Language Malnutrition and Psychotherapy:
Emmanuel Levinas, Distributive Ethics, and Economic Class

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In *Dialogue on Thinking-of-the-Other,* Emmanuel Levinas' (1998) reminds us that one of the "dangers of democracy" is "the permanent exclusion of a minority that always exists"—more specifically, the poor (p. 205). However, he also holds an optimism regarding the liberal state; the possibility of justice wherein a "ceaseless deep remorse" constantly requires justice to be "perfected against its own harshness" (p. 229). In this paper, the authors attempt to introduce such a "remorse" and "harshness" in order to bring light to significant psychotherapeutic access disparities that presently exist and that map onto contemporary caste-based imbalances in the socioeconomic and class structuring of the United States. More specifically, we explore the "evidence-based practice" (EBP) movement and how its research and implementation rarely frame the conversation in terms of the availability and marketing of therapeutic languages along class lines. As such, the authors consider the intersection between language, experience, and class access to treatment orientations and discourses. The authors contend that the *marketing* of evidence-based modalities and symptom-reduction models impacts the experiential possibilities of persons and this has a particular bearing on persons with fewer economic resources who have access to a narrow range of therapeutic and epistemological possibilities. Linguistic options are circumscribed and pre-decided (Cushman, 1995). In conclusion, the authors illustrate the segregations and hierarchies of therapeutic approaches available at different class designations and reflect on the present epistemological violence in the mental health delivery system as it relates to Levinas' understanding of justice and language.

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