24.
BEING-WITH (*MITSEIN*)

Being-with is the character of Dasein whereby it is always already structurally related to other Daseins (even when one is alone and others are actually absent). *Mitsein* (literally "being-with") in everyday German simply means "togetherness" or "companionship," but in *Being and Time* Heidegger gives the term a particular philosophical inflection. The everyday, public, cultural world of oneself among others is a "primary phenomenon" for Heidegger. Each one exists in a world saturated with others linked through shared social practices. In *Being and Time*, in §§25–27 and §74 in particular, and also dispersed through his phenomenological writings more generally (1919 to 1929, e.g., the 1925 lectures *History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena*, GA20 §26), Heidegger uses a number of key terms to name aspects of the a priori structures of human social interrelatedness in an attempt to specify phenomenologically the manner in which human existence involves sharing a common world with others. "Being-with" is the most common term used by Heidegger, but he also speaks of "co-existence" (*Mitdasein*) and, more generally, of "being-with-one-another" (*Miteinandersein*), in an overall "shared or common world" (*Mitwelt*).

For Heidegger, Dasein is essentially being-in-the-world, but there are other structures that are "equiprimordial" (SZ 114) or "co-original" (*gleichursprünglich*, GA20:328/238) with it, namely: "being-with" (*Mitsein*), "existence-with" or "co-existence" (*Mitdasein*) and "being-with-one-another" (*Miteinandersein*). In part this co-belonging accounts for Dasein's sense of shared temporality and historicity: we belong to a generation and a particular era. Besides "common world" (*Mitwelt*), Heidegger also uses the term "life-world" (*Lebenswelt*) already in his Freiburg lecture courses of 1919–23, around the time Husserl himself begins to use the term (c.1917), so it is not clear who introduced the word *Lebenswelt* into phenomenology.

Heidegger uses the term "co-existence" to characterize the kind of existence that other human beings have alongside and in relation to one's own Dasein. The term *miteinander* is a regular German adverb meaning variously "with one another," "together," "between them," as in such phrases as *miteinander verbunden*, "interconnected," or *miteinander unvergleichbar*, "incomparable." In its noun form, *Miteinander* connotes "cooperation" or "togetherness," but for Heidegger it is a *terminus technicus* to express the a priori existential structure of human being-with-one-another. To say that being-with (*Mitsein*) is a fundamental existentiale of Dasein is to say that Dasein is always in the condition of being-with others even if there are no actual others in one's environment. Human existence is essentially and inherently social and communal. As Heidegger puts it, in *Being and Time* §26, "being-with is an existential constituent of being-in-the-world" (SZ 125). He goes on to say: "so far as Dasein *is* at all, it has being-with-one-another as its kind of being" (SZ 128).

There is a host of other terms employed by Heidegger that have the preposition "with" (*mit* or *bei*), e.g., *Sein-bei*. There is a regular German term, *Beisein*, that means "presence" (e.g., "in the presence of" = *im Beisein des*) but Heidegger reverses it to *Sein-bei* (Kisiel translates this as "being-involved-with," GA20:214), and "being-already-alongside" ("*Schon-sein-bei-der-Welt*," SZ 61) to characterize the manner human beings exist alongside objects in the world. Thus

Heidegger explains that what Husserl characterized as INTENTIONALITY is better understood in term of the "being-involved-with" (*Sein-bei*) of Dasein. The world as such is never there with us in the same sense as other human subjects are; "being-involved-with" has a different structure than the with-world (*Mitwelt*, GA20:333–34).

Heidegger's discussion of "being-with" and "being-with-one-another" generally forms part of a larger discussion aimed at fleshing out the meaning of Dasein's being-in-the-world. In particular, Heidegger seeks to counter the standard metaphysical conception of a human being as an isolated Cartesian thinking self, *cogito ergo sum*. For Heidegger, there is no isolated ego ("a bare subject without a world never 'is' proximally, nor is it ever given," SZ 116); human existence is a priori oriented to others. As he puts it, being-with (*Mitsein*) is co-original with "being-oneself" or "being a self" (*Selbstsein*). Heidegger maintains that one's sense of self is reflected from one's prior engagement with things. One is never given as an isolated "I." In analyzing the "who" of Dasein, Heidegger emphasizes that Dasein is in each case mine, but there is a kind of mineness of everyday Dasein that is really better described as "anyone" and in this sense is already a conduit for a generalized other to be encountered "environmentally" (SZ §26).

Heidegger was already employing the terms "common world" (*Mitwelt*, GA63:93, 98, 102), "co-existence" (*Mitdasein*, GA63:98), and "with one another" (*Miteinander*, GA63:30) in his early Freiburg courses, e.g., Summer Semester 1923, *Ontology – The Hermeneutics of Facticity* (GA63). In his Freiburg lectures, Heidegger distinguishes between "surrounding world" (*Umwelt*), "common world" (*Mitwelt*), and the "self-world" or "world of self" (*Selbstwelt*, GA58:59–64), although the latter term (which still appears in 1925 – I belong to my own "self-world," GA20:333) is not carried forward in *Being and Time*. For Heidegger, the surrounding world consists primarily of "environmental things" (*Umweltdinge*, a term Heidegger probably found in Max Scheler's 1913–16 *Formalism* book) and other people who are encountered practically in relation to one's everyday concerns. I encounter the other person "out of his or her world" (GA20:331). I am with others and they are with me; we are "with-one-another." Others – definite others are encountered when objects are experienced in the surrounding world – are part of an "AVERAGENESS" (*Durchschnittlichkeit*, GA63:99) whereby no one in particular stands out. Dasein, furthermore, lives in a shared present (*Jeweiligkeit*, GA63:30) with others. This social world of others is often anonymously given and is experienced in terms of 'THE ANYONE' (*das Man*). In this experience, I am less myself as I am just anyone, I am one of the gang. Further, the anyone is, for Heidegger, a modality of being-with. We all belong to the *same* shared world that occupies us and engages our solicitude.

This terminology of being-with and being-with-one-another is often thought to be original to Heidegger, but both terms are also found in Husserl's phenomenological writings, especially in the writings of the 1920s or 1930s, and, indeed, Husserl appears to have developed these terms independently from Heidegger, although Husserl does use the term *Mitsein* (e.g., *Husserliana* XXIX, Husserl 1993, 260) in a late text from 1936, which may indicate an influence from Heidegger. Husserl often uses the terms "in each other" (*Ineinander*), "with each other" (*Miteinander*), and "for each other" (*Füreinander*) together to capture the many different ways human beings intentionally interlink, cooperate, enter into conflict, or act on each other's behalf (see the 1925 *Phenomenological Psychology* lectures, where he speaks of the *Ineinander* and *Miteinander* interconnectedness of nature and spirit, *Husserliana* IX, Husserl 1959, 55). Husserl's conception is slightly looser and less technical than Heidegger's. Husserl wants to explore the a priori conditions governing human sociality. Human beings for Husserl are members of

a community, a society, and a social world. There are many layers of community from family through to religious congregations and the state. Heidegger takes over this discussion but situates being-with as an existentiale of Dasein.

In the 1920s and early 1930s, a number of phenomenologists (including Max Scheler, Adolf Reinach, Edith Stein, Gerda Walther, Herbert Marcuse, Alfred Schütz, Aron Gurwitsch, Karl Löwith, among many others), some stimulated by the writings of Marx and especially Max Weber, turned their attention to the a priori structures of sociality and the constitution of the social world. Karl Löwith's habilitation thesis written under Heidegger, entitled "Das Individuum in der Rolle des Mitmenschen" ("The Individual in the Role of Fellow Human Being," Löwith 1928), distinguishes between "world" (*Welt*), "surrounding world" (*Umwelt*), and "shared world" (*Mitwelt*) and devotes a whole chapter to "being with one another" (*Miteinandersein*). Similarly, the Austrian social phenomenologist Alfred Schütz (who had read Husserl independently) offered a detailed exposition of the world of everyday life in his *Der sinnhaften Aufbau der sozialen Welt* (Schütz 1967), where he distinguishes between four dimensions of the life-world, namely, "the world of contemporaries" (*Mitwelt* – Schütz's own translation), "the world of predecessors" (*Vorwelt*), "the surrounding world" (*Umwelt*), and "the world of our successors" (*Folgewelt*). For Schütz, *die Mitwelt*, "the world of our contemporaries," can be primarily impersonal and anonymous and Schütz distinguishes it from the world we have through "face to face encounters." There was, therefore, a strong current of social phenomenology in the contributions published in Husserl's *Jahrbuch* during the 1920s. Nevertheless, Heidegger's being-with remains a groundbreaking and original analysis. Heidegger discusses being-with already in his 1925 *History of the Concept of Time* lectures (GA20) – see especially §26 (an early version of *Being and Time* §26). First and foremost we are in a world with others and we do not distinguish ourselves from these others. Their "existing-with" (*Mitdasein*) character is encountered by us in an innerworldly way – we encounter others as part of our plans and intentions. For Heidegger, contrary to the philosophical tradition, other humans are never encountered purely as simply there, neither occurrent nor as available; others are experienced as "co-Dasein" (GA20:330) or "Dasein-with" (SZ 114). They have a specific mode of being encountered as "the Dasein of Others" (SZ 118). They are disclosed in a different way than being either mere things or utensils – there is a third modality of being. Heidegger is also clear that "others" here does not mean "everyone else but me" but rather means everyone, including me (SZ 118), in other words, it is the way "we" experience each other. Others have the character of "being there too" (*Auch-dasein*, SZ 118). Indeed, as Heidegger says in his 1925 *History of the Concept of Time* lectures, it is only because of being-with that there can be "being for" or "being against" others (GA20:331). Even avoiding others is a specific form of being-with (GA20 §26). As a constitutive structure of Dasein, it means that even being alone is a form of being-with. The world is a world that includes others as agents, participants, partners; it is an intentional "with-world." This a priori with-character has to be, for Heidegger, the correct theoretical basis for understanding phenomena such as empathy which has been mischaracterized as one person trying to break out of his private consciousness to understand another, essentially inaccessible, consciousness.

As Heidegger elaborates on "being-with" as a fundamental existentiale of Dasein (SZ 118), he asserts that it is not just an empirical fact that humans find themselves in a world with other humans. Human existence has the character of "being-with'" even if there are no others in one's immediate vicinity. I walk by a field that shows itself as belonging to someone, the boat is owned by an acquaintance, Others are encountered in the available world of equipment (SZ §26).

A piece of clothing is made for someone, will fit someone of a certain size. Humans are essentially other-oriented and communal, entangled in one another's project and environments. Being-with is an existential constituent of being-in-the-world.

In the public domain that Heidegger calls "PUBLICNESS" (*die Öffentlichkeit*, SZ 127) we are aware of others in all kinds of way, some closer and some more distant. But there is an implicit leveling down, averaging out, and distantiation involved in this "publicness" (e.g., seats on trains and planes are designed to accommodate average Dasein). The general other is encountered everywhere.

According to Heidegger's analysis, furthermore, the manner in which human beings live and relate to their own existence can be either authentic or inauthentic (see AUTHENTICITY). As Heidegger puts it, "PROXIMALLY AND FOR THE MOST PART" (*zunächst und zumeist*), human existence is absorbed in and fascinated by the world. Furthermore, this kind of inauthentic "absorbed living" (*Dahinleben*), this going with the flow, letting things run on, living for the day (*in der Tag hineinleben*, SZ 370) is a priori condition that makes authentic being possible. Already in 1924 in the "Concept of Time" lecture, Heidegger discusses the anyone and the everyday character of Dasein and says that no-one is himself in everydayness (GA64:113/8). The anyone is always "governed by tradition [*Tradition*]." Being an anyone means being in the public space; one is acting in the dimension of "publicity." Furthermore, the anyone has associated with it a specific state of mind (SZ §34). Heidegger sees everyday being with others as infected with "idle talk" or "gossip" (*Gerede*, SZ §35) and "publicness" (*Öffentlichkeit*). The experience of others more or less sucks the authenticity out of our social encounters. Publicness is a way of existing and discoursing that has a high tolerance for loose, easy generalities. It enables and sustains a kind of "groundless" discourse that closes off the possibility of genuine communication. As Schütz will elaborate, it is possible to be in shared groups that have little to do with one another, e.g., a group of "bystanders" at an accident, a group of "rubberneckers" driving past an accident. The inauthentic everyday common being-with-one-another seems to be primarily a negative experience, although Heidegger himself denies that he is expressing any negative evaluation (SZ 175); rather he is characterizing a really distinct modality of being in the world. Do all forms of being-with lead inevitably to "FALLING" (*Verfallen*) and the anyone? Heidegger is explicit that the self of everydayness is the anyone (SZ §51). Can there be an *authentic* dimension to being-with for Heidegger or is authenticity something associated primarily with an individual Dasein and its decisions? For Heidegger, Dasein in its everyday modality of existing is primarily in flight from itself and from its freedom. Everyday Dasein has a tendency to conceal the world and to elide the difference of others. Heidegger's account of being-with and being-with-one-another has been criticized for its lack of recognition of reciprocal presence and genuine interpersonal experiences, "face-to-face" experiences of the kind discussed by Schütz, Levinas, or Binswanger. This is most obvious in Heidegger's discussion of the possibility of experiencing the death of others (SZ §51) where the anyone dispels and does not allow for anxiety in the face of death (SZ 254). In fact, although this is certainly underplayed in the existential analytic of *Being and Time*, Heidegger does allow for concernful relations with others in solicitude. One can put oneself in the place of the other. As Heidegger puts it, inauthenticity is based on the possibility of authenticity (SZ 259).

Heidegger's discussion of the ontological character of being-with as an essential dimension to human existence as being-in-the-world has had a major influence on twentieth-century philosophers, including Hannah Arendt, Hans Jonas, Herbert Marcuse, Hans-Georg Gadamer,

Emmanuel Levinas, Martin Buber, Jürgen Habermas, and Jean-Luc Nancy. For example, Simone de Beauvoir discusses being-with in *The Second Sex* (1949) and sees that it is a structure that can be concretized as solidarity and friendship or as hostility and enmity. She writes "human reality is at once being-with and separation" (Beauvoir 1953, 79). Some writers have been able to see being-with as offering a possible foundation for a social ethics. Perhaps the great strength of his analysis is in unmasking the absence of authentic or genuine social relations in human social existence. Thus, on Heideggerian grounds, social networks, discussion forums, "friends" on Facebook, and so on, are all forms of *inauthentic* sociality and characterized by averageness, falling, and distantiation.

Dermot Moran

REFERENCES IN HEIDEGGER

Mitdasein SZ 114, 120, 121–25
Mitsein SZ §26, 114; 118, 119, 120, 121, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 131, 142, 146, 161, 162, 163, 164, 181, 237, 238, 239, 250, 263, 264, 271, 272, 281, 282, 283, 298, 384, 386
Miteinandersein SZ 121, 122, 124, 125, 126, 127, 129, 130, 138, 161, 162
Öffentlichkeit SZ 127, 128, 138, 167, 169, 175, 188, 189, 190, 192, 252, 254, 257, 271, 370, 397

FURTHER READING

Bauer 2001, Beauvoir 1953, Carman 2005, Dreyfus 1995, Gadamer 2000, Gothlin 2003, Gurwitsch 1979, Löwith 1928, Nancy 2008, Novak 1985, Olafson 1998b, Schatzki 2005, Scheler 1973, Schütz 1967, Theunissen 1984, Zimmerman 1986

BEING-WITH-ONE-ANOTHER (*MITEINANDERSEIN*). SEE BEING-WITH (*MITSEIN*).

BEING-WITHIN-THE-WORLD (*INNERWELTLICHKEIT*). SEE WORLD.