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WATSUJI Tetsurō 和辻哲郎 (1889–1960)



Watsuji Tetsurō was not only Japan's premier ethical theorist and historian of ethics in the first half of the twentieth century, but also an astute philosopher of culture and interpreter of religious traditions and practices. Born the son of a country physician in a village near the Inland Sea, at age sixteen he ventured out to the metropolis of Tokyo to study at its First Higher School and then the Imperial University, graduating in 1912 with a thesis on Schopenhauer's pessimism. Forty years later he published a memoir of his philosophy professor there, Raphael von Koeber. In his student years he took up the study of

Nietzsche, the subject of his first publication in 1913, followed two years later by a book on Kierkegaard, the first in Japan. In 1918 he issued a critique of Taishō-era infatuation with democracy, coupled with an appeal to ancient nature cults, under the ironic title, *The Revival of Idols*, and then began work on *A Critique of Homer* published nearly twenty years later. Among the religious, cultural, and historical studies he authored were *The Cultural-Historical Significance of Primitive Christianity* (1926), and *The Practical Philosophy of Primitive Buddhism* (1927).

Although he was not the first person to find philosophical thought in Dōgen* or Shinran*, the essay cited below opened Dōgen's writings to nonsectarian, philosophical inquiry for the first time. Watsuji's works were informed by the philological methods he learned from Koeber and later by the hermeneutical approach he gained during a year spent in Europe from 1927 to 1928, when he studied in Berlin, engrossed himself in Heidegger's just-published *Sein und Zeit*, and made excursions to the cultural centers of Italy. The trip proved to be a turning point in Watsuji's career and interests. Soon after returning to Japan he was made a professor of philosophy at Kyoto Imperial University, and in 1934 was appointed to the chair in ethics at Tokyo Imperial University. Inspired to develop the hermeneutical phenomenology he had come to know in Germany and further elucidate cultural differences, he published *Climate and Culture*, demonstrating how human spatiality shapes the intentionality of our perceptions and actions, and how climatic zones shape the character of interhuman relations and give rise to distinct cultures: pastoral, desert, and monsoon. The excerpt below from this work represents perhaps the world's first phenomenological description of weather.

Watsuji later abandoned these rather impressionistic idealizations of cultural types but continued to focus on interrelations among humans and between humans and their environments. His three-volume work on *Ethics* was completed in 1949 and followed Heidegger's lead in exploiting the literal meanings and the cultural

nuances of terms in his native language to drive home the insights of his analysis. The term translated as “human being” is an example. The ordinary modern Japanese word *ningen* refers to humans but its sinographs literally indicate the *inter-human* or relationship between one person and others, all who live together in a shared cultural space or “betweenness.” At the same time, he argued that Heidegger’s *Das-ein* was individualistic and overemphasized the temporality of human existence to the neglect of relationality—spatial, temporal, cultural, and climatic—that Watsuji considered central. The passage cited below on the negative, dialectical structure of human existence reveals the influence of Nishida’s philosophy and Buddhist thought as well, but the work overall implies a critique of traditional Confucian and Buddhist thought that lacked a notion of intentionality and therefore an adequate base for philosophical analysis.

For Watsuji, ethics forms the core of philosophy, and in a two-volume *History of Japanese Ethical Thought* published in 1952 he attempted to lay out the manifestations of universal human relatedness in the particular historical strata of Japanese value systems, including that of emperor veneration as opposed to a feudal ‘*bushidō*’. His critique of the samurai ethic did not, however, keep from applauding the benefits of self-negation, the superiority of Japan’s view of the human, and the virtue of the nation-state as the supreme form of human community—all of which served military factions during the Asian Pacific War with a rationale. While the political status of his views remains controversial, the clarity of his analyses is striking.

[JCM]

SHINRAN AND DŌGEN

WATSUJI Tetsurō 1923, 192–203

~~The most remarkable part of Shinran’s* teaching is his explanation of boundless ‘compassion’. For Shinran, compassion is the image of the absolute being.... But Shinran does not explain infinite compassion in phrases such as “love thy neighbor,” “love all humankind,” or “love between people is the most meaningful thing in life.” This is because he understands how feeble human love truly is, and how difficult it is for human beings to love selflessly. He distinctly separates human compassion from the Buddha’s compassion.... The path of sages is one of cultivating pity and sorrow. However, as long as people live in this world, we cannot truly help others, no matter how much our hearts pity or yearn for them.~~

~~Shinran’s great love for humanity is expressed here; we cannot help but be moved deeply by it. Indeed, how many hurting souls can we see immediately around us? And how much do we suffer because we cannot save people from their pain—or rather, because their pain is such that they cannot be saved from it? It is not that we don’t know the means to eradicate their suffering. The prob-~~

~~As opposed to this, Dōgen imitated the patriarchs before him through 'cultivation'. He followed them for good or ill. Both Dōgen and Shinran are in agreement with regard to abandoning egoistic views and "following"; it is where the focus on "faith" and "cultivation" diverges that we find the notable difference between the two....~~

~~It seems to me that these similarities and differences recur again and again throughout both of their writings. Their similarities always maintain their different colors at the same time that they are one, and their differences, while having one root, remain different.... According to Shinran, compassion belongs to Amida. Therefore, human excellence loses its significance in the face of that compassion. According to Dōgen, compassion belongs to humans. Therefore, the significance of human excellence is deepened further by compassion. Shinran only explained the relationship between human good and evil and Amida's compassion, while Dōgen delved deeply into the relationships between people....~~

~~However, we cannot count too many of these similarities. This is because Shinran has very little to say concerning applied excellence. Therefore, we cannot know about the moral excellences that are supported by Amida's compassion. In contrast, we can find impassioned speeches on moral excellence by Dōgen, who preaches the compassion of humanity. Because of his "faith," Shinran, who was in immediate contact with the people and directly influenced their lives, had little to say about the path of human beings. On the other hand, because of his idea of "cultivation," Dōgen, who retreated into the forests and mountains solely in order to work towards realizing the truth, has great passion for the ways of human beings. This contrast is profoundly interesting.~~

[SMB]

A PHENOMENOLOGY OF THE COLD

WATSUJI Tetsurō 1935, 7–10 (1–5)

All of us live on some piece of land or other, and the natural environment of this land "surrounds" us whether we like it or not. This seems an obvious fact, a matter of certainty. People usually discern this natural environment in the form of natural phenomena of various kinds, and accordingly concern themselves with the influences that the natural environment has on us—whether we are regarded as biological and physiological objects, or as engaged in practical activities such as the formation of a nation-state. Each of these influences is complicated enough to demand specialized study. What I am concerned with here, however, is the question whether the climate that we

take for a fact of our daily lives is to be regarded as a natural phenomenon. It is proper that the natural sciences should treat climate as a natural phenomenon from their own perspectives, but it is another question whether the phenomenon of climate is in essence an object of the natural sciences.

By way of clarifying this question, let me take as an example the phenomenon of cold, which is merely one constitutive part or moment within the phenomenon of weather, and something evident as far as our common sense is concerned. It is an undeniable fact that we feel cold. But what is this cold that we feel? Is it that the air of a certain temperature, that is, cold as a physical object, stimulates the sense organs in our body, so that we as physiological subjects experience it as a certain mental state? If so, it follows that the “cold” and “we” exist as separate and independent entities in such a manner that only when the cold presses upon us from the outside does the intentionality arise by which “we feel the cold.” In that case, it is natural that we think of this as the influence of the cold on us.

But is this really so? How can we know the independent existence of the cold before we feel cold? It is impossible. It is by feeling cold that we discover the cold. It is by misunderstanding the intentional relation that we consider the cold as something pressing in on us from the outside. It is not true that the intentional relation arises only when an object presses from the outside. As far as individual consciousness is concerned, the subject possesses the intentional structure within itself and as a subject already “directs itself toward something.” The “feeling” in “feeling the cold” is not a separate piece that results in a relation directed at the cold, but is in itself already a relation by virtue of its feeling something, and it is in this relation that we discover cold. As a relational structure, this intentionality is precisely a structure of the subject relating to the cold. The fact that we feel the cold is, first and foremost, a lived, intentional experience of this kind.

But, it may be argued, if this is the case, is not the cold merely a moment of subjective lived experience? The cold thus discovered is cold limited to the sphere of the “I.” But what we call the cold is a transcendent object outside me, not merely my feeling. How can a subjective experience form a relation with a transcendent object of this sort? In other words, how can the feeling of cold become related to the coldness of the outside air? This question involves a misunderstanding of what is intended in the relation of intentionality. The intention is not directed at some mental content. What is intended is not the cold as an experience independent of objective cold. When we feel the cold, it is not the sensation of the cold that we feel, but directly the coldness of the outside air, “the cold” itself. In other words, the cold felt in intentional experience is not something subjective but something objective. It may be said, therefore, that the intentional “relation” in which we feel the cold is one whereby we are

already related to the cold of the outside air. The cold as something existing transcendently comes about only in this intentionality. Therefore, from the start there is no problem in understanding how a feeling of cold supposedly comes into relation with the coldness of the outside air.

Seen this way, the usual distinction between subject and object, or more particularly the distinction between “us” and “the cold” as independent of one another involves a certain misunderstanding. When we feel the cold, we ourselves are already dwelling in the coldness of the outside air. That we come into relation with the cold means that we ourselves already “stand out into” the cold. Our very way of being is characterized by what Heidegger calls “*ex-sistere*” or, accordingly, by intentionality.

This leads me to the contention that, as “*ex-sisting*,” we ourselves stand over against ourselves. Even in cases where we do not face ourselves by means of reflection or by looking into ourselves, our selves are exposed to ourselves. Reflection is merely a mode of grasping oneself. Furthermore, it is not a primary mode of self-disclosure. But if the word “reflect” is taken in its visual sense, that is, if it is understood as bouncing against something and being displayed in the reflection coming back from it, then the word may well indicate the way in which our selves are exposed to ourselves. We feel the cold, that is, we are out in the cold. Therefore, in feeling the cold, we discover ourselves in the cold itself. This does not mean that we transport our selves into the cold and there discover the selves thus transported. The instant the cold is discovered, we are already out in the cold. Fundamentally, therefore, what is “present outside” is not some thing or object such as the cold, but rather we ourselves. “*Ex-sisting*” is the fundamental structure that defines our selves, and it is on this structure that intentionality depends. Feeling the cold is an intentional experience in which we discover our selves already *ex-sisting* outside in the cold.

We have considered the problem in terms of the individual’s consciousness in experiencing the cold. But as we have been able to use the expression “we feel the cold” without any difficulty, it is “we” who experience the cold, not “I” alone. We feel the same cold in common. It is precisely because of this that we can use words describing the cold in our exchange of daily greetings. The fact that the feeling of the cold differs between us is possible only on the basis of our feeling the cold in common. Without this basis it would be quite impossible to recognize that any other “I” experiences the cold. Thus, it is not I alone but we—or more strictly, I when I am “we” and we when we are each an “I”—who are outside in the cold. What fundamentally defines our “*ex-sistence*” is this we, not an “I” by itself. Accordingly, to “*ex-sist*” means already to be out among other “I”s before it means to be out in some thing such as the cold. This is not the relation called intentionality, but rather an interrelation called *aidagara*,

betweenness. It is primarily we in this mutual relationship of betweenness who discover ourselves in the cold.

I have attempted to clarify the phenomenon of cold, but we do not experience this phenomenon of the weather in isolation from others of its kind. It is experienced in connection with warmth or heat, as well as with wind, rain, snow, or sunshine, and so forth. In other words, the cold is simply one of the whole series of similar phenomena that we call weather. When we enter a warm room after being in the cold wind, when we feel a mild spring breeze after a cold winter is over, or when we are caught in a torrential shower on a boiling hot summer day, we first of all apprehend ourselves within these weather conditions that are other than ourselves. Again, when changes in the weather occur, we first of all apprehend changes in ourselves. This weather, too, is not experienced in isolation. It is experienced only in connection with the soil, the topographic and scenic features of some land, and so forth. A cold wind may be experienced as a mountain gust or as the cold, dry wind that sweeps through Tokyo at the end of the winter. The spring breeze may be one that scatters cherry blossoms, or that caresses ocean waves. So, too, the heat of the summer may be of the kind to wilt vigorous green leaves or to entice children to play merrily at the sea. Just as we find ourselves happy or saddened in a wind that scatters the cherry blossoms, so do we apprehend our wilting selves in the very heat of summer that scorches plants and trees in a spell of dry weather. In other words, we discover ourselves—our selves as interrelated—in climate.

[GB]

ETHICS

WATSUJI Tetsurō 1945, 11–22, 106–7, 125, 278, 283–6

The Study of Human Being

My approach to ethics is based on an inquiry into the meaning of the Japanese word for “human being,” *ningen*. The primary significance of this approach is that it frees us from a fallacy prevalent in the modern world, namely that ethics is to be constructed solely as a problem of individual consciousness. This fallacy is grounded in the individualistic view of man that developed in the modern period. Clearly, this concept of the individual is, in and of itself, an achievement of the modern spirit and is imbued with a profound significance that we must not overlook. At the same time, however, we must note that what individualism sought to do was to substitute the individual, which is but one moment of human existence, for the entirety of human being. This abstraction has become the source of all manner of fallacy. One example of this is the asser-

tion that the isolated ego should serve as the point of departure for modern philosophy. The fallacy of this assertion is not so pronounced when the assertion is placed within the confines of problems that call strictly for reflecting on an objectified view of nature. This is because the stance required to reflect objectively is already one step removed from the concrete nature of human existence. By virtue of this, it moves from a context in which those who do the reflecting function throughout as “viewers of objects” that are seen as specimens; or, to put it differently, it as if those who reflect were acting strictly from a subjective position. However, it must be said that this isolated subjective stance, from its inception, has nothing to do with the problem of human existence, which is a problem of the practical, active, and relational interconnections of our existence. Moreover, this isolated subjective stance, from which has been eliminated the practical, active, relational interconnections that exist between one human being and another, is then made to apply to ethical problems. With this, the context of ethical problems becomes confined to the *relationship that exists between subjectivity and nature*, and therein it is attributed to its own field as a problem of will, which is seen as standing in opposition to the problem of awareness. Consequently, such issues as the independence of the self in relation to nature, the control of self over itself, and the satisfaction of the desires of the self are placed at the heart of ethical problems. However, in whatever direction one seeks to develop a theory regarding such problems, if that work is based solely on this stance, it will never be possible to solve those problems. In the end, if such issues as the self that transcends the individual and the well-being of society and the welfare of all humankind are not brought forward, then first principles cannot be established. This tells us that ethical problems are not simply matters of individual consciousness.

The context of ethical problems is not to be found within the consciousness of the isolated individual, but rather within the mediating space or “betweenness” that exists between one person and another. Ethics thus is none other than what could be called the study of human being. Without seeing ethics as the study of this dynamic mediating space, which exists between one person and another, we will not be able to unravel the nature of virtue, responsibility, obligations, and of the good and the bad within human actions. Moreover, we will be able to clarify this issue through an examination of the concept of *rinri* or ethics itself, which is the very subject we are addressing here.

The concept of ethics is expressed by the word *rinri*. When we reflect on the nature of words and language, it is obvious that language is one of the most remarkable things created by humankind. There is no one who can say, for example, that he or she personally has created a language, and yet the words used by any one person are very much his or her own words. This characteristic of words originates from the fact that language is the crucible that converts

the subjective relations of human beings into noematic meanings. To put it differently, language is the process through which the existence that is prior to consciousness is brought into consciousness. This existence is simultaneously a subjective reality that cannot be objectified and a practical, active network of human relations already existing. Thus, when that existence is brought into consciousness, it possesses a structure that is not merely a source of individual existence, despite the fact that its contents rest within individual consciousness. In this sense, language is also an expression of the subjective existence of human beings and, consequently, it provides us with a passageway into our subjective existence. In trying to clarify the concept of ethics, I shall first make language into an intermediary in the process, and my reasons for doing this are based on the argument I have just stated.

With that, let us begin. The Japanese word for ethics, *rinri*, is comprised of two sinographs. The first of them, *rin*, means “companion” or “associate” or “someone with whom one has a relationship within a certain space.” This space of relationship, or *nakama*, can refer to a group serving as a relational system for a given set of people as well as to the individuals that comprise it. In ancient China, the ‘five relationships’ between father and son, lord and subject, husband and wife, elder brother and younger brother, and friend and friend were referred to as “the great human *rin*” and were considered the most essential relational spaces. But if the relationship between father and son can be characterized as a type of *rin* or *nakama*, this does not mean that a father and a son first exist as separate individuals and then later join to create this relationship. It is only within the context of this relationship that a father can be called a father and a son a son: the father comes to be a father and the son a son only by virtue of each belonging to a relational system.

How is it, then, that in one *nakama* individuals can be defined as father and son, and in another as friends? Because a *nakama* is none other than a way of engaging in a specific relationship. Thus, *rin* stands for both *nakama* (the individual or group that is engaged in a specific relationship with others) and the ways of actively engaging in that specific relationship within human existence. Hence, we may say that *rin* refers to the conventions or patterns of living in human existence, that is to say, to the broader order found within human existence—the “way of the human.”

The ways we engage actively in these human interconnections do not exist in and of themselves as something apart from the relationships themselves. In each case they exist only as *ways* of engaging with humanity through actions based on those active relationships. But insofar as human existence, which is dynamic in nature, realizes itself again and again in such *specific ways* of engagement, it is possible to abstract their *continued* expression from their foundation in dynamic existence, and thereby gain some understanding of them. The

Confucian concept of *rin* and the idea of the Five Constant Relations and “Five Cardinal Virtues” are examples of how these ways of engagement can take on noematic significance. The sinograph ‘*ri*’, which is appended to *rin* to form the word for ethics, is defined in Japanese as “reasoning” or as “that which establishes a reasoned connection within a discourse.” In general we may say that *ri* was added as a means of further emphasizing that ethics is a reasoned discourse on the active ways of engagement or order we have just referred to. Therefore, ethics is to be understood as nothing other than the order or way that makes the communal existence of humans what it is. In other words, ethics is the law of social existence.

If this is so, does ethics not carry within it a sense of functioning as a moral imperative, since the nature of the ethical order has already been realized? The answer is both yes and no. The fifth of the Confucian five relationships states, “between friends there is trust.” To the extent that an association characterized as a friendship has been established, it already has at its base the “trust” that is one of the constituent modes of engaging in this specific relationship. Without trust, a friendship cannot come into being. Yet an association between people is not static but exists dynamically in an active, interconnected relation. That a previous action within a relationship was expressed in a certain mode does not mean that one cannot break from that mode of action in the future. Consequently, at every moment communal existence bears within itself the danger of and potential for its own destruction. Still, by virtue of its own nature—that is, because human existence is human existence—it is permanently oriented turning toward the realization of a communal existence. From there, despite the fact that a mode of engaging an active interconnected relationship has already been determined, that mode also serves as the momentum that compels one to continue to act. Therefore, ethics is, on the one hand, something that already exists, though not as a simple moral imperative, and, on the other, something that must be eternally actualized, though not as a simple law of being.

Thus far, we have been able to clarify the concept of ethics based on an examination of the meaning of the word *rinri*. Needless to say, this word bears within it the intellectual history of ancient China, and the more we reflect on the social forms of ancient China in socioreligious terms, the more the profound significance of its intellectual history comes to the fore. However, it is important to state that what we are seeking to do here is not to revive an ideology of human relationships based on the social forms of ancient China exactly as it existed. Rather our assertion is simply that ethics is always a problem of the mediating relational aspects that exist between one person and another. By virtue of this, what we are attempting here is simply to resurrect the significance of ethics as the way of engaging relationships among human beings.

Yet, as we seek to clarify this concept of ethics, what also becomes evident is

that the keys to this clarification are to be found in none other than such concepts as human existence, active interconnected relations, and the “betweenness” that exists between one person and another. *Rin*, as we have seen, means both *nakama* and the modes of engaging in active interconnected relations as a *nakama*. But just what is this *nakama*, and what is this thing we call a human being? These are not self-evident concepts. To inquire into the meaning of ethics is, in the end, an inquiry into the ways of engaging human existence and, consequently, an inquiry into the very meaning of being human. In short, the study of ethics is the study of human being.

In light of this, we must first work to clarify this concept of human being, which we have used in a vague sense thus far. This is especially necessary in order to distinguish it from the philosophical anthropology that has become popular in recent years. Philosophical anthropology, as seen, for example, by Max Scheler in *Man's Place in Nature*, seeks to grasp the “person” as a unity of spirit and vital drives. This is simply another way of framing a view of the human in terms of the unity of body and mind. Scheler also locates the typology of classical anthropology within this same framework:³⁸

1. The concept of the person in the Christian faith. Here the person is created originally by a personal God, but is punished for his sin and redeemed through Christ. This becomes the point of departure for an anthropology centered on the problem of the spirit and the flesh.
2. The person as a rational being (*homo sapiens*). Here the person possesses spirit, that is, reason; this spirit forms the world as world; this spirit of reason within the human person is active in and of itself, without being influenced by sensation; this is unchanged by historical, ethnic, or cultural factors. (Only this last point is challenged by Hegel.) Dilthey and Nietzsche were the philosophers who saw through this argument and realized that this form of anthropology is nothing more than an invention of the Greeks.
3. The person as a working being, a technician (*homo faber*). This view conflicts with the former in seeing no essential distinction between human beings and animals. Still, given that humans create language and tools, they can be distinguished from other animals by virtue of their particularly developed brain. This is the anthropological position of naturalism and positivism.
4. The person as a being that has become enfeebled by spirit. This view is a new attack on *homo sapiens*.
5. The concept of the person as a transcendent being. This anthropology sees the grandeur of the person in the ascent to self-consciousness.

All five of these types abstract the human being from the context of the

38. “Mensch und Geschichte,” *Philosophische Weltanschauung*, 1929.

social group and treat the human being as an autonomously generated being. The problem of the person is always posited in terms of spirit and flesh or of a self. Hence, despite the fact that Scheler's form of mind-body theory stands in opposition to formal anthropology and is, therefore, advanced as a *philosophical anthropology*, insofar as it locates the essence of the person solely in the individual, there is no fundamental change of standpoint.

It seems to me that this tendency is based on the assumption that words like *anthropos*, *homo*, man, and *Mensch* can have no meaning apart from the individual human being. To adopt this position one has to express things like society, communal existence, and the betweenness between one person and another in language somehow distinct and removed from the person. If, on the other hand, a person is essentially a social animal, then it is impossible to abstract the betweenness or social element from the person. A person must be understood as a being who is capable of existing individually while at the same time living within a social space. The Sino-Japanese term *ningen* captures well this twofold nature of human existence. From the standpoint of *ningen*, the fact that the "study of the human" and the "study of society" have been set up as separate disciplines indicates that each has extracted one aspect of the concrete experience of the human being, raised it to an abstraction, and forced it to be examined in isolation. If we are to study human being in its concrete particularity, then there must be a single field that focuses on the study of *ningen*. Such a study does not aim at some vague synthesis of anthropology and social science; it must be something fundamentally different. For if we are ever to understand the individual and the social as constituting the dual character of the human and to uncover therein the profound essence and meaning of human existence, we cannot pose the question on the assumption of an unambiguous and radical distinction between the individual and the social.

.....

So we are in possession of this deeply significant term *ningen* and out of it have fashioned a concept of the human according to which the human being *is* "in society" and *is* an individual "person" in society. Human being *is not* just individuals and it *is not* just society. Here we see the dialectical unity of the twofold character of the human being. Insofar as human beings *are* individuals, they will always differ from society. They *are* human individuals because they *are not* society. Accordingly, one individual person is never entirely in commune with every other. Self and other are absolutely "other." That said, to the extent that human beings are in the world, they are always in commune with other individuals; they are a society, and never just isolated individuals. Human beings are human precisely because they *are not* isolated individuals. Self and other, though absolutely "other," are one in their communal existence. The individual, though fundamentally different from society, is effaced within society.

This is the sort of unity of opposites that human beings are. To ignore this dialectical structure is to fail to comprehend the true nature of our existence.

.....

The concept of *ningen* thus differs from that of *anthropos* by virtue of its twofold character of being in society and being an individual. But is it correct to equate, as we have, “being in the world” with communal existence or society? The question brings us to a key problem in modern philosophy.

When Heidegger defined human existence as “being-in-the-world,” he began from the idea of *intentionality* as developed in modern phenomenology. He deepened its structure and brought it into the realm of existence, understanding it as something akin to our connection to tools. Indeed, he gave us a model for clarifying the *subjective* significance of what it means to be “in the world.” But for Heidegger communication between persons has been overshadowed by the liaison between persons and their tools. Despite his insistence that he has not overlooked this question, the fact is, it has clearly been neglected.

.....

It seems clear that there is a sense in which the “world” can refer to *society as subject* or to *communal existence*. To know a few friends is not to know a society. One or two people causing a commotion does not amount to a social disturbance. The social world constituted by subjects who know each other or get involved in a disturbance with each other is an active connection taking place between persons, but at the same time it is also a *communal subject* in a connection that goes beyond the individuals: it is a *subjective communal existence*.

The advantage of this kind of idea of a “social world” as opposed to the simple idea of the “world” is that it grasps both the temporal and the spatial aspects of our subjective communal existence. As we have noted, “world” can refer to a generation or to a group or collection of individuals that belong to a generation as “located in its place.” With time, however, the temporal and ‘place’-related significance seems to have yielded to the tendency to see the world as the sum of the objects of nature. If the meaning of Japanese words for the social world, like *seken* and *yo no naka*, continue to undergo change, they have yet managed to retain some sense of the broader subjective element. Hence the very concept of the social world they convey entails historical, environmental, and social cultural structures that are integral to human existence.

[RMO]

The Negative Structure of Human Existence

In the course of trying to pinpoint the individual persons who make up the mediating space we have called “betweenness,” we saw that in the end they dissolve within their communality. Individual persons do not subsist in themselves. Yet in our attempts to locate something communal, some whole,

we have now discovered that this is nothing but the negation of the individual's independence. Nor does the whole subsist in itself. To say, moreover, that a whole takes shape in the negation of the individual's independence is still to recognize the independence of the individual who is being negated and restricted. Individual persons therefore subsist in their interconnection with wholeness. Similarly, to say that the individual's independence is constituted in the negation of a communality is already to recognize the whole that is being negated and rebelled against. Accordingly, we must say that the whole subsists in its interconnection with the individual's independence. Neither the individual nor the whole subsists in itself; each subsists only in connection with the other.

As we have seen, interconnection with the other is in each case a negative relation. The independence of the individual arises when it rebels against the whole, and a whole is formed when it negates the individual's independence. Thus the individual must have its separate individuality negated for the whole to form, and the whole is the base against which the individual must rebel in order for it to arise. For the one to exist in an interconnection with the other means that it exists by negating the other and by being negated by the other.

It is the betweenness characteristic of human existence that allows individuals and society to form in their mutual negations. Regarding human existence, therefore, we cannot say that individuals arise first of all and then form social relationships among each other, nor can we say that societies arise first and out of them individuals are created. Neither has precedence over the other. As soon as the one is discovered it has negated the other, and it arises as one that has already undergone the other's negation. If we are to speak of precedence at all, then, we necessarily imply this negation. This negation, moreover, is never found apart from individual and society mutually arising. In a sense, it makes its appearance precisely in the form of individuals and society. Insofar as individuals and society are already being formed, society is the relation between individuals and the individual is an individual within society. Hence, if on the one hand we regard society as a set of mutual activities or human relationships, or on the other hand see society as an autonomous group beyond the individual, we grasp only one side of the betweenness characteristic of human existence. Such views can be acknowledged as long as they do not claim to grasp the betweenness of human existence in its ground. Fundamentally, both sides arise through negation, and so it is only in negation that the mutual acts of individuals and autonomous groups, respectively, exhibit their true form....

The Fundamental Law of Human Existence

We have claimed that the negative structure of human existence is the fundamental law that ceaselessly allows human beings to take shape pre-

cisely as they do. Apart from this law there is no human existence; it is the very foundation of being human. Yet we began by defining the foundation of human community, that is, the law of human existence, as ethics. Hence we must conclude that it is precisely this fundamental law that constitutes foundational ethics. The basic principle of the discipline of ethics is this foundational ethics. We may, then, stipulate very generally that the basic principle of the study called ethics is “the dynamic activity of absolute negativity returning to itself by way of itself.”...

Trust

Having understood human action in terms of the spatio-temporality of human existence, we may now consider the vital significance of trust and truth for human existence. What does trust mean? What is the ground of trust?...

In the previous section we looked for the ground of trust along two different lines, the ultimate principle of morality, and human society. To put it in our terms, we sought the ground of trust in the law of human existence, that is, in the reciprocal activity of diversifying and unifying. Yet this description does not suffice if we are to see the phenomenon of trust as a problem, for trust does not occur merely by a process of overcoming an opposition between self and other and creating a unity. The unity yet to come must also be assured beforehand, in the present. The ground of trust, therefore, will be adequately clarified only by referring to the spatio-temporal structure behind the activity of diversifying and unifying human subjects.

Nicolai Hartmann is someone who recognized the temporal element in the phenomenon of trust. He examines two kinds of trust, *Zuverlässigkeit* or trustworthiness, and *Vertrauen* or trust in another.³⁹ Trustworthiness is also called “the ability to make promises,” the ability to assure that one’s given word regarding a matter not yet realized will indeed be kept. Hence, trustworthiness is valuable to the degree that a future action is assured. The trustworthy person does not change his intention until the matter is realized as promised. In promising he binds his will. Only such trustworthy persons are able to remain within the bounds and order of social life, that is, to live in society. The capacity to be trusted is thus basically the moral capacity of the person to prescribe his or her future disposition beforehand. Personhood is realized by preserving oneself not only in present intentions but in intentions to come. This identity of intentions or will, and the identity of personhood behind it, constitutes the ground of trustworthiness. Hartmann discusses trust in others only after exam-

39. Nicolai Hartmann, *Ethik* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1926), 422ff.

ining that on which it is based, the trust proper to the individual person alone. For Hartmann, one trusts on the spur of the moment on the assumption that a person is trustworthy, and that is what trust in others implies. It is not the case that one trusts only after testing whether or not the person really is trustworthy. Trust involves taking a risk, making a wager. All human relationships are built on such trust. "Trust is the capacity for community."⁴⁰ According to Hartmann, then, a society takes shape only when mutual trust exists among individual people. For him, human society is not the ground of trust. Hence the second line of investigation that we mentioned above is discarded, and the ground of trust is once again relegated to the personal identity of the individual or the moral value of personhood. The point we wish to emphasize is different. Even if it comes down to a matter of personal identity, it is necessary to proceed from personal identity only because one can prescribe beforehand one's future will or intention, one's future behavior or actions.

This aspect is much more important than Hartmann thinks. He believes that "self-predestination" can be explained purely in terms of personal identity. He writes, "The person making a promise identifies himself as one now who will be the same self later."⁴¹ But does one's self-identity vanish when one breaks a promise? No, rather self-identity underlies the ability to break a promise. Self-identity does not change according to whether there is trust or distrust, fidelity or betrayal. We must say that Hartmann is misled in his attempt to ascribe moral persistence (*moralische Beharrung*) to personal identity. A more basic law is at work in the ability to prescribe beforehand one's future behavior. To recognize it we must come to grips with the temporal element in the law of human existence.

The phenomenon of trust is not simply a matter of believing in another person. It requires taking a stance *in advance* toward an undetermined future within the relationship between one and another. Such a decision is possible because the past that we carry with us is at the same time the future we head for. Our actions right now occur in an identity between this past and the future, in the sense that we "recur" in our actions. While the past that our actions carry with them belong, for the time being, to yesterday's mediating space, this space of betweenness arose in our doing or not doing something. And this doing or not doing likewise occurs as the dynamic activity of recurrence. The past, then, is the dynamic activity of recurrence going on endlessly. Similarly, while the future that our actions aim at belongs for the time being to tomorrow's mediating space, this space of betweenness will presumably arise by our doing or not

40. Hartmann, *Ethik*, 471.

41. Hartmann, *Ethik*, 466.

doing something. The future likewise moves on endlessly as the dynamic activity of recurrence. Our actions right now continually carry this activity from the past and head for it in the future. What runs through the entirety of our actions is nothing but the dynamic activity of a return to our undetermined, original authenticity. Present actions, as a link in this activity, exhibit the dynamic structure that we call recurrence. So no matter how finite human existence may be, we must not lose sight of the fundamental movement that proceeds from this original authenticity and returns to it. Our origin, where we start out, is also our final destination, the culmination of our origin. The decision to take a stance in advance toward an undetermined future is rooted most profoundly in this original authenticity.

The ground of trust, as we have said, is found in the spatio-temporal structure of human existence. In other words, the law according to which human existence unfolds spatially and temporally is also what allows trust to appear. The supposedly self-evident proposition that human relationships are based on trust actually has the matter backwards. The basis on which human relationships occur is the law of spatio-temporal human existence, and that is the ground of trust as well. Along with human relationships, trust also arises on this ground. Human relationships, then, are at the same time relationships of trust; where they exist, trust is found. In saying this, however, we are not claiming that there is no such thing as a relationship of distrust or of betrayal. Distrust and betrayal indicate a lack of trust. As a rebellion against the law of human existence, they are negated in its uttermost depths. This is why betrayal has always been held in contempt as a most detestable offense. But how is it possible to lack trust? This question turns our attention to the issue of truthfulness in human beings.

[JCM]