cautionary yet compelling argument for the central role of empathy in a political theory of care that enables solidarity to confront precarity.

For those new to the subject of precarity, Andries Baart provides a comprehensive overview of the topic in "Precariousness, Precarity, Precariat, Precarization and Social Redundancy: A Substantiated Map for the Ethics of Care." A pioneering Dutch philosopher of presence and medical ethics, Baart draws upon experiences in the Netherlands as well as international political movements to interrogate the lexicon of precarity and to offer a practical road map for care theorists. His provocative primary concern is that in the process of providing aid, caring social efforts "reproduce the process of precarization" through the normalization of precarious existence. Baart views the problem as pervasive, and he casts a wide net for his analysis: "Precarity pertains to much more than poverty, unemployment, bad housing, or unhealthy working conditions. Fundamentally, it is about pervasive

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uncertainty: you do not have any idea whether you will be able to survive until tomorrow." Baart provides the most systematic review of the precarity literature found among the chapters in this volume. He briefly overviews the works of Pierre Bourdieu, Robert Castel, Guy Standing, Oliver Marchart, Judith Butler, and Kathleen Millar. From this analysis, Baart acknowledges the contested nature of the term and draws together some common threads of understanding. Baart offers a "map" to demonstrate the forces and impact of late modernization. He makes an intriguing comparison between precarity and social redundancy—the notion that increasing numbers of us are unnecessary to the economy. Baart contends that both social phenomena have helped to spur the current round of populism witnessed around the world, and he contends that it is up to care theorists to describe how to disrupt the process of precarity production and reproduction he has suggested.

No one can escape the fragility of human life. Tragically, contributor Elena Pulcini passed away from COVID-related health issues while *Care Ethics in the Age of Precarity* was in production. She was an internationally known Italian care theorist and social philosopher who added a great deal of heart to the care ethics literature through her work on moral emotions. Her chapter, "Global Vulnerability: Why Take Care of Future Generations?" extends her impressive intellectual legacy. In the chapter, Pulcini addresses how care can address precarity by transcending the challenges of time and place. Pulcini notes the temporal dimension of precarity created by neoliberal globalization, given that much of precarity is worry about the future: the next meal, next month's rent, the lives our children will have, and so on. She finds all the existing normative approaches inadequate to the task in that they fail to take into account the moral subject and their motivation to act: "All of the major theories of justice—Rawls and neoliberalism, utilitarianism, and communitarianism—have hit a wall or failed outright to justify the obligation toward the future generations by proposing the same abstract and rationalistic assumptions." Pulcini reformulates the problem of caring for distant others by considering issues of vulnerability, debt, and reciprocity in ways that recenter ethics around the caring subject in order to understand what motivates action. She returns to the theme of empathy to argue that proximity is not necessary to trigger empathy. The relational ontology of care theory, which expands the notion beyond abstract normative considerations, is crucial for Pulcini. She

elegantly concludes, "The strength of the ethics of care lies in it sinking its roots not in normative precepts or deontological imperatives but indeed in a form of life, in material and symbolic forms of organizing one's life and one's world." Pulcini will be missed as a scholar and as a friend.

Italian care theorist and scholar of pedagogy and medical research epistemology Luigina Mortari offers a prosaic chapter, "Care: The Primacy of Being," which continues the theme of viewing care ethics as more than a normative formula for moral adjudication but rather care as a way of being. Mortari claims that not only is care imperative for our existence, but it also structures who we are and what we do. She suggests that care "could be defined as a *fabric of being.*" In an unconventional genealogy, Mortari turns to ancient philosophy to find that in *The Republic,* Plato suggested that philosophers were obliged to care for citizens in the art of living. Unfortunately, care has been largely overlooked in the history of philosophy until the present. Mortari seeks a natural language definition of care through the ontological reality of fragility and vulnerability. In interrogating these concepts, Mortari develops a threefold notion of care that responds to precarity as an "ontological necessity." For Mortari, "the practice of care is implemented in three ways: by procuring things to preserve life, by fostering being through the cultivation of each person's potentiality, and by healing the wounds each person has sustained both in body and in spirit." In Mortari's sweeping analysis, we find a notion of care for the precarious that is not dictated by external moral norms but rather that finds its foundation in our fundamental connection to our nature, making care a realization of our humanity.

The assumption thus far among all of the chapters in this volume, and for most considerations of precarity, is that it is a negative and uncomfortable position to be mitigated in society as much as possible. In "Deliberate Precarity? On the Relation between Care Ethics, Voluntary Precarity, and Voluntary Simplicity," Carlo Leget, a care ethics scholar and a leader in advancing care ethics research worldwide, provokes the reader to reframe conventional thinking about precarity by asking what can be learned about precarity from those who have intentionally chosen a precarious lifestyle. Leget explores examples of deliberate precarity from the thirteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries, as well as current decisions by some to live with voluntary simplicity. Although recognizing that the earlier historical contexts were quite

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different from those of the present day, Leget finds a number of po-
tential benefits from intentional precarity, including spiritual, epis-
temic, symbolic, instrumental, and transformative outcomes. Such
acts and attributes can be "examples of a lifestyle that shines as a
protest against . . . neoliberalism." In the final sections of the chapter,
Leget analyzes the philosophy behind voluntary simplicity move-
ments. He draws upon the work of German sociologist Hartmut Rosa
to suggest that today's precarity points to a deeper issue than just car-
ing for the needy in the acceleration and churning that markets cause
when they seek more and more growth. Leget, through Rosa, claims
that "neoliberalism, with all its perverse effects on caring relation-
ships, is the wrong answer to a deeper and more fundamental problem.
It is the wrong answer because it sustains the process of acceleration
that turns the world we live in into a 'mute' world: a great heap of dead
and meaningless raw material." Leget concludes by making it clear
that voluntary precarity or simplicity is not intended as a mainstream
lifestyle choice, but he does offer significant insights for how to care
for one another without ignoring underlying causal dynamics.

In "Precarious Political Ontologies and the Ethics of Care," politi-
cal scientist and feminist theorist Maggie FitzGerald also challenges
the reader to think about care ethics and precarity differently through
the nascent theoretical framework of the pluriverse. Although care the-
ory is often associated with a relational ontology, FitzGerald describes
a pluriverse approach as reframing political ontologies to "consist of
the ongoing, shifting, dynamic, and (de)stabilizing practices and rela-
tions that bring worlds into existence." Accordingly, rather than un-
derstanding politics as a static competition of constituent values and
interests, the concept of the pluriverse views political ontologies as en-
acted or performed and entangled with one another in a complex and
changing social environment. FitzGerald suggests that care theory pro-
vides an effective means of engaging the political pluriverse. She em-
ploys an extended case study of the Māori people of New Zealand and
their relationship to the Whanganui River to demonstrate the clash of
political universes. For the Māori, the Whanganui River is a living en-
tity. Their political universe came into conflict with that of the state,
which considered the river a natural phenomenon instrumental to hu-
man needs. The Māori had to overcome the differences in political
ontologies to have the Whanganui River given identity status in the law.

For FitzGerald, the Māori example epitomizes a marginalized political ontology. With this example as a backdrop, FitzGerald describes precarity as enhanced vulnerability, although the relationship between marginal and privileged political ontologies is not straightforward. She describes an interrelated entanglement: "Precarity, as developed here, highlights those worlds at the margins of the global political economy, specifically those that have been excluded, purposefully reshaped, devalued, and even erased, while also equally emphasizing that even apparently 'stable' or 'hegemonic' worlds are vulnerable and unstable, dependent upon marginalized worlds, and susceptible to falling precarious themselves." The responsive epistemic resources in care theory allow for a method of navigating the political pluriverse and the ever-present potential for precarity.

While FitzGerald innovatively pushes care theory into the contemporary discussions of political pluriverse, political scientist and theorist Sacha Ghandeharian provides another fresh approach to thinking about subjectivity within care theory in "Care Ethics and the Precarious Self: A Politics of Eros in a Neoliberal Age." Taking neoliberal presuppositions head on, Ghandeharian claims that a careful analysis of the relationship between care and desire or eros can "broaden our understanding of the relational and ethical self and its inescapable precariousness." For Ghandeharian, eros provides a robust understanding of subjectivity that is simultaneously a critique of neoliberalism. Drawing heavily upon Luce Irigaray's work on eros, and the notion that "our very being, as subjects, depends on a *becoming-between-two*" in a responsive, non-homogenizing way, Ghandeharian suggests that our fundamental relationality results in "self-inflicted precarity." He also turns to the work of Kelly Oliver who frames subjectivity as a "witnessing structure." Ghandeharian juxtaposes these relational understandings of subjectivity with the achievement subjectivity demanded by neoliberal thinking. Neoliberalism undermines the fundamental relationality of subjectivity by framing the subject relation as a matter of commodity; Ghandeharian views such commodification as doomed to failure. Engaging the writings of Byung-Chul Han to understand eros as motivating political care, Ghandeharian advances a key claim—that we meet precarity with precarity. Ultimately, Ghandeharian offers a novel approach to viewing care theory as an antidote for neoliberal thinking.

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Continuing the theme of care theorists engaging in new and innovative political narratives witnessed in the previous two chapters, sociopolitical thinker, feminist philosopher, and qualitative researcher Emilie Dionne thrusts care ethics into contemporary posthumanities discussions in "Resisting Neoliberalism: A Feminist New Materialist Ethics of Care to Respond to Precarious World(s)." Extending the work of Karen Barad, Dionne frames feminist new materialism (FNM) as recentering analysis around matter that she describes as ontologically indeterminate. Ultimately, Dionne claims that FNM can expand care theory's ability to "participate in the work of healing, alleviating, or transforming precarity and its multifarious effects on people's lives." To accomplish this connection, Dionne begins by offering a lexicon for the field of FNM and, in particular, Barad's notion of agential matter, agential realism, and intra-action. She then utilizes Judith Butler and Isabell Lorey's conceptualization of precarity to contend that neoliberalism works to embody a precarious ontology: "when precariousness and precarity *matter* and come to stay through the effects of governmental precarization, they also become a self-sustaining and new ontology-making process that becomes ingrained and incredibly difficult to change or counteract." Dionne offers some concrete tools for care theorists by analyzing several extended illustrations of how neoliberalism foments precarity. Dionne finds hope in new feminist theories leveraging the liminality of care theory: "Care ethics is enriched by considering FNM's views of a world that is increasingly agential in light of its new, constantly increasingly, situation of shared, mutually entangled, and complexifying conditions of globalization, growing sickness, fragile ecological transformations, and the various insecurities that trouble us." Put crudely, in some ways, FNM puts another nail in the coffin of androcentric modernism as reflected in the messiness described in the above quote. From its origins in resisting the categories laid out by Lawrence Kohlberg in the Heinz Dilemma, care has eschewed traditional ethical frameworks. Perhaps Dionne has helped to show that new feminist thinking is providing an appropriate theoretical constellation from which care can reach its full potential.

The volume concludes with a more personal account of precarity and policy: "Precariousness, Precarity, and Gender-Care Politics in Japan" by feminist political theorist Yayo Okano. In an extended localized case study, Okano juxtaposes natural disasters in Japan, including typhoons

and earthquakes (not to mention the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant disaster), with political policies that weaken social welfare but which are instigated under the guise of strengthening the nation. She wonders whether care ethics can provide any resources for resisting the precarity wrought by the policy changes. In the midst of recurring natural disasters, the country has also faced economic stagnation and turned to the market to fix its woes: "Because the structural reform launched in the mid-1990s adopted neoliberalist rhetoric, workers in Japan have been facing deregulation of labor conditions in order to pay the price necessary to stimulate the national economy." According to Okano, the result of these policies is that young people, women, and the less educated find themselves with more tenuous labor prospects. Further exacerbating the circumstances is that for the past decade, the government has diverted funds for building a stronger military defense, for example, by lowering corporate taxes and increasing consumption taxes. Furthermore, in the effort to build the Japanese army, government leaders used images of the vulnerable—women and children—to make the case that a strong army is needed to protect them. The irony of utilizing this justification is not lost on Okano: "Japan has been in a vicious circle of impoverishing people's welfare and, at the same time, heightening insecurity, anxiety, and precarity among people." Okano offers us an example of a destabilization witnessed repeatedly around the world and for which care becomes an act of resistance.

Note

1. As William Connolly (2012) remarks, "Perhaps the quickest way, then, to dramatize the difference between classical market liberalism and contemporary neoliberalism is to say that the former wanted the state to minimize interference with "natural" market processes as it purported to leave other parts of civil society to their own devices, while the latter campaigns to make the state, the media, schools, families, science, churches and the corporate estate be ordered around neoliberal principles of being."

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