INTRODUCTION

Das unter dem Anspruch der Anwesenheit Stehen is der grösste Anspruch des Menschen, ist “die Ethik.”

Martin Heidegger

I

When existential philosophy first became widely known in the years after the Second World War, it was understood to be a radically individualistic philosophy. It is not hard to see why this was so. For these philosophers, every aspect of human life was to be understood in terms of the concept of choice; and choice was held to be in every case the choice of an individual human being, however we might try to conceal this fact from ourselves. Such choices were declared to be ultimately arbitrary and unjustifiable by the procedures of reason. If there was any virtue that survived the wreck of all traditional conceptions of moral truth and validity, it was the ability to accept this grim fact and live “authentically” with it. This meant living in a way that did not invoke any authority for one’s own actions that was inconsistent with these underlying assumptions.2

1 “To be subject to the claim that presence makes is the greatest claim that a human being makes; it is what ‘ethics’ is.” Martin Heidegger, Zollikerer Seminare (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1987), p. 273. These seminars were given in Switzerland late in Heidegger’s life. It is worth noting that this quotation expresses both the strength and the weakness of Heidegger’s way of locating “ethics.” It explicitly connects presence (Anwesenheit) with ethics, but it does not acknowledge the even more important connection of ethics with reciprocal presence and thus with Mitsein. The trouble with this association of presence (but not reciprocal presence) with ethics is that it issues in a conception of the relation of thought to the truth of being as “the original ethic” without any reference to our relation to one another. See the relevant quotations on this subject in note 5.

In some ways, an even better quotation to set at the beginning of a work like this would be what Saint Paul says in Ephesians 4:25: “Therefore speak the truth for we are the members one of another.” Interestingly, the Greek word for truth that Saint Paul uses is aletheia, which figures prominently in Heidegger’s own thought.

2 My interest in these themes is of long standing and goes back to an early book of mine, Principles and Persons: An Ethical Interpretation of Existentialism (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1967). In that book I tried, among other things, to show that there was a linkage between the concept of authenticity, which has played such an important role in existential philosophy, and that of moral obligation, which has hardly figured there at all.
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In the version of these ideas that we owe to Jean-Paul Sartre, this individualistic theme was taken as far as it could logically go. The same holds true for any implications it might be supposed to have for the ethical character of our relations with other human beings. According to Sartre, these relations could only be one form or another of domination; as he put it, they would unavoidably be either sadistic or masochistic. No true mutuality was possible; and even the Kantian attempt to conceive and treat other human beings as ends in themselves was declared to be a unilateral exercise of power over them.\(^3\) In other formulations after the end of the war, Sartre softened these harsh implications of his ontology of freedom, doubtless because they were hard to reconcile with his social and political activism at that time. There is no evidence, however, that he ever modified them until the very end of his philosophical career, when he threw out some ideas of a quite different kind that have a special importance for the purposes of this study. These will be brought into this discussion at a later point.\(^4\)

That suggestion certainly had an air of paradox about it; and it was not well received by those who commented on the book. Nevertheless, I am still convinced that it has merit. What I have come to see, however, in the course of subsequent work largely concerned with different aspects of Heidegger’s thought, is that what was missing in the account I gave in that early work was a fuller ontological concept of human nature itself. I have worked out such an account in two more recent studies, *Heidegger and the Philosophy of Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987) and *What Is a Human Being?: A Heideggerian View* (Cambridge University Press, 1993). In the Conclusion to the latter book, I pointed out that the fact of the plurality or “manyness” of human beings had not been brought – explicitly – into the ontological analysis I had given of human nature, although it was presupposed in it. I also suggested that the key to an understanding of how this could be done lay in Heidegger’s conception of what we usually call “intersubjectivity” as “being with one another” (Miteneinandersein or, more commonly, *Mitsein*). My thought was that if that conception could be developed beyond the very brief sketch he gave of it in *Being and Time*, it might be possible to show that it has at least a proto-ethical character and that this would be of fundamental importance for any inquiry into the ground of ethics. That is the task I am undertaking here. In some sense, then, this study is an amplification of both the line of thought I was trying to develop thirty years ago and of the powerfully suggestive but all-too-brief account Heidegger gave of *Mitsein* in *Being and Time*.

\(^3\) In a popular exposition of his views that Sartre presented as a lecture in 1946 and that was subsequently published as *Existentialism and Humanism*, translated by P. Mairet (London: Methuen, 1948), he takes a very Kantian line and argues that I cannot consistently desire my own freedom without desiring that of others. That kind of logical consistency would have meant nothing to the author of *Being and Nothingness* (translated by Hazel Barnes [New York: Philosophical Library, 1955]); and it cannot have meant much to him even in 1946 since he took no notice of the flagrant conflict between this thesis and the line of thought developed in his earlier work.

\(^4\) A year or two before the 1946 lecture, Sartre wrote his play *No Exit*, containing the famous line, “Hell is other people”—not exactly a Kantian sentiment, but one quite consistent with the theses of *Being and Nothingness*. Even so, at the end of that work, Sartre promised a book on ethics that would explore the possibility that the kind of freedom that he celebrated in *Being and Nothingness* could itself become the basis for an ethic. The conception of ethics that
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The general theory of human being from which these drastic conclusions were drawn was strongly influenced by the thought of Martin Heidegger, which had been developed in the aftermath of the First World War, as Sartre’s was during the Second. Heidegger repudiated any suggestion of an affinity between his thought and that of Sartre; and there can be no doubt that in matters of ontology Sartre departed quite significantly from the line of thought of his predecessor. Even so, there is much in Being and Nothingness that echoes themes in Being and Time. In both, a concept of radical choice was made the basis of an authentic human life and the concept of authenticity as a kind of existential ideal that had been elaborated by Heidegger was taken over by Sartre. More generally, although Heidegger never dealt directly with questions of normative ethics, there was, in Being and Time, a very harsh critique of the whole conception of “values” as objective criteria for the guidance of our lives. These were declared to belong to an anonymous public mode of selﬁthood — what Heidegger called das Man — the “One,” as in “One says . . .” — that occludes both the individuality and the distinctive ontological character of human being. At bottom, it is a set of defenses by which we human beings hide our freedom from ourselves. But it was possible, Heidegger claimed, to dismantle these defenses, at least partly, and to emerge into a new kind of responsibility for one’s own life. Whether the state of being into which one would so emerge could have an ethical character that would be consistent with this new freedom was a question Heidegger did not pose in this form and certainly did not answer.

But even if the world contains no moral signposts, there is still the question of whether our relation to one another can by itself yield standards of right and wrong. The concept of authenticity is pretty clearly one that most readily applies to the situation of individual human beings. But if the illusionless freedom it represents is to have any meaning in a life that we share with other people, it would have to be made clear how we can be authentic together. Heidegger never did that, but there is in Being and Time a section devoted to what he calls Mitsein — our being in the world together with one another. It is not just an empirical fact, he argues, that there are many human beings in the world. Our being with other like entities is, instead, a

Sartre had in mind was evidently still completely individualistic in character; and there was no suggestion that any bond between human beings that would constitute them as a “We,” not to speak of any concept of obligation, was in prospect. In any case, that promised book never appeared; and when the notebooks that contained Sartre’s preparatory studies for it were posthumously published as Cahiers pour une morale (Paris: Gallimard, 1983), there was nothing to indicate that Sartre’s conception of ethics had been broadened in any significant way. It appears that, instead, he was engaged in developing the new line of thought that came to expression in his Critique de la raison dialectique (1960), in which a kind of Marxism was grafted onto an existentialist base. It was only in an interview given a year or two before his death that Sartre rejected the theses of both Being and Nothingness and Critique of Dialectical Reason and proposed the idea of an ontologically based ethic of the “We.”
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constitutive element in our own mode of being as it is in theirs; and it is one
to which we cannot do justice as long as we approach it via traditional philo-
sophical routes like the theory of empathy. What is even more interesting is
the fact that in characterizing our Mitsein Heidegger invokes at least one
other concept to which an unmistakably ethical character attatches. This is the
concept of Fürsorge—one human being’s caring about another—and it is this
caring that he declares to be, in its several modalities, central to our being
with one another. On the strength of these theses, he is even willing to go
so far as to state that we are, as he puts it, “for the sake of others” (umwollen
Anderer). Because this idea was never developed further and Heidegger’s oc-
casional reflections on ethics in his later period take a quite different line,
we have no explanation of how the concept of Mitsein generates the notion
of Fürsorge.\(^5\) Significantly, however, he claims that “resoluteness” — an exis-

\(^{5}\) For Heidegger’s later view of ethics, see his “Brief über den Humanismus,” in Wegmarken
(Frankfurt am Main: V. Kostermann, 1967), pp. 145–94. This essay has greatly influenced,
in a negative sense, the interpretation of Heidegger’s attitude toward an interest in human-
ity and in ethics, especially in France but elsewhere as well. The unfortunate result of this ap-
proach has been that his later writings — from the mid-1960s onward — have controlled the
interpretation of his thought as a whole and the strong interest shown in Being and Time in
a specifically human mode of being has been more or less dismissed. In this way Heidegger
became a kind of patron saint for all the intellectual tendencies that have been trying for
several decades to put the human subject out of business. (On this topic, see Luc Ferry and
Michel Renault, La pensée 68: Essai sur l’anti-humanisme contemporain [Paris: Gallimard,
1985].) Admittedly, Heidegger’s own statements on this subject are hardly consistent, but it
is difficult to see him as unqualifiedly repudiating the concept of a subject. After all, Dasein
was described in Being and Time as a subject-entity (seiendes Subjekt); and in the late Zollkoner
Seminar Heidegger invoked the concept of Dasein and showed the same interest in the kind
of entity a human being is as he did at the time of Being and Time. He also said, as few anti-
humanists would, that humanism had in some sense underestimated the dignity of man by
failing to do justice to his relation to being.

Even so, the “Letter on Humanism” marks a high point in Heidegger’s campaign against
traditional humanism; and one of the main targets is once again the concept of values. This
time, though, the grounds of his opposition appear to have widened considerably. In Being
and Time, the trouble with values was that they were creatures of Das Man and, as supposedly
preexisting attributes of things or situations, relieved people of the necessity to choose.
In the later essay, choice is not mentioned at all; and Heidegger’s argument against values is
that they involve an unacceptable subjectivization of being. “All evaluation (Werten) is a sub-
jectivization, even when it evaluates something positively. It does not let entities be; evaluation
grants them validity (lässt gelten) only as the object of its own action” (“Brief über den
Humanismus,” p. 179). In what sense evaluations would be “subjective” is left unexplained:
but it looks very much as though any action by a human being that rests on a judgment that
one outcome is preferable to another would be subjective in this undefined but clearly nega-
tive sense. But then if “letting entities be” is the only way to avoid subjectivism, we would
have to give up the active life altogether and adopt a wholly passive stance as satellites of be-
ing. If this were accepted, it would seem to obviate the need for anything like an ethic; but
Heidegger also wants to claim that the kind of “thought that thinks the truth of being as the
initial (anfanglich) element in a human being as an ek-sistent is in itself the original ethic”
(p. 187). For all his hatred of preestablished formulas for the guidance of conduct, he is
tential virtue closely akin to authenticity – “pushes us into a caring Mitsein with others.”

It is these texts of Heidegger’s that will provide the point of departure for this study. There is, however, at least one other philosopher who was notable for his willingness to conceive Mitsein – what he called être pour autrui – in positive terms. Maurice Merleau-Ponty was an existential phenomenologist whose thought drew on many of the same sources as did that of Heidegger and Sartre and, while highly distinctive in its own right, stands in a close relation of affiliation with theirs. Unlike Sartre, who denied that it could have any ethical character, Merleau-Ponty invariably made the sociality of human existence central to a wide range of human functions; he carried on a lifelong debate with Sartre on this topic. Although he did not, in his all-too-brief philosophical career, ever develop a theory of Mitsein as an ethical condition, it is not far-fetched to surmise that his influence must have counted for something in the extraordinary turnabout that Sartre effected at the end of his life. Sartre was not a man who had ever felt constrained by any requirement of fidelity to the positions he had previously held. Nevertheless, it was quite astonishing that he should repudiate, as he did in an interview given in 1978, the whole doctrine set forth in Being and Nothingness and speak, cryptically but intriguingly, of a distinctive relation humaine and an ontologically based ethic of the “We.”

This last phrase expresses very well the intention of this study, which will draw on the work of all these philosophers in order to work out a concept

even willing to go so far as to say that “only insofar as man, ex-sisting in the truth of being, belongs to being, can the directions (Weisungen) come from being that must be law and rule for man” (p. 191). This makes it sound as though any normative contrast asserted by a human being must offend against the dignity of being since it presumes to set itself up in some degree of independence from the being that is now described as the source of the “rules” by which we are to live. Being, in other words, is not just a necessary condition for an ethic but apparently a sufficient condition as well. This has a familiar – indeed, a quite traditional – ring to it, but it can hardly be reconciled with the theses of Being and Time. Somehow, it does not come as a surprise that this conception of ethics gives no account at all of our relations to other human beings – that is, our being with one another.

For a discussion of the relationship between ethics and ontology in Heidegger’s thought, see Joanna Hodge, Heidegger and Ethics (Routledge: London, 1995). Unfortunately, there is no analysis of Mitsein in this book and no suggestion that it might have any ethical implications.


7 The best exposition of Merleau-Ponty’s views on being with others can be found in his Phenomenology of Perception, translated by Colin Smith (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), Part II, ch. 4, “Other Selves and the Human World.”

of *Mitsein* as the ground of ethics. It will, however, be Heidegger’s account of *Mitsein* that will serve as the main exegetical basis for the line of thought I want to develop. Since at the same time as I build on his account of *Mitsein* I will also be trying to amplify it quite significantly, a certain tension in my relation to his thought may result that could prove rather confusing. The complexity here is due to the fact that I am engaged in a dual undertaking: extracting a key idea from the work of another philosopher and trying to develop it independently. (By way of justification, it could be said that Heidegger did very much the same thing in his interpretation of Kant’s doctrine of the schematism, which he took out of its context in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and greatly amplified so as to make of it his own concept of temporality.)

My primary concern in all this is not to vindicate Heidegger, the man, against his many critics. It is rather to show that the profoundly original constellation of ideas he introduced in *Being and Time* can make an important contribution to our understanding of the whole ethical side of our lives. I am deeply convinced that those ideas need not lead to nihilism, as they have been almost universally supposed to do; and I want to show that there is a quite different way in which the ethical implications of existential philosophy can be construed. What I am trying to do is to show that there is a fundamental insight in Heidegger’s account of *Mitsein* that he did not develop, although he appears to have had a sense of its ethical significance. By way of proof that this insight is not just an invention of mine, I rely chiefly on the fact that, in the matter of *Fürsorge* on which I have already touched, Heidegger himself asserts a strong linkage between it and our being with one another. There is plainly a large hermeneutical question here as to why a philosopher who had achieved the kind of insight into the character of the relations of human beings to one another that I impute to Heidegger never developed it beyond the brief formulation offered to us in *Being and Time*. I do not try to answer that question, both because I am not sure I can and because to do so would take me too far from my real theme: the ethical potentialities of the concept of *Mitsein*. But all these matters are finally of secondary importance because, for all my great debt to Heidegger’s thought, what I am proposing is a constructive philosophical account of the ground of ethics, and this must be judged on its own merits.

This book does not claim to be an exhaustive treatment of its subject. What I offer here are “essays” in the original sense of that word. As such, they have many lacunae and they do not attempt to anticipate every criticism that might be made of the theses being proposed. What they do attempt is to set forth what I take to be the central elements of any theory that would build on the concept of *Mitsein*. In this spirit, then, I begin in Chapter 1 with an account of the special character of the being-with-one-another of human beings; and although the account I give is, I believe, faithful to Heidegger’s thought, it also attempts a kind of reconstruction of his con-
exception of Mitsein with a view to a formulation of its ethical import. Then, in Chapter 2, the concept of caring about others as a fundamental element in Mitsein is taken up. Heidegger’s treatment of this concept is examined; and I try to show that it does not enable us to understand the linkage between our being-with-one-another and our caring about one another (Fürsorge), although this is something to which Heidegger was explicitly committed. More specifically, it cannot generate (and does not appear to have been intended to do so) the peculiar binding character that is the hallmark of distinctively moral relationships. I propose an alternative account in which the concept of truth as a partnership among human beings has a central place; and I claim that it can establish a linkage between the reciprocal character of our disclosure of one another and primary moral notions such as responsibility and trust.

In Chapter 3, I argue that Mitsein is not only the ground of ethics in a positive sense, but makes possible a distinctively human wrongdoing and a special kind of evil as well. I also propose a theory of the good that goes altogether beyond anything that can be attributed to Heidegger, but is consonant, I argue, with the conception of Mitsein as the ground of ethics. Finally, in the Conclusion, I sketch some possible adverse reactions to the theses of this book; I then take up the conception of a ground of ethics, which turns out to be central to these otherwise very differently motivated criticisms. The point is made that a ground of ethics, as I conceive it, is a distinctive relation between human beings rather than a supreme moral truth from which rules of conduct could be deduced. I also discuss briefly how a theory of being as presence that makes a place for Mitsein is relevant to the situation in which humanity finds itself in an age of science.

II

This agenda is in marked contrast with normal practice in ethical theory at the present time. It is very noticeable that, for most contemporary writers on these subjects, the concept of a human being does not appear to be problematic in any philosophically interesting way. Most notably, the whole topic of the status of human beings as subjects is typically left aside or dealt with only in the language of common sense or some appropriately naturalistic variant thereof. It would seem that a fear of straying into some forbidden “metaphysical” domain is a principal motive for this attitude. However that may be, the result is the peculiar featurelessness that commentators have sometimes noted in the way the human beings who figure in contemporary

9 It is true that there has been a good deal of interest on the part of English-speaking philosophers in the concept of “person” in recent decades; but this interest is largely independent of the ontological issues that arise in connection with the concept of human being, or Da-sein, as it is understood in Heidegger’s thought.
ethical theories are conceived and presented. \textsuperscript{10} As I will try to show, a reliance on common-sense understandings in the context of such inquiries as these has its own hazards; and it is by no means clear that, for all their familiarity, these understandings are any less “metaphysical” than the revisionary alternatives to them that are so severely deprecated. In any case, the account I will offer attempts to show that an ontology of human nature is of fundamental importance to any effort to get at the ground of ethics.

The assumption on which I am proceeding is thus that it is the special character of the relationships among individual human beings that is of central importance for moral philosophy. This may seem to be a very banal remark because one would naturally suppose that the history of ethical theory must be that of an effort to understand just those relationships. And yet there is a difference here to which attention needs to be drawn. In general, these relationships have been understood to be those holding between persons who are all subject to the same body of ethical principles or rules. These have been variously conceived, sometimes as necessary a priori truths, sometimes as the terms of a social contract, and so on. In the latter case, the relationship in question is understood as that of people who have in effect made reciprocating promises to one another. That represents an important insight; and I will have something to say about the practice of promise-making in the course of my own discussion. But promising, whether express or tacit, is only one element in the larger relationship with which I will be concerned.

That relationship, which does not emerge with any real clarity in the ethical theories with which I am familiar, is the relationship between one human being and another simply as beings that are in the world together with one another. The mode in which they are in the world together is that of disclosing both other entities and themselves. \textsuperscript{11} It is this Heideggerian concep-

\textsuperscript{10} This seems to me to be true of both the two major reconstructions of moral and social thought that have been attempted in the postwar period: those of John Rawls and Jürgen Habermas. It is certainly legitimate to abstract, as both these authors do, from the personal characteristics of the people that they are talking about. It is something else, however, to set aside all questions that have to do with the generic relationship of one human being to another and the bearing of that relationship on ethical matters. In the absence of any attention to such issues, the ultimate authority for the social arrangements these authors propose would be entirely a matter of the contribution they make to the well-being of the people who adopt them. It is deeply problematic, in my view, whether such a basis for ethical theory can ever yield a strong concept of obligation. In Chapter 3 I try to show the difficulties that such an approach encounters.

\textsuperscript{11} The word “disclose” translates the German word entdecken, which Heidegger uses extensively. Entdecken might also be translated as “un-cover” or, indeed, as “dis-cover.” In all these English words there is a prefix – “un-” or “dis-” – that negates the idea expressed in the rest of the word. This is the idea of something being covered or closed off and thus by implication hidden. This is true of the German entdecken as well. All these verbs, therefore, describe human beings – Dasein – as negating the covered-UPness of entities (Seiendes) gener-
tion of a human being as a “subject-entity” (seiendes Subjekt) that makes the character of our being together in the world much less “obvious” than it is usually thought to be. For among the entities that are so disclosed are not only things or objects whose mode of being is quite different from that of the Dasein or ek-sistent being that discloses them, but also other like entities – other human beings. This means that this kind of entity has the distinctive feature of turning up both as self and as other. More concretely, both Ego and Alter and all their cousins not only have a world in the Heideggerian sense, but are reciprocally present to one another as having a world – the same world – in a way for which there is no really convincing parallel in the natural world. It is this relation of reciprocal presence that Heidegger calls Mitsein; and it is entities standing in this relation to one another that he says are “for the sake of others” – that is, for the sake of one another.

This relationship is so familiar to us that we rarely, if ever, stop to consider it or give it a name; this is presumably the reason why not very much attention has been given to it by moral philosophers. In part, this has been due to a deeply ingrained belief that ethics should be independent of both empirical and philosophical theories of human nature. One can sympathize with that attitude since all too often such theories have themselves incorporated

ally and thus bringing them into a zone of openness that Heidegger also calls Unverborgenheit or unhiddenness. A distinctive feature of human beings is that they can reciprocally disclose one another whereas their dis-closing of things is not and cannot be so reciprocated. The relation of human beings to animals is in some sense reciprocal but presumably also impoverished by comparison to that of human beings to one another.

There has been much controversy about the status of the concept of a subject in Being and Time and in Heidegger’s thought as a whole. It is clear that he rejects the notion of subject in its traditional form as the concept of a mental substance that contains representations of “external” objects. At the same time, however, Heidegger calls Dasein – his concept of the kind of entity that a human being is – a seiendes Subjekt – a “subject-entity.” It is the confusion of these two senses of “subject” that has caused some readers to conclude that the concept of subject is simply eclipsed in Heidegger’s thought. All these matters are discussed in detail in my Heidegger and the Philosophy of Mind (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987); and especially in my article “Being, Truth and Presence in Heidegger’s Thought,” forthcoming in Inquiry 48 (1998), no. 1.

For an explanation of the term “ek-sistent,” see Chapter 1, note 3.

The concept of presence is a central one in this book and so a further word of explication is in order. This is the most general concept that Heidegger uses to express the status of an entity that is (or has been or could be) disclosed – that is, perceived or remembered or expected – by someone. Most importantly, its being present or present in absence in one of these modes to someone is what is expressed in the name Dasein, which Heidegger gives to the kind of entity that can disclose another entity and/or itself in its being in such a way that it may be said to be present to it. Because any assertion of the being of an entity involves its being present to the perception or imagination or memory – these are our psychological designations of what Heidegger calls disclosure (entdecken) – of the entity that makes this assertion, Heidegger describes presence as the fundamental character of being as such. For a discussion of the sense in which absence can be a form of presence, see my Heidegger and the Philosophy of Mind, ch. 3, “Presence and Absence.”
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unacknowledged ethical assumptions of one kind or another with the result that the arguments founded on them take on an unhelpful circularity. But there is also (and perhaps more influentially) a belief at work here that there is really nothing about being in the world with one another that is not simply self-evident and thus unproblematic. If that is true, then everything about this relationship must have been noticed long ago, and the idea that on closer scrutiny it might reveal something of philosophical importance must appear very implausible.

On the view of human nature that finds favor at the present time, it is typically the rationality of these human beings who live side by side with one another that is held to be the proper object of philosophical interest. What is objectionable in this is not the emphasis placed on rationality as such, but rather the peculiarly discarnate and contextless way in which rationality itself is conceived.14 This is well illustrated by a pervasive principle of method that substitutes the “logic” of ethical discourse and the logical relations among characteristically ethical statements for any characterization of the relations between the people who make them that goes deeper than our ordinary common-sense observations. Plainly, such a view of the business of ethics is abstracted from situations in which one human being confronts another and has to justify what he does to that person as someone who is affected by it.15 My contention is that when the fuller context of such justificatory activity is borne in mind, many things that might otherwise be missed become available for philosophical reflection. In this way, moreover, the supposed obviousness of everything about that relation begins to look quite dubious. In any case, it is surely the business of philosophy to question the “obviousness” of many matters that other disciplines pass over quickly on their way to ostensibly more important areas of inquiry.

My thesis, then, will be that our being “for the sake of others” does indeed follow from Mitsein as this relation of reciprocal presence. This does not mean that I am proposing to pull a list of specific “dos and don’ts” out of the argument of this book. The underlying thought here is rather that in an important sense the recognition of another human being as complementing one’s own being is prior to the definition of such substantive rules of conduct, whether of justice or whatever, and that this identity of Ego and Alter, accordingly, needs more attention than it has received in ethical theory.

14 At least a minimum of what we call rationality is implicit in the concept of disclosure itself. That is, an entity is always disclosed “as” something – typically as something that can be used in a certain way – and as such its status is such that it could (though it need not) be referred to in a statement. It is susceptible of the various “logical” transformations that entail that and that are expressed in the temporal and modal features of what Heidegger calls interpretation.

15 Throughout this book, “he” and related pronouns are used in referring to hypothetical persons of either sex.