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Review: McMULLIN, Irene. *Time and the Shared World: Heidegger on Social Relations*

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McMULLIN, Irene. *Time and the Shared World: Heidegger on Social Relations*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2013. xiii + 298pp. Cloth, \$99.95. Paper, \$34.95—A common and widely shared criticism of Heidegger’s account of the human, even by those who are sympathetic and largely approving of his account, finds it inadequate with regard to social relations. The criticism takes various shapes—that Heidegger’s view of *Dasein* is solipsistic, that his account makes sense of the “we” but fails to account for the “I-Thou (you), that relations to others are inevitably inauthentic, that the individuality of the other is lost in the anonymity of an a priori category, and so on. Irene McMullin ably defends Heidegger’s account both by directly addressing the criticisms and by providing a detailed and nuanced reading of “Heidegger on social relations.”

This work relies almost entirely on the so-called early Heidegger, the Heidegger of *Being and Time*. Her account usefully draws also on *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, *The Essence of Human Freedom*, *The History of the Concept of Time* and a few other early works. From the later works *The Zollikon Seminars* are important for her interpretation. McMullin reads Heidegger as a transcendental phenomenologist who is deeply indebted to Husserl and also to Kant. She asserts that Heidegger was not as narrowly focused on the human theoretical capacity as were Husserl and Kant, but she

also asserts that “Heidegger is a phenomenologist in the same scientific way Husserl was.” She thinks that the difference between the early and the later Heidegger is often overstated, though this claim is not developed or important to the book (other than the usage of *The Zollikon Seminars* to occasionally illuminate her interpretation). One can see how her approach to Heidegger relies on the work of Steven Crowell, though her account of sociality and intersubjectivity in Heidegger, goes beyond what he has done in this regard.

At the very beginning of the book she acknowledges that Heidegger failed to fully develop his position and adds that she will not speculate on why this is so. She also acknowledges more than once that Heidegger can be found to be inconsistent in his treatment of this phenomenon. She develops explicitly what she takes to be implicit in Heidegger’s account. Her interpretation is advanced by way of dealing with the major criticisms of Heidegger in this regard. She takes on Dreyfus, Searle, Sartre, Levinas, Nancy, Theunissen, Blattner, among others. Of these, the most important are Sartre and Levinas. McMullin wishes to show that Levinas’ account of the relation to the other is not as different from Heidegger’s account as Levinas would have us see. At the heart of McMullin’s account of the sociality of *Dasein* is the temporality of *Dasein*. She does not rely merely

on sketchy account of “being-with” (*Mitsein*) that Heidegger provides but shows how our being-with-another pervades and is relevant to the other basic structures of *Dasein*, especially discourse and conscience but most importantly time and temporality. The book is more ambitious than merely to show how ‘social’ the human is. It also attempts to show how Heidegger’s account provides an understanding of the origins of normativity and the basis for respect, that is, an ethics.

The work begins with a discussion of “mineness” (*Jemeinigkeit*) in which she attempts to find a middle way between Dreyfus and Searle with regard to self-awareness—a way less propositional than Searle and more normative than Dreyfus. The argument then moves on to consider the criticisms of Sartre, Levinas, and Theunissen. She argues that in the encounter with things and persons in the world “the order of precedence prioritizes the inaugural encounter with concrete foreign temporalities.” She rejects the view that there is a priority in Heidegger’s account to the encounter with things. What the other brings to one is another view of the world and another temporality. According to McMullin, injustice is for Heidegger the insistence on “my time... my now.” She shows how one can be a conscience for others. She argues that the everyday worldly modes of being are not inherently fallen but display a tendency toward inauthenticity.

She resists a decisionistic interpretation of Heidegger's ethics by pointing to the significance of receptivity, passive activity and the middle voice for Heidegger's account of action.

There is much more to McMullin's account of the human encounter of one another and her treatment of the extensive literature on this topic than can be discussed here. It is the fullest account and best defense of Heidegger in this regard that I have seen. Because the 'social' and 'justice' are themes of the book, a reader might expect some discussion of the political dimension of human life, but there is no reference to the political, no discussion of the significance of the hero, and no reference to the distinction of the social and the communal (at the cost of the 'social') that Heidegger makes toward the end of *Being and Time*. –Robert J. Dostal, *Bryn Mawr College*.