

TOWARD A RELATIONAL ETHICS OF GENERATIVITY

Wanhong HUANG

huangwanhong@serendip.ngo

Abstract

A set of practices ordinarily held apart, the teaching of a subject, the counsel given to a market, the advice offered to a government, the work of the analyst with the one who comes to speak, and the organizing of a community, share a single ethical structure, and the sharing is an isomorphism in the structure specified rather than a mere analogy. Two definitions state that structure. The relational ethics of generativity names the ethic under which the office of a practice is the design and the tending of the relation within which new capabilities, understandings, and subjects can emerge. The generalized language system names the situated whole through which a subject renders a world, comprising a mode of perception, a neural dynamics, a use of signs, a cultural context, a set of habits, and a horizon of expectation set within organizations of several scales, from the family to the firm to the nation. Upon these two definitions rest three claims. The generative ethic is isomorphic across the professions named, working in one medium, the relation, and producing one thing, the conditions of generation. Within such a relation the two parties, each standing in a generalized language system of their own, come to observe a matter that neither held in advance and that appears in the meeting of their systems and in neither alone. And the generalized language system is constituted by the joint structure of a past, a present, and a future, its present alone insufficient to it, since the subject's expectation of a structure yet to come already enters the understanding and the conduct of the present. The account issues in an ethic and in the questions that ethic opens, and it closes on those questions.

Keywords: generativity; relational ethic; generalized language system; generative justice; professional ethics; Socratic education; psychoanalysis; temporal structure of understanding; the conditions of emergence.

AI usage statement: The ideas, claims, and theoretical framework of this paper originate with the author. AI tools were used as an aid in drafting and revision. The origin of each idea has been verified by the author, who takes full responsibility for the content.

1 INTRODUCTION

A group of professions is ordinarily classified, and studied, by the objects upon which each works. A teacher works upon a subject matter, a psychoanalyst upon the speech of the one who comes to be analyzed, a policy adviser upon the instruments of a government, a market consultant upon the competitive position of a firm, a community organizer upon the bonds of a locality. The classification by object holds these practices apart. It assigns each to a literature of its own, a pedagogy here, a clinical theory there, a science of management and a craft of organizing each in its region, and it finds among them no more than a loose resemblance. Yet the classification by object conceals a deeper identity. Beneath the difference of what these practices work upon there lies a sameness in how they work and in what, at their best, they produce, and this sameness is a shared ethical structure precise enough to be stated and exhibited.

The observation that motivates the argument is a common one, and it can be stated without appeal to sentiment. When a practitioner of one of these professions has served well, what the

one served retains is characteristically not the content the practice is nominally about. A student who names a teacher as decisive for a life seldom credits a body of knowledge the teacher transmitted, and credits instead the onset of a capacity, the first availability of a certain way of thinking, the discovery that a question long carried was the student's own. An analyst does not report that the analyst supplied a correct interpretation and closed the matter, and reports instead that a formation came into view in the course of the work that neither party had held at its outset. A community that has worked with a good organizer does not describe a program received from without, and describes instead a capacity to organize that it found it already carried and had not known to exercise. The firm that remembers its counsel well remembers a clarity about its own situation that it came to hold as its own, and not a strategy handed down. Across professions divided by their objects, the mark of good practice is the same. What the practice leaves is a power in the one served rather than a content delivered to it.

That recurrent mark is a phenomenon to be explained, and it is explained by a single ethic common to the professions in which it appears. The ethic is relational, in that its medium is the bond between the practitioner and the one served, and generative, in that its work is the bringing about of the conditions under which the one served generates a good of their own. Where a practice of each kind works in the mode of delivery, handing over a content, a knowledge, an interpretation, a strategy, a policy, a mobilization, the same practice in its generative mode tends a relation within which the other party generates an understanding, a subject, a capacity, a direction, an organization that is the other party's own. This ethic is the relational ethic of generativity, and the identity of the ethic beneath the difference of objects is what the recurrent mark records.

The position rests on two definitions and three claims. Two terms must be defined, since the claims depend on them and neither can be left to the resonance of an example. The first is the relational ethic of generativity itself, the ethic just named, which must be set down as a principle rather than illustrated as a mood. The second is the generalized language system, the situated whole within which each party to a generative relation stands and out of which each renders the matter that lies between them, a term without which the account of what the relation generates cannot proceed. On these two definitions rest three claims. First, the generative ethic is isomorphic across the professions named, working beneath the difference of their objects in one medium and producing one thing, so that in respect of the places to be specified the sameness is an isomorphism exhibitable term for term rather than a resemblance of degree, claimed for those places and not as a formal correspondence through the whole of what the practices are. Second, within a generative relation the two parties come to observe a matter that neither held in advance, a matter that appears in the meeting of their generalized language systems and in neither system alone. Third, the generalized language system is constituted by the joint structure of a past, a present, and a future, its present alone insufficient to it, since the subject's expectation of a structure yet to come already enters the understanding and the conduct of the present.

Established together, the three claims carry a consequence, and stating that consequence is the contribution of the account. The generative professions, held apart by their objects, form a single field of a relational and generative ethic whose principles carry across the professions that occupy its regions, so that what is won in the study of any one of them, pursued to the structure of its generative office, bears on the others. The account descends from a relational ontology developed in prior work of this framework, under which value is generated between subjects rather than possessed within them, and it recovers in the ethic a comportment the classical traditions had named. What the account yields is an ethic and the questions its statement opens, and it closes, in the manner it requires of itself, on those questions.

The order of what follows answers to this design. The next two sections state the two def-

initions, the relational ethic of generativity and the generalized language system. The three sections after them establish the three claims in turn, the isomorphism of the ethic across the professions, the generation within the relation of a matter neither party held, and the temporal constitution of the generalized language system. A penultimate section grounds the ethic in the relational ontology from which it descends and in its classical formulation, and a final section states the conclusion together with the questions the account leaves open.

2 THE RELATIONAL ETHICS OF GENERATIVITY

The position rests on two terms, of which this section sets down the first. The relational ethic of generativity is the ethic the introduction ascribed to the professions it named, and it must be stated as a principle before the claims that draw upon it can be advanced. The statement proceeds dialectically, through the delivery of a content, the self-contradiction that delivery reaches at its limit, and the generative ethic in which that contradiction is resolved. The order is not expository convenience. The generative ethic is intelligible as the resolution of a movement, and stating the movement is stating the ethic.

2.1 THE DELIVERING MODE

The first moment is the practice understood as the delivery of a content, passed from one who holds it to one who lacks it. On this understanding the teacher holds a knowledge the pupil lacks and conveys it, the consultant holds a strategy the firm lacks and supplies it, the adviser holds a policy the government lacks and hands it down, the analyst holds an interpretation the analysand lacks and pronounces it. This understanding has its truth, and the truth is not to be discarded. Much practice proceeds exactly so, and rightly, for there are goods that are genuinely held by one party and genuinely owed to another, and the transfer of them is a real service. The delivering mode is the immediate and self-evident form of the professions, the form in which they first present themselves, and a great part of what they do is well described by it. Were the delivering mode simply mistaken, the dialectic would not begin, for there would be nothing in it to preserve.

2.2 THE CONTRADICTION AT THE LIMIT

The delivering mode carries within it, however, a contradiction that emerges when it is pursued to its limit. A practice organized wholly around the delivery of a content depends, for its own continuation, upon a lack in the one served, and a practice that depends upon a lack acquires an interest in the lack it exists to relieve. At the limit this interest becomes productive. A practice can secure its own necessity by manufacturing the lack the content is then supplied to fill, and a market saturated with the message that a life is deficient without a possession produces the need whose satisfaction it offers, so that the production of the need, rather than the meeting of a need already there, becomes the engine of the practice. Here the delivering mode turns against the good it names as its purpose. It undertook to relieve a lack, and at its limit it sustains and deepens the lack, since a lack relieved would end the practice and a lack maintained continues it. The one served is retained in dependence, rendered a standing occasion for a supply, and the power to want otherwise is narrowed to a recurring demand. The delivering mode, followed to the end of its own logic, negates the service it began as, and this negation is immanent to the delivering mode, produced by its own principle rather than imposed from outside.

2.3 THE GENERATIVE RESOLUTION

The contradiction is resolved neither by abandoning the delivery of goods nor by condemning the professions that deliver them, but by relocating the moment of generation. What the delivering mode took to be complete in the transfer of a content is disclosed, by its own breakdown, to require something the transfer cannot supply, namely that the good come to be the possession and the capacity of the one served rather than a supply held over them. The generative ethic secures exactly this. The office of a generative practice is the design and the tending of a relation within which the other party generates what is the other party's own. The practitioner does not produce the understanding, the capacity, the subject, or the direction that the practice is for. The practitioner produces, and sustains, the conditions under which the other produces these, and holds those conditions open against the several pressures, impatience, the wish for a settled answer, the temptation to install a content in the place of a generation, that would foreclose them. The delivery of a content is preserved within this office as a moment, since a generative practice still conveys, still demonstrates, still supplies, but the conveying is placed in the service of the other's generation rather than in the place of it, and the interest in a maintained lack, which drove the contradiction, has no hold where the measure of success is the other's enlarged power to generate without return. What the delivering mode reached for and undid, the generative ethic accomplishes, and it accomplishes it by carrying the truth of delivery into a relation that delivery alone could not sustain.

The Relational Ethics of Generativity. The office of a generative practice is the design and the tending of the relation within which the other party generates what is the other party's own, a capability, an understanding, a subject, a direction, a common form. The practitioner produces the conditions of generation and holds them open against foreclosure, and produces the good the practice serves in the derivative sense of producing the relation in which the other can bring that good about. The delivery of a content is preserved within this office as a subordinate moment, placed in the service of the other's generation, and it lapses from the ethic only where it substitutes for the tending of the relation.

Three features of the definition bear marking, since the claims to come rest on them. The ethic is relational, in that its unit is the bond between the practitioner and the other rather than either party taken alone, and its work is done in that bond and nowhere else. The ethic is generative, in that its measure is the power to generate enlarged in the one it serves rather than the quantity of content transferred. And the ethic is self-effacing, in that its success leaves the generated good in the possession of the other and vested in no proprietor, so that what the practitioner has produced withdraws from view in the very measure of its success. This last feature returns, in a later section, as a condition of the ethic's operation and not an ornament upon it, since the matter a generative relation brings about can be kept in generation only by a practitioner who declines to convert it into a content owned.

3 THE GENERALIZED LANGUAGE SYSTEM

The account of what a generative relation produces requires the second of the two terms, for the two parties to such a relation do not meet as bare minds exchanging propositions. Each stands within a situated whole through which a world is rendered, and each brings that whole to the meeting. The term *language* is used here in an extended sense, and the extension must be stated, since the whole in question far exceeds a vocabulary or a grammar. It is the entire situated apparatus through which a subject renders and inhabits a world, and it comprises,

without exhaustive enumeration, a mode of perception by which a world is disclosed as salient in one way and not another, a neural dynamics that carries the rendering in the movement of a living system, a use of signs through which the world is articulated and held, a set of habits sedimented from a history of action, a cultural context that supplies the meanings a rendering draws upon, and a horizon of expectation, the anticipated structure of a future, set within organizations of several scales, a family with its culture, a firm with its culture, a society and a nation with theirs. Each of these enters the rendering, and the rendering is theirs together and not the work of any one.

The Generalized Language System. The generalized language system of a subject is the situated whole through which the subject renders and inhabits a world. It comprises a mode of perception, a neural dynamics, a use of signs, a set of habits, a cultural context, and a horizon of expectation set within organizations of several scales, from the family to the firm to the society and the nation. It is the whole apparatus of rendering within which the subject stands, wider than any vocabulary the subject employs, and out of which the subject brings a rendering of any matter to a meeting with another.

Two consequences of the definition prepare the claims that follow. The first is that no two subjects, standing in generalized language systems formed by distinct histories, render a matter alike, and their meeting is therefore a meeting of renderings and not a comparison of copies. This consequence is developed as the second claim below, where the matter a generative relation generates is shown to appear in the meeting of two such systems and in neither alone. The second consequence is that a generalized language system is a whole with a temporal depth, since among its constituents is a horizon of expectation, and an expectation is a structure of a future that is nonetheless present, and already at work, in the rendering a subject makes now. This consequence is developed as the third claim below. Both are registered here so that the definition may carry them from the first.

4 THE FIRST CLAIM: THE ISOMORPHISM OF GENERATIVE PRACTICE

The first claim is that the relational ethic of generativity is one and the same across the professions that the introduction set side by side, and that the sameness is an isomorphism in the structure to be specified, stronger than a resemblance of degree. A resemblance would hold that these practices are alike in some respects and unlike in others, and would leave the likeness a matter of degree. The isomorphism claimed here is narrower and more exact. It holds that in respect of three places to be named, the practices share a structure that can be exhibited term for term, so that where they differ they differ in what fills the places and not in the places themselves. The structure has three places. Its medium is the relation between the practitioner and the one the practitioner serves. Its product is the conditions under which the one served generates a good of their own. And it has a failure mode, a lapse from the generative into the delivery of a content, which for each practice takes a form proper to its object. To exhibit the isomorphism is to show, for each practice, that the same three places are occupied, and that the good generated is in each the possession of the one served and vested in no proprietor. The claim reaches these three places and no further, and it is in this delimited sense, and not in the sense of a formal correspondence established across every dimension of the practices, that the sameness is called an isomorphism.

The cases are set out in the same form, so that the identity of the structure shows through the difference of the objects. Each names the practice, states what its work in the mode of delivery

would be, and states what its generative office is. The reader is asked to attend to the recurrence of the three places across the cases, since it is the recurrence, and not any single case, that carries the claim.

Case, the teacher. The delivery: the teacher holds a body of knowledge and conveys it to a pupil who lacks it, and the work is done when the knowledge is received. The generative office: the teacher tends a relation within which the pupil generates an understanding that is the pupil's own, so that what is produced is a capacity to go on knowing, and the teacher's success withdraws into the pupil's power to think without the teacher. The medium is the relation of teaching, the product is the pupil's enlarged power to generate understanding, and the failure mode is the reduction of teaching to the transmission of a content a pupil can receive without coming to generate anything.

Case, the market consultant. The delivery: the consultant holds a strategy and supplies it to a firm that lacks one, and the engagement is complete when the strategy is handed over. The generative office: the consultant tends a relation within which the firm generates a clarity about its own situation and a capacity to read its own market, so that what is produced is a discernment the firm carries forward without the consultant. The medium is the relation of counsel, the product is the firm's enlarged power to understand and act in its own situation, and the failure mode is the sale of a strategy the firm cannot renew, which secures the consultant's return in place of the firm's independence.

Case, the policy adviser. The delivery: the adviser holds a policy answer and hands it to a government that lacks one, and the advice is rendered when the answer is delivered. The generative office: the adviser tends a relation within which the stakeholders of a decision generate together an understanding of their situation that none held at the outset, so that what is produced is a shared discernment from which a policy the stakeholders own can proceed. The medium is the relation among the parties to the decision, the product is their joint power to form an understanding and a direction of their own, and the failure mode is the delivery of an expert answer that leaves the parties as dependent on the next answer as they were on this one.

Case, the analyst. The delivery: the analyst holds an interpretation and pronounces it to the one who comes to speak, and the work is done when the interpretation is delivered. The generative office: the analyst tends a relation within which the analysand generates a speech, and through it a subject, that is the analysand's own, so that what is produced is a subject that comes to speak and to desire in its own name, and the analyst's success is measured by the analysand's coming to do without the analyst. The medium is the analytic relation, the product is the analysand's own subjective generation, and the failure mode is the pronouncement of a meaning that installs the analyst in the place of the analysand's own coming to speak.

Case, the community organizer. The delivery: the organizer holds a program and mobilizes a community to carry it out, and the organizing is done when the community is mobilized. The generative office: the organizer tends a relation within which the community generates an organizing capacity of its own, so that what is produced is a power to organize that the community holds and can exercise again without the organizer. The medium is the relation of organizing, the product is the community's enlarged power to generate its own common action, and the failure mode is a mobilization that leaves the community dependent on the organizer for the next occasion of action.

The five cases occupy the same three places. In each, the medium is a relation and not a content, the product is an enlarged power to generate that the one served comes to hold as their own, and the failure mode is the collapse of the generative into a delivery that leaves the one served dependent on a further delivery. The difference among the cases lies entirely in what fills the places, a subject matter, a market, a policy, a speech, a common action, and the structure that the places compose is invariant under the substitution. This invariance, holding across the three places and claimed for them alone, is what the isomorphism asserts. The practices are more than merely alike. In respect of the three places that compose their generative structure, they share one structure carried out upon different objects.

The relational ethic of generativity is isomorphic across the professions that practice it. Beneath the difference of their objects they work in one medium, the relation, and produce one thing, the conditions under which the one served generates a good that is the one served's own. The generative teacher, consultant, adviser, analyst, and organizer are, in the structure of their ethic, one figure, and the classification of their practices by their objects conceals the identity of their office.

The isomorphism carries a corollary that the introduction anticipated. If these practices are one in structure, then the ethic they share is not the property of any one of them, and the principles won in the study of any one carry to the others. What the study of Socratic teaching discloses about the generation of understanding in a relation bears on the work of the analyst and the organizer. What the study of generative justice discloses about the return of value to those who generate it bears on the teacher and the adviser. The professions, held apart by their objects, are disclosed as a single field of a relational and generative ethic, and the sections that follow develop two features of that field that the isomorphism brings into view.

The word isomorphism is used here in a delimited and stipulated sense, and the delimitation guards the claim against overreach. It does not assert a formal correspondence in the sense of category theory, under which objects and the maps between them would be specified and a structure-preserving bijection established across the whole of what the practices are. It asserts a correspondence at the three places named, the medium, the product, and the failure mode, and it leaves open that the practices diverge freely in the many dimensions those three places do not reach, in their objects, their temporal rhythms, their institutional forms, their standards of success. What is claimed is that at the level of abstraction the three places fix, the same structure recurs, and that the recurrence is exact enough at that level to be exhibited term for term rather than gestured at as a family likeness. A stronger claim, that a single formal structure governs these practices through and through, is neither made nor needed. The isomorphism is an isomorphism of the generative structure so specified, and its force lies in the exactness of the correspondence at that level and not in a reach it does not have.

5 THE SECOND CLAIM: THE MATTER GENERATED IN THE RELATION

The first claim established that the generative professions share a structure whose product is the conditions of generation. The second claim concerns what is generated within those conditions, and it states a result stronger than the enlargement of the served party's power. It states that within a generative relation the two parties come to observe a matter that neither held in advance, that this matter appears in the meeting of their generalized language systems and in neither system alone, and that its generation is therefore a joint achievement of the relation rather than a discovery by either party of something already possessed.

The received account of such practices supposes that whatever comes to light in them was there beforehand in one of the parties. On one form of the supposition the practitioner held the good and conveyed it, and this the first claim has already set aside. On a second and more subtle form, the one served held the good latently, and the practitioner's work was to draw it out, so that the analysand recovered a truth already within, the pupil recollected a knowledge already possessed, the community activated a power already latent. This second form is the more resistant, for it credits the served party rather than the practitioner, and it appears to honor the generative character of the work. The present claim sets it aside as well. What comes to light in a generative relation is, in the cases that matter most, held in advance by neither party, and its coming to light is neither a transfer from the practitioner nor a recollection by the one served but a generation in the relation between them.

The ground of the claim is the definition of the generalized language system. Each party to the relation stands within a situated whole through which a world is rendered, and the two wholes, formed by distinct histories, render the matter between them differently. Their meeting is a meeting of renderings, and it is the setting of the two renderings into relation that generates an observation neither rendering held. The pupil brings a rendering of a matter shaped by a history of perception and habit and expectation, the teacher brings another, and in the movement between them, a question that the teacher's rendering could not have posed to itself, an aspect the pupil's rendering had not made salient, a matter becomes observable that lived in neither rendering taken alone. The analyst and the analysand, standing in generalized language systems of their own, generate in the analytic relation a formation that was in neither the analyst's rendering nor the analysand's before the work, and that could not have been recovered from either, since it was not in either to be recovered. The matter is generated in the relation and observed from within each of the two systems that the relation brings together, and it belongs to the relation rather than to either party who entered it.

Within a generative relation the two parties come to observe a matter that neither held in advance. The matter appears in the meeting of their generalized language systems and in neither system alone, and each party observes it from within a situated whole of their own. What the relation generates is therefore not transferred by the practitioner nor recollected by the one served but generated between them, and it belongs to the relation and not to either party who entered it.

The claim requires a distinction that guards it against a misreading. To say that the two parties observe a matter that neither held is not to say that they observe the same object in the same way, as though the relation delivered a single content into two receptacles. Each observes from within a generalized language system of their own, and the matter observed is refracted through the mode of perception, the use of signs, the cultural context, and the horizon of expectation that each brings. The teacher and the pupil do not come to hold one identical understanding. Each generates, within their own system, an observation occasioned by the relation,

and the two observations are related as the renderings of a matter by two situated wholes and not as two copies of one content. The generation is joint in its occasion and situated in its issue, and this double character, one relation generating two situated observations, is the precise form of what the relation produces.

This is the point at which the ethic of the practitioner meets its sternest test, and the definition of the first section returns with a sharper edge. If the matter generated in the relation belongs to the relation and is observed by each party from within a system of their own, then the practitioner who seizes the matter, names it in the practitioner's own system, and delivers it back to the other as a finding, has undone the generation in the act of harvesting it. The matter, seized and named, ceases to be generated in the relation and becomes a content delivered, and the served party is returned to the position of one who receives rather than one who generates. The generative practitioner accordingly holds back from the seizure that the delivering mode would count as the fruit of the work, and tends the relation in which the other continues to generate, within the other's own system, an observation the practitioner declines to appropriate. The self-effacement named in the first definition is here shown to be a condition of the ethic's very operation and not a modesty added to it, since the matter the relation generates can be kept in generation only by a practitioner who refuses to convert it into a content owned.

6 THE THIRD CLAIM: THE TEMPORAL STRUCTURE OF THE GENERALIZED LANGUAGE SYSTEM

The third claim concerns the constitution of the generalized language system, and it corrects a supposition that the term, taken carelessly, might invite. A situated whole through which a world is rendered might be imagined as a present configuration, a stock of perceptions, signs, habits, and meanings held now and brought now to a meeting. The claim of this section is that the generalized language system is constituted otherwise. It is constituted by the joint structure of a past, a present, and a future, and the future enters its present rendering as an expectation already at work in the understanding and the conduct of the present, a structure not yet arrived and yet operative now.

The past enters the generalized language system in a way the account has already relied upon. The mode of perception, the use of signs, the set of habits, the cultural context, each is a sediment of a history, and the rendering a subject makes now carries the deposit of everything through which the subject came to render as it does. This much a static account of the system could concede, treating the past as the source of a present configuration and the configuration as the whole that acts. The claim of this section reaches past this concession to the role of the future, which a static account cannot accommodate, since the future is precisely what is not yet, and a configuration held now would seem to contain nothing of it.

Yet the future is present in the system, and it is present as expectation. A subject renders the present in the light of a structure it anticipates, and the anticipation does its work in three ways at once. It shapes what is salient now, since a subject perceives the present as bearing on a future it awaits and attends to what the awaited future renders significant. It shapes the meanings drawn upon now, since the sense a subject makes of a present matter is formed by the subject's expectation of what that matter will have meant. And it shapes the conduct undertaken now, since a subject acts in the present toward a future it projects and orders its present action by the structure it expects to inhabit. The organizations of several scales within which the subject stands each supply such a structure of expectation, a family whose anticipated form governs the present of its members, a firm whose expected future orders the conduct of those within it, a society and a nation whose projected structure enters the rendering that each of their members

makes now. The future is not absent from the present rendering awaiting its arrival. It is present in the rendering as the expectation that co-constitutes it.

The generalized language system is constituted by the joint structure of a past, a present, and a future. The past enters as the sediment from which the present rendering is formed, and the future enters as the expectation of a structure yet to come, an expectation that shapes what is salient, what is meaningful, and what is done in the present. The subject's anticipation of a future structure is therefore a present constituent of the system, and the rendering a subject makes now is co-constituted by a future it does not yet inhabit.

This temporal constitution bears directly on the two prior claims, and drawing out the connection completes the account. It bears on the second claim first. If the generalized language system of each party is co-constituted by an expectation of a future, then the meeting of two systems in a generative relation is a meeting of two structures of expectation, and the matter the relation generates is generated in part from the encounter of the futures the two parties anticipate. A pupil who expects to inhabit a certain future renders the present of a lesson in its light, and the observation the teaching relation generates is shaped by the meeting of that expectation with the teacher's own. The generation the second claim described is thus not a meeting of two presents but a meeting of two temporally extended systems, and the future each party awaits is among the constituents from which the jointly observed matter is generated.

It bears on the ethic itself, and here the generative office receives a further specification. A practice that works upon a generalized language system works upon a structure that includes an expectation of a future, and a generative practice tends this expectation rather than fixing it. The delivering mode, in its temporal aspect, installs in the other a determinate expectation of a future, a fixed picture of what is to come, and thereby forecloses the other's power to generate a future of the other's own. The manufacture of lack described in an earlier section is, in this aspect, the manufacture of a determinate future the other is taught to await and to lack, so that the other's horizon of expectation is colonized by a structure supplied from without. The generative practice, by contrast, tends the other's horizon of expectation so that the other generates, within their own system, the future they will come to inhabit, and it declines to install a future in the place of the other's power to project one. The office of tending the conditions of generation extends, by this claim, to the tending of the other's own relation to a future, and the generative ethic is shown to bear not on a present configuration alone but on the whole temporal structure through which the other renders and projects a world.

7 THE GROUND OF THE ETHIC

The three claims stand on the two definitions, and the definitions in turn descend from a relational ontology developed in the prior work of this framework, an ontology under which value comes to rest not within things but in the relations between them, and presence is generated in the bond rather than possessed by either party to it.¹ The relational ethic of generativity is the practical face of this ontology. If value is generated between and not within, then a practice that would serve value cannot proceed by delivering a value from within one party to another, and must instead tend the relation in which value is generated between them. The ethic is the form a practice takes once the relational generation of value is understood, a consequence of

¹The ontology is developed in the author's *Responding to the Crises of Symbol and Subject in Modernity* [4], and its epistemological extension, on which the account of the generalized language system draws, in *Towards a Generative Relational Epistemology* [3].

the ontology rather than a preference laid over a neutral practice, and its refusal of delivery follows from the ground as a consequence follows from a premise.

The ethic has, moreover, an ancient statement, and recovering it guards the account against the appearance of novelty for its own sake. A classical formulation of a generative comportment holds that the generative power gives rise to things and does not possess them, acts and does not presume upon what it has done, and fosters growth and does not rule over what it has fostered. This is the comportment ascribed above to the generative practitioner under a modern description. To tend the conditions of another's generation, to hold back from seizing what the relation generates, to foster a power in the other and leave it vested in the other and in no proprietor, is to give rise without possessing, to act without presuming, and to foster without ruling. The ethic defined here is a recovery, in the vocabulary of a relational ontology, of a comportment long named in the traditions that took the generative rather than the acquisitive as the measure of a rightly ordered practice.

Value is generated between and not within, and a practice that serves value must therefore tend the relation in which value is generated rather than deliver a value from within one party to another. The office of the generative practitioner follows.

Of the work. To give rise to a generation and not to possess it, to act and not to presume upon what the acting has produced, to foster a power in the other and not to rule over the power one has fostered.

Of the measure. A generative practice is measured not by the value it delivers but by the power to generate value that it enlarges in the one it serves, and its success withdraws into that enlarged power and vests in no proprietor.

So stated, the ethic answers the question with which the account began, the question why practitioners as various as a teacher, an analyst, and an organizer leave a single feeling. They leave it because they share a comportment that the relational ontology grounds and the ancient formulation names, a comportment under which what they produce is a power to generate enlarged in another, held by that other and owed to no owner, a power in place of a good delivered. The feeling is the trace of a generation that its author declined to possess, and the identity of the feeling across the professions is the identity of the comportment from which it issues.

8 CONCLUSION

Two definitions and three claims have composed the position. The relational ethic of generativity is the design and the tending of a relation within which the other generates what is the other's own, and the generalized language system is the situated whole, temporally extended, through which a subject renders and inhabits a world. On these rest the three claims, that the generative ethic is isomorphic, in the structure of medium, product, and failure mode specified above and not beyond it, across the professions of teaching, counsel, advice, analysis, and organizing, that within a generative relation the two parties observe a matter that neither held and that appears in the meeting of their systems and in neither alone, and that the generalized language system is constituted by a past, a present, and a future together, the future entering as an expectation already at work in the present. The ethic is grounded in a relational ontology under which value is generated between and not within, and it recovers a comportment the classical traditions had named.

The position carries a consequence for how the generative professions are to be understood,

and the consequence is worth stating plainly. These professions are ordinarily divided by their objects and studied apart, a pedagogy here, a clinical theory there, a science of management and a craft of organizing each in its own literature. The isomorphism argued above suggests that beneath these divisions lies a single ethic of relational generativity, and that the study of any one of these practices, pursued to the structure of its generative office, reaches a structure the others share. What this framework has developed under the name of generative justice, of relational value, of the Socratic generation of understanding, belongs to this single field, and the field is wider than any of the professions that occupy a region of it.

Consistent with the account developed here, what remains are the questions the account has made it possible to ask. The arrangement of a practice, in each of the professions, so that the generative office is protected against the pressures that collapse it into delivery, remains open, and its answer will differ with the object each practice works upon. The condition of two generalized language systems meeting well, so that the matter generated between them is neither seized by the practitioner nor lost for want of tending, remains open, and admits of no rule that would settle in advance what only the relation can generate. The tending of a horizon of expectation rather than its fixing, so that the other generates a future of the other's own, remains open, and belongs to a practice defined here but not exhausted. These are posed in the manner of the generative ethic itself, which sets the conditions of an inquiry before those who would carry it and declines to deliver its end. What is offered is the conditions under which the inquiry may continue, and what is withheld, of these claims as of all others, is the settlement that would arrest the generation the account has undertaken to describe.

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