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## Early Heidegger on Social Reality

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### 1 Introduction: Three Dimensions of Social Ontology

One of the perennial questions of social philosophy concerns how we should understand the fundamental relationship between the human individual and the social environment in which he or she is embedded and participates. As a specific branch of social philosophy, social ontology investigates the nature, character, and structure of this relationship in all its multifaceted varieties and complications. Thanks especially to the ongoing work of Philip Pettit (1996: Part II and Postscript; 2002; 2014; Pettit and Schweikard 2006: 36), we can discern *three dimensions* of social ontology along which we can consider the relationship of the individual agent and the social entities, forces, structures, systems, or (last but not least) the manner in which this agent is thought to be socially constituted or ‘socially constructed’.

The first dimension or axis of social ontology is ‘vertical’ insofar as it examines the extent to which macro-level social forces, structures, or systems, etc., can coercively constrain and thereby quasi-deterministically restrict the autonomy (agency) of an individual, a group or population of individuals, or such individual(s) under the aspect of how they embody or fall under the ascriptions of occupying certain social identities or social positions (Pettit 1996: Ch. 3). It is important to note that the type of coercive constraint or limitation in question is not in the first instance political, but turns rather on whether and how social forces, structures, or systems, etc., can supposedly undermine (in Pettit’s terminology, ‘override’ or ‘outflank’) the intentional

attitudes or agency of individuals as constitutive aspects of their individual autonomy. In terms of Pettit's conceptual apparatus, this is the primary issue between individualism and collectivism, in his particular senses of these labels.

The second dimension or axis of social ontology is 'horizontal' insofar as it examines whether and how individual agents are necessarily socially constituted (or 'socially constructed'), in the sense that some basic capacity or set of capacities that they exercise as intentional autonomous agents requires that they intrinsically coexist and engage with other people (Pettit 1996: Ch. 4; 2002). It is important to note that the sense of coexistence and engagement with others in question is not in the first instance factual, but turns rather on how the basic capacity or set of capacities under consideration depends non-causally or intrinsically on their relations and engagements with other people. In terms of Pettit's conceptual apparatus, this is the primary issue between atomism and holism, in his particular senses of these labels.<sup>1</sup>

Pettit has also recently noted a third distinctive dimension along which we can understand and investigate the relationship between individual agents and the larger social or collective entities of which they are parts or members (Pettit 2003; 2014; Pettit and Schweikard 2006). This dimension concerns the way in which it is legitimate (justified) to claim that there exist group or collective agents, beliefs, attitudes, intentions, actions, etc., in ways that are irreducible to the aggregations of the agency, beliefs, attitudes, intentions, actions, etc., of the singular individuals that compose these larger social or collective entities as their parts or members (cf. Schmitt 2003; Schmid 2009). We can describe this dimension as the primary issue

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<sup>1</sup> One of the major innovations of Pettit's social ontology is his discernment of the crucial distinction between the issue that animates the disagreement between individualism and collectivism, and that about which atomism and holism are in opposition. He notes rightly that social theory and social ontology will continue to encounter intellectual impasses if they fail to distinguish the 'vertical' and 'horizontal' issues in social ontology. For an instructive discussion of these matters, see Pettit 1996: 111-16.

about which ‘singularism’ (Gilbert 1989: 12<sup>2</sup>) and ‘corporatism’ (i.e., the irreducibility or at least explanatory indispensability of corporate persons or corporate agency) are in dispute. It is clear that the emergence of analytic social ontology since the late 1980s – in particular, the literature concerning collective intentionality phenomena and how to analyze them satisfactorily – has tended overwhelmingly to focus on the philosophical issues and problems within this third dimension of social ontology.<sup>3</sup>

I have briefly canvassed these three dimensions of social ontology in order to situate and set the stage for the main task of this paper: namely, to consider how Martin Heidegger’s early philosophy (from his so-called ‘phenomenological decade’ in the 1920s) can possibly contribute to our understanding of social reality as a specific branch of social ontology, broadly construed. At the most general level of this paper, I will argue that early Heidegger’s conception of human social existence and reality delivers philosophical insights that pertain not just to the above mentioned second and third dimensions of social ontology, but also show how there is a tight connection between these two dimensions. Now, the suggestion that Heidegger of all people can make a contribution to social ontology, especially analytic social ontology, might strike most readers who tend to move within conventional philosophical circles as very unlikely if not downright perverse.<sup>4</sup> This is by no means an unreasonable assumption. For it is not obvious at first glance how early Heidegger’s philosophy can make any positive contribution to our

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<sup>2</sup> According to Gilbert, who may be the first in analytic social ontology to coin this term, ‘*singularism* is the thesis that [collectivity] concepts are explicable solely in terms of the conceptual scheme of singular agency’ (*ibid.*, emphasis in the original).

<sup>3</sup> The main philosophers who inaugurated, and whose ongoing work continue to sustain, the burgeoning interest in analytic social ontology are Gilbert (1989; 1996; 2000; 2003), Searle (1990; 1995), Tuomela ([with Miller] 1988; 1995; 2002; 2003; 2007), Pettit (1996; 2002; 2003), and Bratman (1999: Part II). I note here in this footnote only their most influential earlier contributions to this particular literature.

<sup>4</sup> For a rare and notable exception, see the work of Schmid (2005: Ch. iv; 2009: Ch. 9). To some extent, this paper engages in an indirect dialogue with Schmid’s interpretation and appropriation of early Heidegger’s philosophy for purposes of social ontology. Despite our apparent disagreements about a number of interpretive and philosophical issues, I am grateful to Schmid for stimulating discussions about them, as well as for pointing out to me in particular the significance of Heidegger’s 1928/29 lecture course, *Einleitung in die Philosophie* (Heidegger 1996), as an important resource for understanding Heidegger on social ontology.

understanding of social reality, even when one is generally sympathetic to the motivations and way of thinking of ‘continental’ philosophy, much less from the perspective of analytic philosophy. Nevertheless, the chief aim of this paper is to show how we can interpret and appropriate his early philosophy in order to better understand some key aspects of the basic character and structure of social reality. In an effort to bring early Heidegger’s conception of the social and analytic social ontology into dialogue, I will juxtapose his existential-phenomenological approach to the social with the set of guiding assumptions that influential analytic social ontologists such as Gilbert, Searle, and Tuomela (among others) typically take for granted. I will suggest at the end of the paper that these analytic social ontologists are not so much wrong, as far as they go, though I do think that some of their main arguments are unsound even on their own terms.<sup>5</sup> Rather, analytic social ontology is flawed in my view because its proponents are under the illusion that they are giving us an adequate conceptual apparatus for understanding and explaining the fundamental nature of social reality, rather than, to be sure, just one important dimension of it as this is circumscribed by singularism and corporatism. What is at stake is this: Whereas analytic social ontologists are primarily concerned with the *process* or *mechanism* by means of which interacting individuals can *construct* social or collective entities (collective beliefs, intentions, actions, agents, institutions, etc.), early Heidegger’s crucial move emphasizes the conditions under which all entities, including social and collective ones, can *make sense at all*. When properly understood, this move has significant consequences by shifting the basic orientation according to which we should carry out investigations of social reality: Instead of beginning by specifying the conditions of adequacy for the *construction* of social or collective entities, early Heidegger emphasizes that we should first consider the necessary

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<sup>5</sup> I argue for this elsewhere in ‘Problems of Circularity in Theories of Collective Intentionality’.

conditions of the *intelligibility* (*Verständlichkeit*) of such entities at all, if we are to succeed eventually in grasping the fundamental aspects and structures of social reality.<sup>6</sup>

This paper is organized as follows. In section 2, I first highlight three basic assumptions that analytic social ontologists like Gilbert, Searle, and Tuomela take for granted. I then briefly elaborate Tuomela's account of social practices and its consequences for understanding social norms and social institutions. In section 3, I lay out my interpretation of early Heidegger's conception of being-with (*Mitsein*) and the 'anyone' (*das Man*) in *Sein und Zeit*<sup>7</sup> (*Being and Time*), with the aim of showing why he is justified to hold that human existence is constitutively being-with-others in a common world. This interpretation shows where early Heidegger stands with regard to the second 'horizontal' dimension of social ontology. Not surprisingly, the result is that he strongly rejects atomism and endorses a distinctive version of holism. Section 4 is a brief excursus that addresses or at least defuses a familiar set of criticisms against the evaluatively neutral interpretation that I give to early Heidegger's conception of the 'anyone'. This must be done in order to fend off an understandable objection against such an interpretation, which, if left unaddressed, would obstruct the further consideration of what social-ontological consequences can follow from this interpretation. Finally in section 5, I consider how this position can intervene in and make a contribution to the debate between singularism and corporatism in the third dimension of social ontology. Although it seems clear enough that he

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<sup>6</sup> I will explain the sense in which analytic social ontologists provide constructionist accounts of social or collective entities in the next section.

<sup>7</sup> All page references in this paper will henceforth be to this work as 'SZ'. The English translation by Macquarrie and Robinson of this text (Heidegger 1962) provides the German pagination on its margins. Note, however, that all translations of *Sein und Zeit* into English in this paper will be my own, not those of Macquarrie and Robinson. In this paper Heidegger's concept of *das Man* will be rendered in English as the 'anyone', which works fairly well as a translation but fails unfortunately to capture the undertone of *prescription* expressed by many (though not all) uses of 'man' in German (e.g., 'Das macht man nicht in der Öffentlichkeit' ['One doesn't (shouldn't) do that in public']). But 'anyone' is slightly preferable for linguistically disambiguating reasons since there will be places in the paper where I use 'one' in its ordinary sense in English, not in the distinctive, loaded sense that Heidegger expresses in his uses of 'das Man' in *Sein und Zeit*. I also prefer not to capitalize 'anyone' in order to avoid any suggestion that it is some sort of reified, self-contained entity that exists over and above or apart from individual human beings.

would reject orthodox singularism and thus become a potential ally of most analytic social ontologists in this particular respect, it is more interesting and instructive to understand how he can accomplish this in a considerably different way than how analytic social ontologists typically argue against singularism and thereby make room for corporatism. I conclude with a few brief remarks about some further consequences of this application of early Heidegger's insights regarding human social existence for the scope of contemporary social ontology.

## 2 Non-summative Constructionism about the Nature of Social Reality

Despite their various specific disagreements, analytic social ontologists such as Gilbert, Searle, Tuomela (and others) are united to the extent that they hold what can be characterized as *non-summative constructionism* regarding the nature and basic features of social reality. That is, they typically argue that: (1) there is a large set of social phenomena (including collective and institutional ones) that cannot be reductively explained in terms of the mere summations (aggregations) of the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of single individuals; (2) the irreducible presence and efficacy of collective intentionality is what constitutes such phenomena as social or collective in the non-summative sense; and (3), at least in the case of Gilbert and Tuomela (but not Searle), we can account for the nature of collective intentionality in terms of some independent conceptual apparatus that shows how collective intentionality is actualized by being constructed (built up) and then non-summatively maintained through interacting individuals, without either reduction to methodological individualism or commitment to metaphysically dubious notions like group minds. Let us call (1) the *non-summativism* thesis, (2) the *irreducibility of collective intentionality* thesis, and (3) the *constructionism* thesis. (I should note

in passing here that one fairly substantive difference between Gilbert and Tuomela, on the one hand, and Searle, on the other, concerns *what* gets constructed and non-summatively maintained: Gilbert and Tuomela holds that this is collective intentionality as such, whereas Searle treats the notion of collective intentionality as explanatorily primitive and uses it instead, plus other elements like the collective assignment of status functions, constitutive rules, and the Background, to construct institutional reality.)

Tuomela's version of non-summative constructionism is probably the most detailed and sophisticated account of certain basic features of social reality on offer. I want to consider how he analyzes three such features according to his theory (as elaborated in his 2002; but cf. also 2007): namely, social practices, social norms, and social institutions. His analysis of social practices takes pride of place because it is the crucial *conditio sine qua non* for his subsequent analyses of social norms and social institutions. He defines what he calls 'proper' or 'core' social practices as repeated collective social actions performed for a shared social reason.<sup>8</sup> There are four components in this definition of social practices: (i) most evidently, they are actions that must be repeatedly performed; (ii) they are collective actions in the sense that they are performed by multiple individuals; (iii) they are social actions in the sense that their performances take into account what other individuals think and do; and finally (iv) they are actions performed for a shared social reason in the sense that this reason displays possession of shared we-attitudes by these individuals.<sup>9</sup> Individual agents possess we-attitudes in and as a group just in case they share intentions, goals, beliefs, etc., in the sense that each individual who shares them not only holds an attitude A, but believes that others in the group also holds attitude A, and believes that others in the group know that each individual in this group holds the attitude A, and so on. In short,

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<sup>8</sup> Tuomela 2002: Ch. 4.

<sup>9</sup> Interestingly, Tuomela notes that we-attitudes can be shared in turn in the I-mode or the we-mode (*ibid.*: Ch. 2).

shared we-attitudes consist in particular individuals holding an attitude, believing that others hold this attitude, and lastly believing that there is mutual belief among these relevant others concerning this attitude.<sup>10</sup> For Tuomela, collective intentionality consists in *collective intentions plus mutual beliefs*. What is noteworthy for our purposes is that it is the creation and maintenance of shared we-attitudes that initially *generates* collective intentionality. Collective intentionality, or shared we-attitudes, result thus from individuals' interactions that are analyzable in terms of a certain sort of *constructive procedure* on the part of the individuals in question. To summarize, social practices on Tuomela's view consist in the performance of collective social actions plus the possession of shared we-attitudes.

Now, what is the difference between an aggregation of individual intentions and actions and those jointly performed actions that display collective or, more precisely, shared intentionality on Tuomela's view? It consists in the satisfaction of two further conditions: the so-called Collectivity Condition and that of collective commitment. It is best to illustrate these by means of a concrete example. What separates a group of disparate individuals dancing on a dance floor from a dance troop performing, *ex hypothesi*, the very same dance movements (cf. a random dance mob vs. a 'flash mob')? Obviously, it is that the intentions and performances of the members of the dance troop are coordinated *from a group's perspective*, i.e., from the perspective of a corporate agent (thereby satisfying the Collectivity Condition); moreover, each member in this group has *some specific role or function to play over time* in the coordinated

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<sup>10</sup> In other words, shared we-attitudes satisfy the condition of 'common knowledge'. The concept of common knowledge is a technical term and refers to the epistemic situation of individuals in relation to each other's intentional attitudes. Its generic definition is as follows: For any two agents *A* and *B*, there exists common knowledge that *p* among *A* and *B* if and only if *A* knows that *p*, *B* knows that *p*, *A* knows that *B* knows that *p*, *B* knows that *A* knows that *p*, and so on. It is easy enough to see how this definition can be iteratively applied to more than two individuals; see Gilbert 1996: 36n4.



execution of some array of activities (thereby displaying their collective commitment to performing this array of activities over time from the corporate agent's perspective).

So much for a quick sketch of Tuomela's conception of social practices. Given his tendency to theorize in 'building-block' terms (at least until recently<sup>11</sup>), it is not so difficult at this point to envisage what his conception of social norms and social institutions look like. In his vocabulary, 'proper' social norms, as opposed to authority-based social norms, are defined as mutual normative behavior expectations that apply either in a society-wide or group-specific manner.<sup>12</sup> Tuomela notes plausibly that many of these are just learned in the course of our upbringing and become habitual; he also rightly notes that they are often not codified or even verbalized.<sup>13</sup> Regarding the creation and maintenance of social institutions, these have several basic forms and are constructed on the basis of combining social practices, social norms (in Tuomela's sense), and the collective acceptance and maintenance by multiple individuals of the combination of these practices and norms (*'collective acceptance basically is coming to hold and holding a relevant we-attitude'*<sup>14</sup>). To summarize, what constitutes a social institution, in the sense of what set of elements are required in order to construct and maintain it, is the continual performance of norm-governed social practices that satisfies the Collectivity Condition with collective commitment.

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<sup>11</sup> It seems that Tuomela's view has become more anti-reductionist with age. One of his earliest papers on the nature of collective intentionality (Tuomela and Miller 1988) is clearly reductive in spirit; and he does not hesitate to use 'building block' talk by asserting in his 2002 that, 'We-attitudes of these kinds [i.e., we-intentions and we-beliefs] are the underlying building blocks of social practices, and they are also causally relevant to the initiation and maintenance of both social practices and social institutions.' (2002: 3) By his 2007, however, he writes that 'the elements in my analysis [of collective intentionality] are not independently existing "building blocks" of joint intentions but are only analytically isolated parts that presuppose the whole of which they are parts' (2007: 97).

<sup>12</sup> Tuomela 2002: 165.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*: 127, emphasis in the original.

### 3 Early Heidegger on the Social Constitution of the Human Individual

Although I have only scratched the surface of Tuomela's intricate account of social reality, I hope to have conveyed the *constructionist* spirit of some of its key elements and how they are meant to work together. Before elaborating Heidegger's conception of the social, one can already raise two reservations about this account. (1) As Tuomela himself concedes in places in his more recent writings, his account of collective intentionality and social practices are given from the *theorist's* perspective, with her particular explanatory assumptions and interests.<sup>15</sup> But then it seems that Tuomela's account of social or collective phenomena is of rather limited interest, for it is conceived and articulated, and judged to be satisfactory, solely from the perspective of the theorist given her assumptions and explanatory interests. As such, then, it does not aim to focus on aspects that actually motivate and guide how human beings think about and realize their sociality from within the purview of their own self-understanding. One wonders, therefore, whether this account is (as the later Wittgenstein puts it) like a revving engine that is idling.<sup>16</sup> (2) More importantly, although a constructive approach like Tuomela's shows nicely how mid-level macro entities and their properties can be built up from micro ones, it tacitly assumes that we already in some tacit sense understand how these elements *hang together as a package*. To put this in more Heideggerian terms (which I will explicate below), his account is intelligible and explanatory precisely because it takes for granted a *prior background familiarity* with other basic aspects or structures of human sociality. That is, his analysis of social practices already helps itself to our *prior disclosure (vorgängige Erschlossenheit) and hence understanding of the*

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. the quotation cited above from Tuomela's more recent work (2007: 97) that disavows the need for reduction in adequately explaining collective intentionality phenomena.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Wittgenstein 2009: §132.

*contexts* in which the various aspects or components that he analyzes fit together as a coherent whole.

This is the juncture at which early Heidegger's conception of being-in-the-world in general, and of *being-with* (*Mitsein*) and the *anyone* (*das Man*) as enabling constraints of the human being's distinctive way of existing in particular, can effect the basic shift in orientation from specifying the conditions of adequacy of the *construction* of social or collective entities to revealing the necessary conditions of the *intelligibility* of social and collective entities in general. Consequently, those who appropriate early Heidegger's thinking here should show how the conditions of the intelligibility of social and collective entities are *prior* in the order of understanding to their conditions of construction. This shift in orientation turns on supporting the extended argument that I see early Heidegger as making in *Sein und Zeit*, which aims to show how human beings always already (i.e., constitutively, intrinsically) coexist with others in a common world. Although some interpretation of *Sein und Zeit* will be unavoidable in what follows in this section, I do so with the sole aim of working out the argument for the social constitution of the individual that I discern as present in that text.

To begin with, Heidegger leaves no doubt in his view that the fundamental way in which the human being (Dasein) exists – i.e., understands things and acts in the world – always already presupposes or involves *being-with-others in a common world* in a distinctive sense:

The phenomenological assertion that Dasein is essentially being-with [*Mitsein*] has an existential-ontological import. It does not aim to establish ontically that I am not factually alone in a present-at-hand [*vorhanden*] way, or even that others with my mode of being occur. ... *Being-with determines Dasein existentially even when another [Dasein] is not factually present-at-hand and perceived.* Even the aloneness of Dasein is being-with in the world. ... Thus, being-with and the facticity of being-with-others [*Miteinanderseins*] is not grounded in a co-occurrence of several 'subjects'.... *Being-with is a characteristic of one's own Dasein in each case [Mitsein ist eine Bestimmtheit des je eigenen Daseins].* (SZ 120f., emphases added)

This rather dense passage makes the following strong and initially counterintuitive assertion: The most basic way in which any human individual is social (i.e., coexists with others) does not

depend on the factual presence of, much less interactions with, other people in that individual's activities. Rather, the fundamentally social dimension of human existence is *constitutive* of (i.e., has an 'existential-ontological' status or import concerning) his or her very capacity to be an individual at all, regardless of whether others are present with whom an individual can possibly interact or go on to construct social or collective entities. This assertion pertains thus to the *social constitution* of the individual as such, not just to the different ways in which she can coexist factually with other people. It pertains, therefore, to the above mentioned second dimension in social ontology; furthermore, it endorses holism (in Pettit's sense) by insisting that our intrinsic (i.e., non-factual) coexistence with and relatedness to others is a necessary condition of being an individual agent at all ('Being-with is a characteristic of one's own Dasein in each case' [SZ 121]). How can this strong claim be made intelligible and justified?

As I interpret it, the argument for it can be summarized in the following steps:

1. Being a human individual presupposes understanding the world always *in terms of some referential nexus of significance (Verweisungszusammenhang der Bedeutsamkeit)*.
  2. Understanding the world as such a context is required for understanding how people (including we ourselves) *make sense in terms of what people do*.
  3. Making sense of what people do requires understanding ('disclosing') the *situational possibilities* that are intelligible to them in their engagements with entities and with one another.
  4. The *intelligibility* of situational possibilities, and hence the intelligibility of people and the entities that people understand, is *normatively constrained*.
  5. The normative intelligibility of situational possibilities is *socially constituted* because this intelligibility *conditions the understanding and activities of a multitude of people* (including our own) as individual and collective agents.
  6. An individual cannot help but draw on this intelligibility in understanding ('disclosing') the *typical* range and types of actions that he or she can perform in a situation. More strongly put, neither an individual's activities, nor his or her interpersonal interactions, can spontaneously generate this intelligibility, for such activities and interactions *presuppose* the prior understanding of this intelligibility in order for such activities and interactions to make sense and hence be possible at all.
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7. Therefore, an individual is socially constituted because the *normative intelligibility of situational possibilities* that enables the exercise of his or her capacity to be an individual at all is *itself socially constituted*.

The conjunction of 1, 2, and 3 shows that it is a fundamental mistake to understand human sociality apart from the distinctive way in which the human individual exists in the world in general, for such an understanding always presupposes our prior familiarity with the world as its starting point. The conjunction of 4, 5, and 6 argues that the human individual can only be a self or agent by drawing necessarily on the sort of shared public understanding of the practices, norms, and roles that enables her to be a self or agent at all.<sup>17</sup> When these two intermediate conclusions are combined into a single line of argument, its overall conclusion is that the human individual is necessarily socially constituted *by sharing a common world with others, in the sense of sharing a public understanding of the norms, practices, and roles that others also understand in their lived experience and activities*. This distinctive way of coexisting with others is a necessary enabling condition of any human individual's ability to be a self and agent at all. And these commitments show how early Heidegger is a thoroughgoing *holist* as far as the second 'horizontal' dimension in social ontology is concerned.

For want of space, I must quickly explicate (1)-(3) and then focus our attention on (4), (5), and (6). To begin with, it is undeniable that the world that we engage in our lived experience – the world in its *worldliness* (*Weltlichkeit* [SZ 65ff.]) – is fundamentally a *space of intelligibility* in which entities and, more generally, the phenomena through which entities show themselves,

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<sup>17</sup> Although Heidegger does not speak explicitly of *roles* in *Sein und Zeit*, it is fairly clear that he thinks other people typically show up and make sense in terms of what they do ('[*die Anderen*] sind *das, was sie betreiben* [SZ 126]), insofar as they occupy and enact public roles of which others can also make sense in accordance with the normalized intelligibility that the 'anyone' supplies and maintains (SZ 127). For example, others show up at work (SZ 120) as craftsmen, the producers or deliverers of products or services, bookshop keepers, sailors (SZ 117f.), commuters of public transportation, or newspaper readers (SZ 126). In the 1925 lecture course that is published as *History of the Concept of Time*, which served as the penultimate draft of *Sein und Zeit*, Heidegger writes: 'One [*Man*] is what one [*man*] does. The everyday interpretation of Dasein takes its horizon of interpretation and naming from what is of concern in each particular instance. One [*Man*] is a shoemaker, tailor, teacher, banker.' (Heidegger 1992: 244, emphases in the German original). These are just a few examples of the average everyday way in which Dasein unthematically falls into or else assigns itself an unexceptional range of 'for-the-sake-of-whichs' (*Worum-willen* [SZ 84]). It ought to be generally speaking uncontroversial to understand and accept, as a simple matter of observation and brief reflection on how we encounter others in everyday life, that they and we ourselves primarily and mostly (*zunächst und zumeist*) show up and make sense in terms of the roles or positions that they and we each occupy and enact. I will elaborate this more below.

make sense. This space has the following basic constituents and structure: (1) a set of entities that show up as ‘ready-to-hand’ (*zuhandene*) equipment, each of which is used for performing some specific task; (2) more encompassing short-term and medium-term goals which are accomplished by the execution of these tasks; and (3) the self-interpretations for the sake of which (*Worum-willen* [SZ 84, 86, 123]) individual human beings make sense of who they are and thereupon seek to actualize themselves in some contexts by engaging in certain activities that accomplish certain short-term and medium-term goals within those contexts. What is significant is not so much that we exhibit a primarily practical orientation toward the world, which is obviously true, but that this orientation presupposes that the world is *already minimally understood as a whole* in terms of these three structural components. Thus, in order to know, e.g., what a store, a product, a customer or store employee, buying and selling practices, and so on are, we must be already familiar with how each of these items relate to one another and play the particular roles that they do within some practically significant complex. When we understand the world as exhibiting this practical intelligibility, this shows that the world that concerns us in lived experience makes sense as a *referential nexus of significance* (*Verweisungszusammenhang der Bedeutsamkeit* [SZ §18]), i.e., an interrelated complex of equipment, tasks, short- and longer-term goals and ends, all of which in turn relate to and thereby make sense for the sake of enacting some ongoing self-interpretations on our part. Not only this: This understanding of the world also enables us at the same time to have a working sense of how *other people* make sense in terms of how they fit and act within a referential nexus of significance, i.e., how they *show up* as what they *do* (SZ 126; cf. Heidegger 1992: 240, 244).

In being-with as the existential for-the-sake-of-others [*dem existenzialen Worumwillen Anderer*], others are already disclosed in their Dasein. This disclosedness of others, which is constituted in advance [*vorgängig*] with being-with, accordingly also co-constitutes significance, i.e., worldliness, as that which is put into place [*festgemacht*] by the existential for-the-sake-of-which. The worldliness of the world that is so constituted, in which Dasein essentially in each case already is, lets thus ready-to-hand entities show up in

an intraworldly way such that the co-Dasein of others show up together with ready-to-hand entities as circumspectively concerned [entities]. [*Daher lässt die so konstituierte Weltlichkeit der Welt, in der das Dasein wesenhaft je schon ist, das umweltlich Zuhandene so begegnen, dass in eins mit ihm als umsichtig Besorgtem das Mitdasein Anderer begegnet*]. (SZ 123)

Lastly, it should be obvious that the basic character or way of being of entities that make sense in terms of their belongingness to some referential nexus of significance is, in the first instance, their *practical holism*.

Next, in understanding the world in its worldliness, what an individual understands – i.e., *projectively discloses (entwerfend erschliesst)* – in a particular situation is the *range of possible actions* that make sense to her to conceive and carry out, given her involvement in a particular referential nexus of significance (world). An individual's familiarity with this range conditions the intelligibility of what she understands and does in a particular situation. The projective disclosure of this range need not be something of which individuals are consciously aware. To use the example of shopping again, my self-interpretation as a shopper in a store projects the typical range of possible actions available for me to conceive and perform in that setting (e.g., browse or buy things, get information from or make requests of a salesperson, get a refund for a prior purchase of something, etc.). My familiarity with some typical range of possible actions constitutes, therefore, my *situational leeway or room for maneuver (Spielraum [SZ 145])*, i.e., the concrete field of possible experiences and actions that make sense to me on that occasion.<sup>18</sup> My understanding of some situational room for maneuver is what enables me to find my activities in some context intelligible by precisely opening up the relevant range of possible actions that I can conceive and perform therein; this grasp of a situational room for maneuver also constrains such actions by closing off other ones as not sensible on that occasion (e.g.,

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<sup>18</sup> Dreyfus 1991: 189-91. Understanding 'projects the being of Dasein on the basis of its for-the-sake-of-which [i.e., its self-interpretations] just as primordially as on the basis of significance *qua* the worldliness of its current world. ... Projection is the existential ontological makeup of the room for maneuver [*Spielraum*] of [Dasein's] factual ability-to-be.' (SZ 145)

actually living in the store as my home, etc.). In short, the projective disclosure of some determinate situational room for maneuver for an individual is prior, not temporally speaking but in the order of understanding, to her actual performance of a particular action. It is the necessary condition of the intelligibility of this performance.

So much for my quick explication of claims (1)-(3). Now, a pressing question can arise at this juncture. Suppose it is true that being an individual agent requires an understanding of the world as a practical holistic context; that is, suppose that this understanding necessarily involves the projective disclosure of situational possibilities (situational rooms for maneuver) that enables an individual agent to make sense of her world in lived experience, including herself and other people in her world. It remains as yet unclear, however, why these points amount to the *social constitution* of the individual, rather than just the distinctive way in which a human individual engages with the world.

In response, it should be noted that my discussion of the projective-disclosive character of understanding above has focused solely for analytical purposes on what must be involved in the *activity* of understanding the world, i.e., *how* we engage with the world, without paying sufficient attention to *what* it is we engage with in this understanding. But what an individual understands in her engagement with the world cannot be ignored in the final analysis. On my interpretation, one of the main, but also often overlooked, aims of Heidegger's discussion of the significance of the *anyone*<sup>19</sup> (*das Man* [SZ §27]) addresses this important issue.

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<sup>19</sup> In what follows, whenever I italicize 'anyone', I am using it in Heidegger's loaded use of this word that also expresses prescriptive undertones. When I do not italicize it, I am using it as this is standardly done in English. My interpretation of Heidegger's conception of *das Man* has learned much from and builds upon (among others) the interpretations of Dreyfus 1991: Ch. 8 and 13; Boedeker 2001; Schatzki 1992 and 2005; Carman 2003: Ch. 3.



What is the *anyone*? To begin with, it specifies *who* we are primarily and mostly (*zunächst und zumeist*) in our everyday existence.<sup>20</sup> Who we are usually makes sense, as starting-points, in terms of the roles and self-interpretations, both mundane and significant, for the sakes of which we are what we do over time (e.g., commuter, customer, consumer, practitioner of a certain occupation, co-worker, partner, spouse, lover, parent, friend, etc.). But the *anyone* does not ultimately refer to any particular individual, group, or population of individuals, or even the sum of all individuals in a community or society (SZ 128f.). Indeed, the *anyone* does not refer to any entity (*Seiendes*) at all, but more generally highlights the mostly inconspicuous but pervasive *normative (in the first instance normalized) intelligibility of the world as a whole* that permeates the background against which human individuals initially and mostly understand anything and act. The claim is that the basic way in which we exist in the world is necessarily intelligible in terms of our grasp of and tacit conformity to the sociocultural norms that the *anyone* supplies. Despite the disparaging rhetoric that Heidegger uses to describe the superficial but insidious ‘dictatorship’ of the *anyone* over our everyday lives (SZ 126-8), it is a serious mistake to understand the *anyone* merely as his label for the factual tendency of human beings to desire and strive for social conformism. Rather, the *anyone*, or more precisely an individual’s being in the mode of the *anyone* as his or her predominant way of existing in the world, is an enabling aspect of human existence in general, not something that is optional for any human being.<sup>21</sup> We do well,

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<sup>20</sup> ‘The expression “everydayness” means ... a definite *how* of existence that predominates Dasein.... We have often used in the present analysis the expression “initially and mostly” [“*zunächst und zumeist*”]. “Initially” means: the way in which Dasein is “manifest” [i.e., shows up as making sense] in the with-one-another of publicness ... “Mostly” means: the way in which Dasein, not always but “as a rule”, shows him- or herself for anyone [Jedermann].’ (SZ 370)

<sup>21</sup> ‘The anyone is an existential and belongs as originary phenomenon to the positive makeup of Dasein.... Self-ownership [Das eigentliche Selbstsein] does not rest on an exceptional condition of the subject that is detached from the anyone, but is an existentiell modification of the anyone as one of its essential existentials.’ (SZ 129f., emphases in the German original) The ‘its’ at the end of the last sentence refers to human existence in general (Dasein or being-in-the-world), not to the *anyone*. As Heidegger also writes in his discussion of the existential of ‘falling’ (*Verfallen*): ‘What matters in falling concerns nothing else than the ability-to-be-in-the-world [*In-der-Welt-sein-*

therefore, to distinguish carefully between the factual tendency of human beings (for better or worse) to pursue social conformism and their structural conformity to the *anyone* as one of the conditions of the possibility of their very way of being in the world.<sup>22</sup>

What does an individual's understanding of the normative intelligibility that informs her familiarity with the world have to do with her ability to share a common world with others, and thereby how she is fundamentally socially constituted? This turns on the *public* (*öffentliche*) character of norms in two senses. First and more familiarly, it is always a *multitude* of people who find norms intelligible; the contents of such norms are impersonal in the sense that they are not initially and mostly the unique inventions or exclusive possessions of particular individuals. Rather, they can be understood by *anyone* who is familiar with them on the basis of his or her sociocultural heritage (SZ 126f.). Second and more importantly, the public character of the *anyone* expresses the *normativity* – in the first instance, the *normalization* – that is involved in our dealings with entities in the world, including ourselves and other people.<sup>23</sup> Heidegger chooses the term '*das Man*' to capture the *impersonal and normative (normalized)* aspects of our everyday existence in general. It should be clear how roles and self-interpretations are normalized. The adoption by or ascription to an individual of a role or self-interpretation straightforwardly implies that he or she is supposed to act in certain normal or acceptable ways tied to that role or self-interpretation. Not just this: it also normalizes (or standardizes) the entire referential nexus of significance that makes intelligible the role or self-interpretation in question.

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*können*], even when in the mode of undistinguishedness/unownedness [*Indifferenz/Uneigentlichkeit*]. Dasein can only fall, *because* what is at issue for it is its understanding-affective [*verstehend-befindliche*] being-in-the-world. Conversely, *owned* [*eigentliche*] existence is not anything that hovers above falling everydayness, but existentially only a modified seizure [*Ergreifen*] of the latter. ... Falling reveals an *essential* ontological structure of Dasein itself ...' (SZ 179, all emphases in the original; cf. SZ 383) I will explain the subtle distinction between 'undistinguishedness' (*Indifferenz*) and 'unownedness' (*Uneigentlichkeit*), both at the levels of textual interpretation and philosophical significance, in the next section.

<sup>22</sup> Dreyfus 1991: Ch. 8 and 13.

<sup>23</sup> I note in passing here that normativity and normalization are related but distinct phenomena. I examine their relationship at length in Koo 2011: Ch. 5.

To generalize, we take for granted without self-consciousness in our lived experience, as our ‘default’ way of dealing with entities in the world, that there are *normal* ways for entities, including people, to be what and how they are. The normativity in play is mostly inconspicuous unless there is some type of breakdown or violation of the way things or people are supposed to be (i.e., behave or act). It is thus important to understand that the normativity that entities exhibit is not primarily instrumental, prudential, or morally prescriptive, but figures as a constitutive aspect of their very *intelligibility*. What is crucial to understand is that any individual must already draw on the normative intelligibility of the world if she is to make sense of things by projectively disclosing the typical situational room for maneuver, regardless of whether an individual in fact conforms to some norm or not on some particular occasion.

When human individuals take over roles and self-interpretations in this manner, they interpret themselves and act on the basis of the public norms that are supplied by the *anyone*. When they do so, they understand themselves as *anyone*-selves (*Man-selbst*), i.e., as what *anyone is supposed to do* on given occasions, once they adopt or simply fall into the occupation of roles and self-interpretations (for-the-sakes-of-which) that are public in the sense explicated above (SZ 129f.). In everyday life, we primarily and mostly exist as *anyone*-selves. Understanding oneself and acting primarily and mostly in accordance with the normative intelligibility that the *anyone* supplies is what ensures that individuals by and large share a *common world* (*Mitwelt* [SZ 117-23; cf. 176, 179]): a *common starting-point or frame of reference* – a *common way of knowing one’s way around in the world* – in relation to which both agreements and disagreements can determinately emerge.<sup>24</sup> As Heidegger writes in a passage tracing back to a now published lecture course that served for him effectively as a first draft of the first part of *Sein und Zeit*:

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<sup>24</sup> Cf. Wittgenstein 2009: §§241-2.

The *anyone* as that which forms the everyday being-with-one-another ... constitutes what we call *the public* in the strict sense of the word. It implies that the world is always already primarily given as the common world. It is not the case that on the one hand there are first individual subjects which at any given time have their own world; and that the task would then arise of putting together, by virtue of some sort of an arrangement, the various particular worlds of the individuals and of agreeing how one would have a common world. This is how philosophers imagine these things when they ask about the constitution of the intersubjective world. We say instead that the first thing that is given is the common world – the *anyone* – the world in which Dasein is absorbed....<sup>25</sup>

Lest there is any misunderstanding, the necessity of our structural conformity to the norms supplied by the *anyone* does not at all imply that individuals can never act in ways that violate such norms. But in order for this non-conformity itself to be significant, it must occur against the background of some ongoing understanding of what the normal or acceptable way of understanding things and acting are in given situations, even if individuals reject this understanding in the end. Indeed, conformity to the normative intelligibility of the *anyone* does not preclude, but actually makes possible and significant, the standing potential for resistance to and rejection of the normalization of phenomena that is maintained by our immersion in the *anyone*.

We are now finally in the position to understand the social constitution of the human individual. Because such an individual understands the everyday world in lived experience as *anyone*-self, she cannot help but initially and mostly projectively disclose situational possibilities of experience and action that are public, as this occurs by and large in accordance with the normative (normalized) intelligibility that the *anyone* supplies. Her predominant existence in the mode of the *anyone*, which both enables but also constrains her ability to be a situated concrete agent at all, is the fundamental way in which the human individual is socially constituted, i.e., being-with-others in a common world. For such an individual cannot help but draw on the normative intelligibility informing the general significance of the world that the *anyone* provides

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<sup>25</sup> Heidegger 1992: 246, emphasis in the original. It is noteworthy that Heidegger's elaboration of the phenomenon of *publicness* (*Öffentlichkeit*) in this lecture course, as well as in a later one (Heidegger 1996), both of which serve, as it were, as the historical 'bookends' of *Sein und Zeit*, are significantly more positive, evaluatively speaking, than his elaboration of the same in *Sein und Zeit*.

in virtue of her familiarity with and general conformity to the public norms that the *anyone* makes available. No single individual can spontaneously generate and fully control the normative intelligibility that the *anyone* supplies, for this intelligibility already constrains the activities of a multitude of individuals by opening up and delimiting the possible roles or self-interpretations that these individuals can take up, an intelligibility that in turn structures how they deal with one another and non-human entities from occasion to occasion.<sup>26</sup> And it is this line of argument that actually *justifies* his claim that Dasein is always already being-with-others:

On the basis of this *communal* [my rendering of Heidegger's German neologism 'mithaften' – JJK] being-in-the-world, the world is in each case always already one that I share with others [*die ich mit Anderen teile*]. The world of Dasein is [the] *common world* [*Mitwelt*]. Being-in is *being-with* others [*Mitsein mit Anderen*]. The intraworldly being-in-itself of others is *co-Dasein* [*Mitdasein*]. (*Ibid.*, all emphases in the German original) (SZ 118).<sup>27</sup>

In more familiar terms, coexistence in a common world is just what is involved for individuals to be socialized into norms, practices, and traditions and then going on to live primarily and mostly by them. This socialization does not simply condition and affect how we interact with other people, but always presupposes an individual's socialization into a *world* that is *common*. The normative intelligibility that the *anyone* articulates, then, serves as the reservoir of possibilities that gives typical content to the self-interpretations that make sense to any human individual in her dealings with the world on some particular occasion. Although her activity of projectively disclosing situational possibilities is numerically distinct from those of others, the content (i.e., the range of possibilities and types of actions) that they each project contains wide-ranging commonalities insofar they understand themselves in the mode of the *anyone*. In sum, different individuals share a common world by initially and mostly projectively disclosing situational

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<sup>26</sup> It is in this precise sense that 'the *anyone*-self, for the sake for which Dasein is in everyday life, articulates the referential nexus of significance' (SZ 129).

<sup>27</sup> On my reading and reconstruction of his argument, he can only adequately support this strong claim by the end of his discussion in SZ §27 about the ambivalent significant of our everyday existence in the mode of the *anyone* in our lives.

possibilities that are common among them because such possibilities are normalized by their existence as *anyone*-selves. It is in this sense that we should understand how the human individual is fundamentally (constitutively) being-with-others in a common world.<sup>28</sup>

#### 4 Criticisms and Replies

It is important at this juncture to directly address an interpretive dispute, in a brief excursus with much at stake, about how we should understand and evaluate early Heidegger's conception of the *anyone*. This is an issue that has been hanging over the evaluatively neutral interpretation of the significance of the *anyone* in the previous section, especially for those who emphasize Heidegger's *existentialist* strain above all others in *Sein und Zeit*. Its presence is undeniable and comes extensively to the foreground in the first half of Division Two of this text. It is important to address it directly in order to make room for what I discern as early Heidegger's position regarding the third dimension of social ontology, for the persuasiveness of this position is closely connected with my construal of him as a holist regarding the second dimension in social ontology.

There exists a familiar and understandable set of objections against early Heidegger's conception of human social existence in *Sein und Zeit*.<sup>29</sup> In summary form, these are that this

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<sup>28</sup> I have chosen in this paper, for both practical and philosophical reasons, to omit any discussion of the connection between Heidegger's conception of human social existence and historicity (*Geschichtlichkeit*) in Ch. 5 of Division Two of *Sein und Zeit*. The practical reason is simply that doing so would have added to the already considerable length of this paper. The more important philosophical reason is my sense that Heidegger's very brief discussion of that connection especially in §74 is rather underdeveloped or else needs to be carefully interpreted in light of his conception of ownedness ('authenticity') as forerunning resoluteness, owned ('authentic') temporality, and owned ('authentic') historicity. We should thus be wary of thinking that we can easily understand what he means by 'destiny' (*Geschick*), which according to him is 'the happening of the community, of the people' (*das Geschehen der Gemeinschaft, des Volkes*) (SZ 384), or more generally any hint (for that is all there is) about what the nature of 'authentic community' can be (SZ 384f.). For instructive remarks about this issue, see especially Schatzki 1992: 90 and 2005: 242-44; and Richardson 2012: 191-97. Despite Heidegger's use of notorious and politically loaded language in §74, much more would need to be said in my view if the account on offer there is meant to be informative for social ontology. I leave it to the informed reader to determine whether my omission here is a mistake.

conception of human social existence, despite Heidegger's assertions to the contrary (SZ 118, 121, 125), seriously distorts the nature of this existence by still ultimately construing other people as ready-to-hand things, not *sui generis* beings with a special ontological and ethical standing who (should) encounter us in their genuine distinctiveness. This is alleged to be so because the Heideggerian conception of being-with renders other people significant only by way of their involvement in the projective understanding of a single individual. This supposedly monadic or monological conception of the individual is flawed because it fails to recognize and appreciate how genuine dialogue and engagement with other people can be the source of mutuality and solidarity, let alone of the ethical dimension of human coexistence. According to this reading of *Sein und Zeit*, early Heidegger's conception of human social existence, because of its *existentialism*, is blind to how other people can make a positive impact on the significance of an individual's existence. For it conceives human social existence as mostly shallow because it is oriented toward the attempt to conform to social pressures that cater to the banal whims and tastes of the masses. On this reading, in the face of this negative indictment of the value of human social existence, the Heideggerian view cannot help but be drawn to a Kierkegaardian conception of radical freedom as the attempt on the individual's part to detach herself as much as possible from her social environment in order to actualize her possibility of becoming an 'authentic' (*eigentliches*) individual.<sup>30</sup> As Rentsch puts it succinctly, 'The moment [i.e., dimension] of the interexistential constitution of a human world is not structurally examined in

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<sup>29</sup> See, e.g., Löwith 2013; Sartre 1956: 333-37, 534-56; Buber 2002: 193-215; Theunissen 1984: Part II, Ch. 5; Levinas 1969: esp. 22-52, 82-90 and 1996; Adorno 1973; Habermas 1987: 149-52 and 1992: 191; Rentsch 1999: §§11-2 and 2000; Olafson 1987: 70-4.

<sup>30</sup> Many critics of Heidegger also locate this negative view of the social as the root cause of Heidegger's official support of Nazism in the early to mid-1930s and, even worse, his reprehensible failure to take moral responsibility for this support after the war; see Habermas 1992. This is a charged and complicated issue that I cannot go into here.

Heidegger's description of the form of all human practice in terms of the existential [framework] of care.'<sup>31</sup>

Let us begin by making explicit some common ground that a defender of Heidegger's conception of the social shares with critics who make the objection in question. First, despite his repeated denials in the text (SZ 42f., 167, 175f.), it is certainly true that the *rhetoric* of Heidegger's discussion of the social cannot help but evince a disdain for human social existence, at least with regard to its impact on an individual's possibility of realizing his or her genuine individuality ('authenticity' [*Eigentlichkeit*]). Given that we exist predominantly in the mode of the *anyone*, his emphasis on our tendency to concern ourselves with how we measure up in comparison with others (the pressure and concern for social conformism, averageness, and 'leveling down', etc.) drips with contempt for the shallowness of ordinary human social existence (SZ §27). Furthermore, there can also be no doubt that he seriously underdevelops the positive aspects of this existence. In particular, he does not discuss ways of being-with-others, e.g., ways of coexisting with and caring for others (*Fürsorge*: e.g., the care of dependents like children, love, friendship, being an engaged citizen of a community, etc.) that need not be perniciously subject to the social pressures exerted by others. And even when he does explicitly discuss specific ways of caring for others, he does so in terms of two extreme ways that only matter from an existentialist perspective (SZ 122).<sup>32</sup> Lastly, given Heidegger's aim of articulating his 'fundamental ontology' (his analysis of human existence as being-in-the-world), he completely ignores the multifaceted ways in which macro-level social structures affect, for better

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<sup>31</sup> Rentsch 2000: 37, my translation.

<sup>32</sup> From this perspective, one can care for an individual by either 'leaping in' for her and thereby obscuring her possibility of coming to 'own' herself (the *einspringend-beherrschende Fürsorge*), or by 'leaping ahead of' that individual and thereby putting her in the position to achieve possible self-ownership (the *vorspringend-befreiende Fürsorge*).



or worse, the life conditions of the human individual, often in ways that systematically obstruct genuine human liberation and autonomy.<sup>33</sup>

These charges, if true, would be pretty damning. But even when one acknowledges that they are legitimate, it does not simply follow that early Heidegger's conception of the social in *Sein und Zeit* must be committed to a negative and distorted understanding of human social existence as such. Indeed, I think this conception is quite compatible with the criticisms mentioned above. On the interpretation presented below, this conception not only does not rule out any positive understanding of human social existence, but actually makes room for the latter, even if Heidegger himself chose not to examine this topic in his own philosophical project.

At the interpretive level, my strongest disagreement with critics who make the above-mentioned set of objections is that they too readily accept the common but simplistic reading of the early Heidegger as an *existentialist*, roughly in the vein of the early Sartre in *Being and Nothingness*.<sup>34</sup> While there is no doubt that one of the central themes of *Being and Time* concerns what it is involved in achieving self-ownership (*eigentliches Selbstsein*),<sup>35</sup> it is reductive to assume that this is *the* overarching theme in terms of which all other themes in *Being and Time* must be understood. But this is exactly what the critics in question assume without hesitation. On their reading, our absorption in the *anyone* cannot help but entail that human social existence is a mostly banal and negative state of affairs. By taking Heidegger's disparaging rhetoric about the impact of that mode of existence on the individual at face value, this existentialist reading of the text thereby closes off any positive contribution that our social existence could make to our personal and collective flourishing.

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<sup>33</sup> According to Habermas 1992, this is the major critique of Heidegger that critical theorists like Lukacs, Adorno, Marcuse, and Habermas himself make of Heidegger.

<sup>34</sup> Here I have benefited from Carman's lucid and instructive discussion of this issue; see Carman 2003: Ch. 6.

<sup>35</sup> This is often misleadingly translated into English (and French) as 'authenticity'. Boedeker gives a convincing argument for why 'self-ownership' is the better translation; see his 2001: 96n35.

Admittedly, the fact that this is a common reading of *Sein und Zeit* is to a large extent Heidegger's own fault. The problem is that he often writes as if an individual can only relate to the sociality of his existence in terms of a mutually exclusive difference, namely, that between 'unownedness' (*Uneigentlichkeit*) and 'ownedness' (*Eigentlichkeit*). Here are two prominent examples:

The self of everyday Dasein is the *anyone-self* [*Man-selbst*], which we distinguish from the *owned self*, i.e., from the self that takes hold of itself as its own [*eigens ergriffenen*]. As the *anyone-self*, Dasein is in each case *dispersed* into the *anyone* and must then [*erst*] find itself. (SZ 129)

Later on in *Sein und Zeit* he characterizes the everyday self in terms of the idea of the necessity but also the negative impact of its 'falling' (*Verfallen*) into the world:

[The term 'falling'], which does not express any negative evaluation, signifies that Dasein is initially and mostly *in the midst* [*bei*] of the world that concerns it. This 'absorption in ...' [*Aufgehen bei ...*] has mostly the character of being lost in the publicness of the *anyone*. Dasein, as an ability-to-be-a-self [*Selbstseinkönnen*] that can own itself, has initially always already fallen away from itself and fallen into the world. This fallenness into the world signifies our absorption in being-with-one-another, insofar as this is guided by anonymous talk [*Gerede*], curiosity, and ambiguity. (SZ 175)

The rhetoric in these passages expresses a stark distinction that clearly valorizes one of its poles (ownedness) to the detriment of the other (unownedness). Without entering into great details, the suggestion is that being an unowned, fallen self is not just something bad, but fails to live up to what any self can be, namely, an entity for whom, in its very being, its own being is a standing issue; in so doing, it does not 'own' its particular way of existing by taking responsibility for it (*Jemeinigkeit*). The existentialist reading understandably feeds off the Kierkegaardian pathos of these remarks and cannot help but deem any entanglements with others (*das Man*) as impediments to one's possibility of achieving genuine individual freedom.

But this reading unjustifiably ignores Heidegger's assertions at important junctures in *Sein und Zeit* that there are actually *three* basic modes of human existence, not just two. In addition to ownedness and unownedness, there is also the 'modally undistinguished' or

*evaluatively neutral* way in which an individual exists. Heidegger characterizes this mode of existence as the *undistinguishedness* (*Indifferenz*) of everyday life:

Dasein should be interpreted at the outset of the analysis precisely not in [terms of] the difference of a determinate way of existing, but uncovered in its undistinguished ‘primarily and mostly’ [*in seinem indifferenten Zunächst und Zumeist*]. This undistinguishedness of everydayness [*Indifferenz der Alltäglichkeit*] of Dasein is *not nothing*, but a positive phenomenal character of this entity. All existing [of Dasein], as how it is, emerges from this mode of being and returns back to it [*Aus dieser Seinsart heraus und in sie zurück ist alles Existierens, wie es ist*]. We call this everyday undistinguishedness of Dasein ‘*averageness*’ [*diese alltägliche Indifferenz des Daseins Durchschnittlichkeit*]. (SZ 43, emphases in the German original; cf. 12)

‘*Indifferenz*’ (along with its cognates) is more perspicuously translated in my view as ‘undistinguishedness’, rather than ‘indifference’ or ‘undifferentiatedness’ and their cognates (which is how Macquarrie and Robinson render it in English in their translation). The reason for this translation preference is that everyday average Dasein is certainly not undifferentiated (i.e., undetermined) in terms of its factual involvement in the world, paradigmatically through its ongoing occupation of a set of specific sociocultural roles and the typical concerns and activities that pertain to these roles. The averageness of Dasein’s everyday life, then, is quite differentiated in all sorts of ways; it is just that such differentiation does not mark out any particular Dasein as *distinguished* from others. As Heidegger writes, other people ‘are rather those from whom one [*man*] mostly does *not* distinguish [*unterscheidet*] oneself, among whom one also is’ (SZ 118, emphasis in the original German). Moreover, in this undistinguished mode of human existence, neither is everyday average Dasein indifferent to, in the ordinary sense of not caring about, the entities (e.g., the events, other people, or aspects of the world) that encounter and matter to it in the course of its lived experience. As Heidegger writes, notoriously, ‘In this inconspicuous and amorphous way, the *anyone* exerts its actual dictatorship. We take pleasure in and enjoy what *anyone* enjoys; we read, see, and make judgments about literature and art as *anyone* sees and judges; we also pull back, however, from the “great masses” as *anyone* pulls back; we find “outrageous” what *anyone* finds outrageous.’ (SZ 126f.) Consequently, everyday average Dasein

is not indifferent to the way the world is and how this matters to it, but is affected by the world, again, in ways that does not distinguish it from how others are affected by the world, too. Consider, e.g., the emotions that one feels when the sports teams that one supports win or lose, or how we feel, individually and collectively, in the aftermath of the occurrences of extraordinary events in the world such as natural disasters, terrorist attacks, wars, the death of one's loved ones, or even the significance of one's impending death (cf. SZ §§51-2). Everyday average Dasein is not indifferent to these events, at least not normally, but neither do the individual or collective emotions that it feels in response to these events distinguish it from how others who are similarly affected feel in such circumstances: 'The domination of the public way of interpreting the world [*öffentliche Ausgelegtheit*] has even determined the possibilities of attunement [*Gestimmtseins*], i.e., the basic ways in which Dasein lets the world matter to it. The *anyone* prescribes our affectivity [*Befindlichkeit*]; it determines what and how *anyone* "sees".' (SZ 169f.)

In light of this explication of undistinguishedness, Heidegger importantly clarifies its place and status at the beginning of Division Two of *Sein und Zeit*:

We have determined the idea of existence as understanding ability-to-be [*verstehendes Seinskönnen*], for which its own being is an issue. ... But this ability-to-be, as something that is in each case *mine*, is free for ownedness, unownedness, or their modal undistinguishedness [*Eigentlichkeit oder Uneigentlichkeit oder die modale Indifferenz ihrer*]. Thus far, the Interpretation [of Dasein's way of existing in Division One of *Sein und Zeit*] has restricted itself, through its account of average everydayness, to the analysis of the undistinguished or unowned way of existing [*indifferenten bzw. uneigentlichen Existierens*]. (SZ 232)<sup>36</sup>

Why does this matter? The reason is that drawing the distinction between undistinguishedness and unownedness makes clear that human social existence not only need not be something deserving condemnation on existentialist grounds, but can be a dimension of human existence of

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<sup>36</sup> Heidegger notes in passing that his phenomenological analysis of being-in-the-world in Division One examines Dasein's understanding of the world insofar as this understanding is unowned (*uneigentlich*) and, indeed (*zwar*), genuine (*echt*) (SZ 146, 148; cf. already 12). This remark should receive more attention than it has gotten in most interpretations of *Sein und Zeit* because it reveals how we need to have a more nuanced understanding of ownedness and unownedness. (Dreyfus's reading is one of the few exceptions here [1991: 192-4].) It is further textual evidence that we should keep separate for analytical purposes Dasein's *undistinguished* understanding of the world from its *unowned* understanding of it.

which one can elaborate positive or at least evaluatively neutral forms.<sup>37</sup> More specifically, a tenable distinction between undistinguishedness and unownedness can be established as follows. An *undistinguished* individual, in virtue of his familiarity with and absorption in the normativity of the *anyone*, projects the public normalized roles and self-interpretations (for-the-sakes-of-which) that make his existence and activities significant. As just suggested, this mode of selfhood is neutral with regard to the assessment of the value of these identities, for it concerns the basic way in which we are human at all (as Dasein). By contrast, an *unowned* individual is presumably not only absorbed in the world, but exists furthermore in such a way that the entire content of his self-interpretation is *exhausted* by the possibilities and requirements that flow from the adoption of these identities. In other words, the apparent problem with being an unowned rather than just an undistinguished self is that the former lives in a *wholly socially informed and prescribed* way that obscures his possibility of achieving genuine autonomy.<sup>38</sup> Unfortunately, Heidegger does not carefully differentiate undistinguishedness from unownedness in *Sein und Zeit*, or rather, he uses ‘unownedness’ and its cognates in a *persistently ambiguous* way so that it sometimes describes the undistinguishedness of average everyday human life, while at other times it clearly *devalorizes and disparages* this mode of existence by emphasizing how living an unowned life lifts the true burden of existing from the individual (SZ §§27, 38).

By taking seriously, however, the distinction between undistinguishedness and unownedness (even if Heidegger himself fails to do so consistently), we can mitigate the objection that Heidegger possesses an irretrievably negative conception of human social existence. Although it is certainly true that he himself does not elaborate what evaluatively

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<sup>37</sup> In fact, he notes (unfortunately only) in passing that besides the two extreme forms of caring for others that concern him, there exist many other mixed forms of sociality that go beyond the scope of his investigation (SZ 122).

<sup>38</sup> Consider, e.g., the self-understanding of the café waiter that Sartre describes in *Being and Nothingness* or the ‘selfless’ housewife that Betty Friedan describes in *The Feminine Mystique*.

neutral forms of being-with-others can look like, this choice does not rule out any positive account of human social existence within the framework of *Sein und Zeit*.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, if Heidegger were so contemptuous of human social existence, why does he nevertheless insist (in his terminology) that the *anyone* is an ‘existential’ (SZ 44), i.e., a *necessary enabling* condition of Dasein’s basic way of existing that ‘articulates the referential nexus of significance’ (SZ 129); and that self-ownership cannot consist in an individual’s radical detachment from the *anyone*, but only in an ‘existentiell’ modification of it (SZ 130, 179, 383; cf. 144-6)? In short, although one can rightly criticize Heidegger for the *incompleteness* of his account of the positive significance of human social existence, it is mistaken as a simple matter of textual interpretation to conclude that his conception of the social *categorically precludes* this significance. Consequently, critics who raise the objection we are concerned with here are wrong in drawing this implication.<sup>40</sup>

## 5 Early Heidegger’s Insights for Contemporary Social Ontology

Early Heidegger’s conception of human social existence and reality certainly makes room, then, for an evaluative neutral (in his vocabulary, ‘undistinguished’) and thereby potentially positive account of human sociality and social reality. In light of Heidegger’s distinctive conception of the social constitution of the human individual, he is clearly a thoroughgoing *holist* with regard to the second ‘horizontal’ dimension of social ontology. Be that as it may, are there any significant implications between his holism in this dimension and his possible position in the third dimension of social ontology?

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<sup>39</sup> Rentsch’s work (1999) is interesting by working out what these positive forms of being-with-others are (among other consequences) from within a broadly Heideggerian framework. It is an exemplary case of how to ‘think with Heidegger against Heidegger’.

<sup>40</sup> Limitation of space here prevents me from saying about the philosophical consequences of this important issue; see Koo 2011: 40-8.

As a matter of sheer logical compatibility, it seems that endorsing holism in the second dimension does not commit one, strictly speaking, to either singularism or corporatism in the third dimension.<sup>41</sup> In fact, if one takes into account Heidegger's existentialist strain in the first half of Division Two of *Sein und Zeit*, one can make the argument that the most important 'practical' goal of his conception of Dasein's possibility of realizing its 'ability-to-be-a-whole' and thereby to achieve 'self-ownership' is precisely to show his readers what 'existentiell' stance they must adopt in order to become truly unique and thereby *singular* individuals. According to early Heidegger, it is the adoption of this stance (of 'forerunning resoluteness' [*vorlaufende Entschlossenheit* [SZ §§62, 64]) that enables someone to *truly* individualize – more precisely, *singularize* – him- or herself as a unique individual.<sup>42</sup> To be sure, this is a highly unusual, existentialist conception of singularism, but it is nevertheless a legitimate (though peculiar) form of it, provided that one understands how this process of individualization *qua* singularization is supposed to happen. On the other hand, it is also not too difficult to conceive how this unusual form of singularism is compatible with a certain sort of corporatism (e.g., attempting to be a unique singular individual (say) by becoming the Rector of a University or the leader of an intellectual movement).<sup>43</sup> The neutrality of holism vis-à-vis singularism or corporatism can be seen in the work of some (but not all) analytic social ontologists. For they typically do not challenge the paradigm of singular agency as such, but aim rather to show how it fails to satisfactorily explain collective intentionality phenomena. Thus, while holists like Pettit (1996: Ch. 4; 2002) and to a lesser extent Tuomela (cf. his invocation of the importance of *ethos* for

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<sup>41</sup> It is crucial to keep in mind how these positions are exactly defined by Pettit; see my brief explication of them above at the beginning of section 1.

<sup>42</sup> 'Dasein *owns itself* in the originary individualization of the resoluteness that is reticent and expects/demands anxiety for itself. [*Das Dasein ist eigentlich selbst in der ursprünglichen Vereinzelung der verschwiegenen, sich Angst zumutenden Entschlossenheit.*]' (SZ 322, emphasis in the original German)

<sup>43</sup> In Heidegger's own life, these idiosyncratic commitments had ethically and politically disturbing consequences, to say the least.

collective intentionality [2007: 16; cf. 5, 35-42]) acknowledge the social constitution of the individual agent and also defend the legitimacy of corporatism regarding collective intentionality phenomena, neither of them challenge the correctness of singularism as such for explaining phenomena that fall within its purview.

That said, it is as a matter of fact more likely that a social ontologist who endorses holism will be more sympathetic to corporatism (or anti-singularism) about collective intentionality phenomena (Pettit 2012; Tuomela 2003). This is also true of the view of the early Heidegger, insofar as one can situate his position in the third dimension of social ontology. Not just this: In light of his conception of the social constitution of the human being, there is a tight connection between his version of holism and (rudimentary) corporatism in his social ontology. Making sense of this tight connection depends on making sense of his claims that: (1) Being-with-others amidst entities in the world is sharing in the unconcealment (originary truth) of entities (*‘Miteinandersein bei ... ist ein Sichtteilen in die Unverborgenheit (Wahrheit) des Vorhandenen.’*).<sup>44</sup> More specifically, sharing in the unconcealment of entities amounts to sharing an understanding of what we can *possibly* do with them, i.e., sharing an understanding of the *possible* ways for entities to be (in short, sharing possibilities); the shared understanding of commonalities among possibilities is what we fundamentally share *in common* (*das Gemeinsame*) between us.<sup>45</sup> (2) The sharing in the unconcealment of entities is sharing something essentially

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<sup>44</sup> Heidegger 1996: 106; cf. 101-10. All translations of this text into English are mine. In this text Heidegger, unlike in *SZ*, does not carefully distinguish between present-at-hand (*vorhandene*) and ready-to-hand (*zuhandene*) entities. In 1996 he tends to talk much more about our sharing in the unconcealment (truth) of the present-at-hand. But I think that since all his examples in this stretch of the text are of equipment (e.g., a piece of chalk, a sponge, a blackboard, chairs and tables, the lectern, the lecture hall, etc.), he has in view, generally speaking, our sharing in the unconcealment of *entities* (*Seiendes*) in general and of the ready-to-hand in particular (see 1996: 74-7). In any case, as far as I can tell, nothing philosophical turns on this loose use of his terminology in this stretch of the text.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*: 101f., 104, 108.



*public*; this sort of sharing can never belong to any particular individual as a private possession.<sup>46</sup>

What do these claims mean and how are they justified?

To begin with, what does it mean to share in the unconcealment (originary truth) of entities? In light our explication in section 3 above of Heidegger's conception of the world in its worldliness, i.e., of the world as a referential nexus of significance (*Verweisungszusammenhang der Bedeutsamkeit*), it is actually relatively easy to make sense, first, of the idea of the unconcealment of entities. Basically, entities are unconcealed in this sense when we understand their place, role, or function within some referential nexus of significance (i.e., some factual world in its worldliness). To use Heidegger's examples in his lecture course, we make sense of equipment like pieces of chalk, sponges, blackboards, lecterns, lecture hall, chairs and tables in the lecture hall, lecturing and listening activities, higher education goals and practices, lecturers, students, and building maintenance staff, etc., by understanding how each of them makes sense by referring to and hanging together with other items within an complex whole. It is the understanding of this complex whole that enables us to understand each entity that is caught up and makes sense within it, including other people who occupy certain roles within it. In this sense the understanding of the whole is prior to that of its constituent parts. In Heidegger's vocabulary (*SZ 220*), to understand some complex whole (i.e., some current factual world) is to 'disclose' (*erschliessen*) that on the basis of which the entities embedded and making sense within this complex whole (this factual world) in turn make sense specifically (i.e., that on the basis of which they are 'discovered' [*entdeckt*]). Consequently, to understand the 'unconcealment' of entities is to understand how particular entities fit into and thereby make sense as what and how they are on the basis of the complex wholes pertaining to them. Regimenting the terminology, it is always a complex whole or, more broadly, some current

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<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*: 129f., 133.

factual world that is ‘disclosed’ or ‘unconcealed’, whereas it is always specific entities that are ‘discovered’.<sup>47</sup>

Now, two or more people coexist with one another when they *share* in the unconcealment or disclosedness of entities in the manner just explained. This is the fundamental way in which they share a *common space of intelligibility*, i.e., a common world in its worldliness, a common referential nexus of significance: When ‘a Dasein steps next to another Dasein, the former steps into the space of significance [*Raum der Offenbarkeit*] of the other; more precisely, their being amidst [entities] moves in the same environing field of significance [*bewegt sich in demselben Umkreis der Offenbarkeit*]’.<sup>48</sup> In short, what they have in common (*gemeinsam*) at this basic level is a common way of making sense of entities, including other people.

Being-with-others manifests itself in the behavior of a plurality of people toward the same [*zum Selbigen*]. The sense of sameness here for a plurality of people is commonality [*Gemeinsamkeit*], having something in common, sharing in unconcealment. Being-with-others amidst entities is sharing in the unconcealment (truth) of relevant entities [*Miteinandersein bei Seiendem ist Sichteilen in die Unverborgenheit (Wahrheit) des betreffenden Seienden*].<sup>49</sup>

More specifically, what they share as a common space of intelligibility in this sense is a shared understanding of what they can *possibly* do, or how they can *possibly* relate or interact, with them. What they share, then, is a common understanding of *possibilities*, the possible ways in which entities can be (e.g., show up, make sense, behave, act, happen, relate to other entities, etc.).

That we share in the use of the chalk is only possible when this chalk is available [*zur Verfügung steht*] to us all, i.e., is lying there, as something left to us, ready for its possible and legitimate use. To make use of it encompasses the fact that it is significant [*offenbar*] to us for this purpose, that we with one another are already occupied with it, that it is something common in and for our being amidst ... [*Sein bei ...*], even when our way of being occupied with it is not explicit. In order for us ... to be able to share in the use of the chalk, it must in advance already be, in a more originary [*ursprünglicheren*] sense, something common; we must in advance already share in this common thing so that it is available to us, regardless of whether we make use of it or not.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*: 130-35.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*: 134; cf. 137.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*: 106.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*: 101.

The more ordinary sense of sharing something in common is precisely sharing the unconcealment (hence *originary* truth) of entities, the space of intelligibility or the world in its worldliness of the entities that belong to it.

Finally, Heidegger claims that the unconcealment of entities can never be the private possession of an individual, but must be something *public* (*öffentlich*): ‘Unconcealment never belongs to an individual as such. It is available as something common, so to speak, to everyone [*jedermann*]; it must therefore be essentially accessible to each Dasein.’<sup>51</sup> Unlike the claims above, however, Heidegger makes this assertion without argument in this stretch of the text. In light of the interpretation of the significance of the *anyone* given above in section 3, which argues that his claim that Dasein always already lives in a common world and must exist essentially as being-with is only justified by recourse to the ambivalent but crucial functions of the *anyone*, it is telling, I think, that the absence of the *anyone* in *Einleitung in die Philosophie* accompanies a lack of argumentative or even phenomenological support for the claim that the unconcealment of entities must always be public. But if the interpretation above of Heidegger’s conception of human social existence and reality in *Sein und Zeit* is convincing, Heidegger is not entitled to assert that the unconcealment in question must be public. In this respect the account he provides of being-with and the *anyone* in *Sein und Zeit* is in my view more adequate and hence convincing.

How does his account of being-with-others in *Einleitung in die Philosophie* express his possible position regarding the third dimension of social ontology? It does so by making explicit how shared or collective intentionality (anti-singularism or corporatism) not just has to be closely connected with the sharing of a common world (a common referential nexus of

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<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*: 130; cf. 129, 133.

significance), but, indeed, how the former must rest on the latter.<sup>52</sup> That is, he suggests in effect that if we want to adequately investigate group or collective intentionality phenomena, we need first to understand how such phenomena *make sense at all* as *possible* ways for entities, including individual agents, to be, before we go on to examine how they can interact in ways that *non-summatively construct* group or collective phenomena: ‘Human community and society in its different variations, levels, and degrees of genuineness and lack of genuineness, persistence and brevity, is possible only because each Dasein as such is fundamentally ... a being-with, i.e., [being-]with-others.’<sup>53</sup> In other words, his suggestion, to the extent that he has one that applies to what is at issue between singularism and corporatism, concerns the proper order of understanding and explanation between the items in question. As Schmid puts it well:

Joint action implies a form of disclosedness of the surrounding world .... [It] is about *our shared* possibilities, and these are not merely a sum or aggregate of the individual possibilities of the participating individuals. There is no way of accounting for shared possibilities in terms of individual possibilities. The reason is not that individuals do not have individual possibilities when acting jointly, but that, in most cases, the individual possibilities they have are *based on* the shared possibility [*sic*], and not the other way around. To quote [*sic*] a trivial example, it’s only within the shared practice of an election that individuals can cast their votes. The possibilities that shape our shared being are the base and frame of many of the possibilities we have as individuals. As observed by Heidegger, possibility is what Dasein basically *is* [i.e., what it projects and lives out], the very being of Dasein is not only *my own being*, but *our common being*. Dasein is not – or not *exclusively* – the being of an individual, as the individualistic setting of *Being and Time* makes us believe.<sup>54</sup>

Heidegger’s claim in this context is that understanding how social or collective entities and their characteristics are in general intelligible, and hence possible, is explanatorily and phenomenologically prior to investigating how these entities and their characteristics can count as being independent of their constituents by way of their non-summative construction. This thought is what distinguishes Heidegger’s (admittedly rudimentary) version of corporatism from

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<sup>52</sup> The example he uses of two individuals engaged in shared cooperative activity of doing various things at their shared cottage that nevertheless aim at accomplishing the same goal is suggestive (*ibid.*: 92), if the thought expressed there is explicitly connected with the issues treated in this section.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*: 141; cf. Heidegger 1992: 241.

<sup>54</sup> Schmid 2009: 171, all emphases in the original. Except for the description of *Being and Time* as being individualistic, I agree wholeheartedly with this important point.

those articulated and defended by most analytic social ontologists. Although the ultimate anti-singularist position that is chosen and defended may be more or less the same, how he and they go about getting there is quite different in the regard just mentioned.

Now, what further consequences does showing that human individuals are always already being-with-others in a common world have for social ontology? If we mean ‘social ontology’ in its *broadest* sense as the study of all aspects, structures, or processes concerning the way of being of social or collective entities, early Heidegger’s approach is in my view crucial to and fruitful for understanding and explaining how these entities are real (exist). Such a broad understanding of social ontology includes theories of intersubjectivity, dialogical encounters, recognition, and alterity; philosophical reflections on the social reality of race, gender, class, and other social/collective notions; the philosophy of the social sciences (e.g., the relation between agency and structure, social causation); and philosophically minded sociology and social theory. Why so many different areas or disciplines? Because it strikes me that early Heidegger’s approach shows well how the social can be in (i.e., subtly condition and affect) the individual, for better or worse, as well as how the individual is in (i.e., enacts or performs) the social in the sense that it can engage with and alter the social. The key insight is to shift from thinking in an overly narrow ontological or mereological approach to social ontology – e.g., inquire about the set of necessary and sufficient conditions that something has to satisfy if it is to count as a social or collective entity, or else ask what its identity (persistence) conditions are, etc. – to an approach that emphasizes practices, norms, and roles in a holistic and dynamic way as the basic site of the social, where social or collective entities are intelligible, come into being, and persist in the complicated and ambiguous ways that they do. In fact, there are other types of social ontologies on offer in contemporary philosophy that take their inspiration from early Heidegger, among

others (e.g., site social ontology, practice theory, etc.).<sup>55</sup> Such social ontologies are united precisely in holding that a proper understanding and explanation of social reality should *begin* by first examining the *context* or *site* in which social or collective entities are intelligible and persist, i.e., more specifically, the nexus of practices, norms, roles, material arrangements, etc., that compose and constitute the meaningfulness of the contexts in question, rather than begin their investigations with the sort of questions that analytic social ontology tend to have in view.

Now, it seems to me that Tuomela's approach does quite a good job if one confines oneself to doing social ontology in a classically analytic fashion (not that there is anything wrong with that, as far as it goes). But this approach at best only investigates and defends anti-singularism in a rather limited and arguably one-sided way by effectively holding that non-summative constructionism is the paradigm of investigating the social ontology of social or collective entities. But this may not be the most penetrating and fruitful approach in social ontology. More importantly, with the notable exception of Pettit's and to a lesser extent Tuomela's work, it is quite puzzling why most approaches in analytic social ontology almost totally ignore the social constitution of the human individual as such, and yet think it unproblematic to help themselves to the resources that this very constitution makes available as unexplained explainers in their accounts of social or collective notions. In this regard analytic social ontology still remains deeply *atomistic* in the sense that it takes for granted that individual agents are the given 'atoms' of social entities,<sup>56</sup> even when it aims to defend corporatism. This assumption succumbs, so to speak, to the Myth of the Socially Given, even if it can at its best countenance and defend, *contra* methodological individualism, the irreducibility of social and collective entities (beliefs, attitudes, intentions, actions, etc.). If analytic social ontology aims not

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<sup>55</sup> Schatzki 1996, 2002, 2003; Rouse 2007.

<sup>56</sup> Consider the title of Gilbert 2003.

to isolate itself as a self-contained program of philosophical research that works on a self-chosen island, it is imperative that it reflects on whether it has the conceptual tools at its disposal to account for the social constitution of the human individual as such, that is, the way in which the human individual always already coexists with others in a common world.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> I thank Thomas Szanto, Alessandro Salice, and Hans Bernhard Schmid, the organizers of the Workshop on ‘Social Reality: The Phenomenological Approach’ (University of Vienna, March 2013), for inviting me to be a presenter at it. This Workshop certainly lived up to its billing by providing me with an opportunity both to think initially about my topic and subsequently getting numerous critical and constructive comments from the audience about many of its ideas as they were presented then. The final version of this paper has altered in a number of significant ways from its initial presentation at this Workshop in light of those comments, for which I thank the audience. I thank especially Bernhard Schmid for his critical questions at my session and also in a number of periodic informal conversations on other occasions. Lastly, I also thank two anonymous reviewers of the penultimate draft of this paper for thoughtful comments and suggestions.

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