



## Being-with as being-against: Heidegger meets Hegel in *The Second Sex*

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**Abstract.** In this paper I attempt to further the case, made in recent years by Eva Gothlin, that readers interested in a philosophical return to Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* have good reason to heed Beauvoir's appropriation of central concepts from Heidegger's *Being and Time*. I speculate about why readers have been hesitant to acknowledge Heidegger's influence on Beauvoir and show that her infrequent though, I argue, important use of the Heideggerian neologism *Mitsein* in *The Second Sex* makes inadequate sense apart from an appreciation of the fundamental role played by her appropriation of Hegel's "master-slave dialectic" in that book. I suggest a way to square Beauvoir's Hegelian claim that human beings are fundamentally at odds with one another with her Heideggerian view that we are also all ontologically "with" one another. Finally, I sketch out a way of interpreting Beauvoir's employment of certain concepts from Hegel and Heidegger in the service of understanding, hence beginning to overcome, women's oppression.

### Introduction<sup>1</sup>

In the very last sentence of the "Introduction" to *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir promises that the book will give her readers the means "to comprehend the difficulties with which (women) collide in the moment in which, trying to make their escape from the sphere hitherto assigned them, they aspire to participate in the human *Mitsein*."<sup>2</sup> But what is this "human *Mitsein*" in which women, according to Beauvoir, aspire to participate? And why does Beauvoir help herself at this important juncture in her book to the word *Mitsein*, a Heideggerian neologism ordinarily translated in English as "being-with"? Despite a surge of philosophical interest in *The Second Sex* over the last decade or so, a surge consisting overwhelmingly of investigations into the book's philosophical roots in the thought of figures such as Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, and Hegel, commentators have had scarcely anything to say about the significance of Beauvoir's copious use of Heideggerian terminology – not just "*Mitsein*," but also "*Dasein*," "authenticity," the "call" or "appeal," the idea of human beings as "grasping" the world, and "disclosedness."<sup>3</sup> The critical silence appears to signify that, at least in the main, Beauvoir's

philosophical readers find her use of these terms gratuitous. Thus, “human *Mitsein*,” for instance, would just be a fancy way of saying something like “human *community*”; and we might presume that Beauvoir recurs to the Heideggerian term simply because she wishes to exploit, more or less cannily or innocently, what she regards as Heidegger’s philosophical cachet, at least in 1949, at least in France.<sup>4</sup>

This idea – the idea that Beauvoir’s indulgence in the philosophical argot of a forebear merely *idles*, philosophically – is not new. Indeed, it has always controlled the reception of *The Second Sex*. Beauvoir’s references to other philosophers are characteristically regarded as incidental to her aspirations and achievements in the book, which at the level of philosophical substance tends to be viewed as a lackluster pastiche of the thought of her partner, Jean-Paul Sartre. In the last decade or so, however, more and more feminist philosophers have called for a “return to Beauvoir” and have taken pains to bring to light not only the pronounced philosophical distance separating Beauvoir from Sartre but also the central importance of her use of other philosophers’ concepts in *The Second Sex*.<sup>5</sup> One might well wonder, then, why philosophers interested in reviving philosophical interest in the book are evidently reluctant to take its Heideggerian bearings seriously.<sup>6</sup>

In the present paper I will suggest two reasons for this reluctance, reasons that come to light upon an examination of Beauvoir’s appropriation of the concept of *Mitsein*.<sup>7</sup> First, I will suggest, we have been too quick to attribute to Beauvoir a popular but, I think, unconvincing reading of *Being and Time*, Heidegger’s magnum opus, a reading on which “*Mitsein*” is to be interpreted in the main as some sort of broadly *ethical* or *normative* concept. The idea, very roughly speaking, is that an absolutely, ontologically, basic feature of being human is experiencing oneself as part of a *fellowship* about which one is bound to *care*.<sup>8</sup> On this interpretation, one might naturally read Beauvoir’s claim that women “aspire to participate in the human *Mitsein*” as suggesting that what women want, and rightly enough, is to join a literal *fellowship*, that is, a pre-existing community of men, one that already exemplifies what it is, and means, to be human. But this view is bound to disturb revisionist readers of *The Second Sex*, for it dovetails with a longstanding and common interpretation of the book as inaugurating contemporary feminism in an insidiously “masculinist” way, one in which men are held up as exemplifying the standard women must strive to meet in order to achieve full humanity.<sup>9</sup> It’s therefore no wonder that revisionist readers, who aim to encourage feminist philosophers to revisit *The Second Sex*, are loathe to draw attention to Beauvoir’s use of *Mitsein* – so understood. On my view, however, though the notion of *Mitsein* may turn out – indeed *does* turn out, at least in Beauvoir’s

hands – to have broadly ethical ramifications, its main function in both *Being and Time* and on Beauvoir’s reading of that book is not to exalt some notion of human community but rather to further Heidegger’s central project of laying out a challenge to the Cartesian epistemological tradition and its threat of solipsism. This challenge, as I shall argue, raises its own set of epistemological (and, farther down the road, ethical) problems, having to do not with the human being’s vulnerability to the temptation to doubt, à la the Cartesian tradition, the existence of anything outside of his or her mind but, quite the contrary, with the endless temptation to *lose oneself* in the *Mitsein*. And these problems are of singular importance, or so I shall claim Beauvoir claims, for women.

A second fact or that I imagine accounts for a certain hesitancy to take Beauvoir’s use of Heidegger’s idiom seriously – a factor that goes hand in hand with the reading of *Mitsein* I’ve just rehearsed – is that, as I shall argue here, it’s difficult to see what sort of vital work Heidegger’s terminology accomplishes in *The Second Sex* apart from an appreciation of the central role played in the book by Beauvoir’s appropriation of *Hegel’s* thought. On my reading, a foundational premise of *The Second Sex*, stated flat out and attributed to Hegel in the introduction, is that “we discover in consciousness itself a fundamental hostility toward every other consciousness” (*TSS*, xxiii; *TA*; *LDS* I, p. 17). My claim is that this premise and Beauvoir’s appeal to the Heideggerian concept of *Mitsein* mutually inform and illuminate each other. And yet the Hegelian premise looks to be in *tension* with the concept of *Mitsein* insofar as *Mitsein* is interpreted as a kind of natural human (or at least male) fellowship. To complicate matters, for many readers the Hegel-inspired notion that people are ontologically hostile toward each other will be no more congenial than the evidently Heidegger-inspired idea that women ought to and in fact do aspire to participate in a (masculinist) “human” community. Indeed, some readers of Beauvoir may well wish to underplay her endorsement of the idea that human beings are fundamentally at each other’s throats, since the same idea lies, in essentially unadulterated form, at the heart of Sartre’s deeply pessimistic picture of how human beings can hope to relate to one another. There is thus a series of related disincentives for serious philosophical readers of *The Second Sex* to explore the Heidegger-Hegel connection in the book: the Hegelian idea that mutual hostility is a basic part of being human seems (a) distasteful and unpromising in itself, (b) trivially derivative of Sartre’s (also distasteful) view, and (c) at odds with the idea of a fundamental human fellowship, masculinist or not.

A careful reading of *The Second Sex*, however, reveals that the claim that human beings harbor “a fundamental hostility toward every other conscious-

ness” does not entail for Beauvoir – as it does for Sartre – the impossibility of non-hostile human relations. Indeed, Beauvoir borrows this idea from Hegel’s famous “master-slave dialectic,” which ends optimistically enough with the promise, fulfilled later on in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, that human beings have the capacity to negotiate their mutual hostility and to achieve what Hegel calls “reciprocal recognition,” a state in which, to simplify the idea, each party acknowledges the fundamental humanity of the other. For Sartre, Hegel’s optimism is misplaced: ultimately, Sartre claims, I am destined either to threaten or be threatened in my relationships with other people (or, to use the shorthand that philosophers from Hegel on have adopted, with “the other”). But, like Hegel, Beauvoir explicitly keeps open the possibility that people may come to achieve reciprocal recognition. In the conclusion to *The Second Sex*, for example, she writes,

To emancipate woman is to refuse to confine her to the relations she has with man, but not to deny them to her. In positing herself for herself [*se pose pour soi*] she will not continue less to exist *also* for him: mutually recognizing each other as subject, each will yet remain for the other an *other* . . . (TSS, p. 731; TA; LDS II, p. 662.).

As this quotation hints, Beauvoir does not adopt Hegel’s understanding of reciprocal recognition wholesale. On Hegel’s view, the initial encounter between the master-to-be and the slave-to-be immediately provokes in each party a desire to be recognized by the other as essentially “for-itself,” as, in other words, essentially different from a mere *object*, from something that has a certain set of static properties, from what Hegel calls the “in-itself.”<sup>10</sup> Each party wishes to be seen as having only one static property, namely the property of not having any static properties. On Beauvoir’s view, the wish Hegel articulates tends to be peculiar to *men*.<sup>11</sup> For a woman, she claims, the desire for recognition tends to take the form of wishing to be confirmed as *essentially* in-itself, as essentially, in an object-like way, having a static set of specific properties. And unlike Hegel, Beauvoir sees reciprocal recognition, that is, the foregoing of both sorts of wishes, as requiring an acceptance both of the reifying (objectifying) nature of one’s own judgment of the other and of the inevitability of one’s being judged, in a reciprocally reifying way, by that other. To put the point another way, the risk required for the consummation of reciprocal recognition, according to Beauvoir, is the risk of allowing both the other and oneself to be and be seen as *genuinely* other, which turns out to entail the risk of, paradoxically, claiming a certain *freedom* from him – or her. And the significance of Beauvoir’s appropriation of *Mitsein* is that it shows us why my establishing genuine human relationships with other human beings requires

that I insist, not on joining some primordial fellowship, but on allowing for or even putting a certain distance between others and myself.

In what follows I provide evidence for this view, first by offering a way of understanding what Heidegger means by “*Mitsein*” via a reading of the central aims of *Being and Time* and then by positioning my own interpretation of Beauvoir’s use of “*Mitsein*” against the pertinent claims of two other revisionist philosophical readings of *The Second Sex*.

### 1. Heidegger’s *Mitsein*

On my reading of *Being and Time*, Heidegger introduces the notion of *Mitsein* to combat a philosophical picture—specifically, a Cartesian picture—in which the individual mind, groping to pin down with apodictic certainty the existence of something outside itself, must bridge some sort of metaphysical gap between itself and other people. That is to say, Heidegger wants to help us escape from a philosophical paradigm that would have us forget that, phenomenologically, my world is not anchored in some solipsistic vanishing point, bounded at its limits by a transcendental “I,” but rather “is always the one that I share with Others” (see §26 of *Being and Time*). My view is that it is this simple, yet fateful, ontological claim of Heidegger’s that Beauvoir appropriates. Beauvoir appeals to the concept of *Mitsein* in *The Second Sex* not to endorse or deny the idea that human beings are bonded to one another in some sort of fellowship or community but to acknowledge, along with Heidegger, that his way of sidestepping the so-called “problem of other minds” raises a new problem: the problem of how an individual is to find the courage to be herself, to distinguish herself, to find her voice, in a world in which she is inevitably *with*—even smothered by—others, and particularly, by men. I read Beauvoir as appropriating the concept of *Mitsein* in *The Second Sex* in her quest to understand why men and women are inclined to exploit the fact of sex difference as a way of negotiating their fundamental fear of being human—of being, that is to say, endlessly tempted to let themselves be reified (for men as essentially “for-itself” and for women as essentially “in-itself”) in the objectifying judgments of others.

*The great theme of Being and Time*, on my understanding of the book, is that philosophy, particularly in its modern incarnation, has succumbed to a temptation to operate with a false ontology, one requiring the philosopher to overcome a fundamental separation between himself and the world. For Heidegger, it might help to say, the lure of this false ontology has been enhanced by philosophy’s understanding of itself as a kind of science and, spe-

cifically, as a mode of inquiry that needs to wrench its objects from their natural contexts in preparation for revealing their true nature. Just as a chemist who is, say, analyzing the nutritional content of a piece of food does not concern herself, qua the task at hand, with the question of how the item tastes or what sort of people will buy it or how much it costs, so the philosopher may be inclined to ignore the roles that the objects of his inquiry play in everyday life. While the chemist's special way of attending to a piece of food is likely to result in a clearer picture of the food's chemistry, however, the philosopher's special way of attending to things is fundamentally *distorting*. Take the metaphysician who espouses a version of physicalism on which nothing other than microphysical particles (or waves or forces or whatever) genuinely – literally – exists. As Cian Dorr, one such metaphysician, puts his version of the view, “everything that isn't microphysical is an epiphenomenon.”<sup>12</sup> Dorr underscores that from his view it follows

that people, if they exist, are epiphenomena. If I exist, then my impression that my choices make a difference to events outside myself is an illusion. . . . I am convinced that if I existed, I would have to be causally efficacious. If there are epiphenomena, then they are of no importance to me; whereas if I exist, then I am of great importance to myself. But if I exist, then I am an epiphenomenon. Hence I do not (strictly and literally speaking) exist. There are thoughts, feelings and experiences with no thinker – at least no *single* thinker; maybe the many things that I used to call ‘the particles that compose me’ could be said *jointly* to think, feel and experience (p. 27).

In this passage of Dorr's article (which I take to be ideal for my purposes, though inherently no more inherently worrisome, from a Heideggerian point of view, than the vast majority of other philosophical writings), our ordinary experience with human beings is identified as irrelevant to the (philosophical) truth of what a person is. On Dorr's view a person is – strictly and literally speaking, of course – merely a collection of particles.

Now, Heidegger doesn't want to deny that people's bodies are made up of particles. What he wants to deny is that *philosophy* makes any serious progress by approaching the question of what it is for a person to exist in the way that Dorr approaches it. The problem is not that Dorr is wrong; it's that what Heidegger would see as his fixation on a highly particular – and, *thereby*, distorting – way of looking at the question of what it is for a person (or anything that isn't microphysical) to exist prevents him from attending to what it is to *be* a person. This isn't a problem that Heidegger sees as particular to (highly controversial) views such as Dorr's. It's a problem for any philosopher who fails to attend to what he is studying as it, in his natural dealings with it, *is*. And for Heidegger, what something *is* invariably has to do with the role it plays

in human lives. In sections 15 and 16 of *Being and Time*, for example, Heidegger considers the simple example of a hammer.<sup>13</sup> One way to investigate what a hammer is would be to do a molecular analysis of it. Or we could examine how exactly its head fits onto its handle. Or we could go to a hammer factory (if there is such a thing!) to learn how to make a hammer from scratch. And so on. But Heidegger's point is that none of these investigations would tell us the most important thing about what a hammer *is* – namely, something that people use to get nails into things or pull nails out of them or bonk would-be criminals on the head (since hammers *are* blunt objects) . . . and so on. Someone living many centuries from now who unearths a hammer during an archeological dig and wants to know what it is will be asking a question about what role hammers played in our lives. One might be inclined to object that it matters that a hammer is a human artifact: not all phenomena with which philosophers concern themselves are *meant* for human use in the way such objects are. But, at least as I read Heidegger, to do philosophy is precisely to concern oneself with what things *mean* for human beings. This is true whether what is being studied is a hammer or a cloud or moral goodness or aesthetic judgment or the mind or a knowledge claim or the human being itself.

Crucially, from the point of view of Beauvoir's appropriation of Heideggerian concepts, Heidegger's position entails a kind of end-run around the sort of skepticism that has dogged philosophy since Descartes. The inaugurating move of the *Meditations*, in which Descartes throws the reliability (and thus significance) of all of his beliefs into doubt, automatically puts him at a certain distance from the phenomena he studies. What Descartes doubts is precisely that the ordinary objects before him – the famous ball of wax in the second meditation, the fire before which he perhaps just dreams he is sitting, and so forth – exist. But why care whether things “exist” in the sense that exercised Descartes? As the average beginning philosophy student is inclined to object, whether what philosophers have come to call “the external world” exists or not has no bearing on our experience. The sort of recalcitrance evinced by beginners in philosophy is easy to write off as a sign that a student lacks a taste or even an aptitude for the subject. But from a Heideggerian point of view, what's being resisted here – and rightly so – is a turning of philosophical attention away from what matters to a distorted picture of the world, one in which objects are salient not in their everyday contexts but as generic metaphysical entities. This is not to suggest that the student who merely fails to be gripped by the idea of Cartesian doubt epitomizes, in his recalcitrance, the proper stance of the philosopher. On Heidegger's view, attending to the being of phenomena requires thinking deeply and seriously about exactly how to resist some-

thing like Descartes' move, lest we yield to the temptation to allow the nature of the philosophical problem we are addressing – in Descartes' case, at least on his understanding of it, the problem of how to overcome the chaos in the science of his day – to distort our investigations from the start.<sup>14</sup> The point of *Being and Time*, as I read it, is to explore, understand, and ultimately attempt to resist this temptation.

But how does the notion of *Mitsein* fit into this picture? Heidegger does not introduce the idea of “Being-with” until section 26 of *Being and Time*, which is to say after he lays out the basic picture that I've sketched above. A major goal of section 26 is to observe that when I attend properly to the being of *things* – hammers, for instance – I will notice that I encounter them “from out of the world in which they are ready-to-hand for Others” (p. 154).<sup>15</sup> It is part of what it means to be a hammer, for instance, that it's something that *people* (and not just I) use. The existence (in Heidegger's sense) of a hammer, then, *entails* the existence (in that same sense) of other people. “[T]he world,” as Heidegger puts it, “is always one that I share with Others. The world of Dasein is a *with-world* [*Mitwelt*]” (p. 155; brackets and italics in original). Furthermore, Heidegger stresses, human beings naturally take an interest in or *care* about (*sorgen*) not just the objects in the world, those things with which, in his terms, we *concern* ourselves, but also other human beings as such. We comport ourselves toward others, Heidegger claims, in the form of what he calls *solicitude* or, in German, *Fürsorge*, which means, literally, *caring-for*.

The idea of “caring for,” however, can be misleading: it might seem to suggest that Heidegger is arguing that human beings naturally, ontologically, have a desire to *help* other people, to take care *of* them. Here, in fact, we find the source of what I'm claiming is the decidedly un-Heideggerian view that *Mitsein* is in the first instance a broadly ethical notion, one that grounds the idea that to be a human being means, fundamentally, to reside in a mutually beneficial – caring, helpful – community. And yet Heidegger takes great pains in section 26 to forestall this interpretation. Indeed, in his first pass at fleshing out the notion of *Fürsorge* he says explicitly that human beings ordinarily comport themselves in “the *deficient* modes of solicitude” (p. 158, my emphasis).<sup>16</sup> “Being for, against, or without one another,” he writes, “passing one another by, not ‘mattering’ to one another – these are the possible ways of solicitude. And it is precisely these last-named deficient and Indifferent modes that characterize everyday, average Being-with-one-another.” Even the “positive” modes of solicitude can fail to create or maintain what we might think of as fellowship or community. When solicitude takes the form of my attempting to spare someone else the pain of living his or her own life, “[i]t

can, as it were, take away ‘care’ from the Other and put itself in his position in concern: it can *leap in* [*einspringen*] for him” (emphasis in original):

This kind of solicitude takes over for the Other that with which he is to concern himself. The Other is thus thrown out of his own position; he steps back so that afterwards, when the matter has been attended to, he can either take it over as something finished and at his disposal, or disburden himself of it completely.

When this happens, “the Other can become one who is dominated and dependent.” Heidegger goes on to suggest a connection between our impulse to leap in (and thus dominate) the other and our investment in the idea of *empathy* (*Einfühlung*): what’s “problematical” about empathy is that, to put the idea in a pointedly un-Heideggerian way, we often come by it on the cheap: we act too quickly as though we understand another person as a way of avoiding the hard work of getting to know him or her, “so that a genuine ‘understanding’ gets suppressed, and Dasein takes refuge in substitutes” (p. 163).

And just as I take the paradoxical risk of pushing the other away (both from herself, as it were, and from me) when I leap in “empathetically,” so I indulge in a kind of epistemological violence when I construe the problem of *how* to “be-with” the other as the so-called “problem of other minds,” and when I try to solve this problem through a misplaced appeal to empathy. To ask how I can know that other people have minds that are basically just like mine, that they think and experience and feel things in essentially the same way I do, is on Heidegger’s view to deny the ontological fact of our Being-with one another. And to respond to this problem with some sort of behaviorist “argument from analogy” – namely, by suggesting that I know that “other minds” like mine exist because I interpret other people’s actions (their “pain-behavior,” for instance) as best explained by their having experiences just like mine – is to ignore the basic ontological fact that my very perception of some phenomenon as “pain-behavior” is a function of the *Mitsein* and, specifically, of our shared concept “pain.”<sup>17</sup> So just as Heidegger’s understanding of what it means to *be* an object sidesteps the skeptical “problem of the external world,” his development of the concept *Mitsein* circumvents the closely related problem of “other minds.”

And yet Heidegger’s “solution” to both these skeptical problems carries its own dangers, dangers that Heidegger himself fully recognizes and indeed discusses in section 27 of *Being and Time*, that is, the section that directly follows his introduction of the concept of *Mitsein*. For if my world is through and through a world marked by the being of other people – if, specifically, the only objects and concepts I have at my disposal are those that are through

and through public, then there is a massive disincentive for me to make these objects and concepts *my own*. If for Descartes the potential crisis is that I may turn out to be alone in the world, for Heidegger it's that I may *drown myself in it*. Here we find Heidegger's first use of his notorious "*das Man*," most commonly, albeit awkwardly, rendered in English as "the 'they'." If I attend to how I actually live my life, I will see that far from worrying about whether other people exist I am endlessly inclined to allow *das Man* to do the hard work for me of living my own life. Rather than make my own decisions, I do what "everyone" does. Rather than struggle with the problem of how to make our words mine, I engage in what Heidegger calls "idle talk." It's important to see that for Heidegger *das Man* is not some group of "other" people: rather, the term refers to our tendency to disburden *ourselves* by allowing the *Mitsein* to, as it were, leap in for us. As Heidegger puts it,

In these characters of Being which we have exhibited – everyday Being-among-one-another, distanciality, averageness, leveling down, publicness, the disburdening of one's Being, and accommodation – lies that 'constancy' of Dasein which is closest to us. This 'constancy' pertains not to the enduring Being-present-at-hand of something, but rather to Dasein's kind of Being as Being-with. Neither the Self of one's own Dasein nor the Self of the Other has as yet found itself or lost itself as long as it is [*seiend*] in the modes we have mentioned. In these modes one's way of Being is that of inauthenticity and failure to stand by one's Self (p. 166).

Here, then, Heidegger indicates that one of his signature concepts, "authenticity," has to do with one's success in "standing by one's Self" and in participating in the *Mitsein* in ways in which one has the chance both to find *and* to lose oneself. Thus, far from constituting some kind of salutary primordial human fellowship, the Heideggerian *Mitsein*, although dissolving the problem of other minds, confronts us with the challenge of living authentically. And notice that part of what "living authentically" will have to mean is figuring out a way to relate to other people that is not "deficient" or "indifferent" or characterized by premature "empathy" or the phenomenon of "leaping-in." (In other words, Heidegger is not here espousing some sort of crude individualism.) If human being is fundamentally being-with, then creating a genuine human community, on any scale, will be massively difficult – but not impossible – work.

In its broad strokes, this picture of *Mitsein* and its implications is, I submit, what Simone de Beauvoir takes away from her reading of *Being and Time*. If we put this picture against what I claimed is her appropriation of Hegel's master-slave dialectic, we get the view – the view that I claim she is developing in *The Second Sex* – that to be a genuine human being, one must strive

both to “stand by one’s Self” and to allow, indeed encourage, others to do so as well. On Beauvoir’s view, these tasks pose a particular challenge to women. But to see why, we need to turn to her own appropriation of the concept of “*Mitsein*.”

## 2. Beauvoir’s *Mitsein*

I want to position my interpretation of Beauvoir’s use of “*Mitsein*” against the only two sustained treatments of her use of this concept I know, one by Debra Bergoffen in her book *The Philosophy of Simone de Beauvoir*, and one by Eva Gothlin in her book *Sex and Existence* (and in several more recent papers of hers), not only to throw my own view into relief but also to show just how dependent one’s interpretation of *The Second Sex* inevitably is on one’s way of understanding why and how Beauvoir engages the thought of her philosophical forebears. Both Bergoffen and Gothlin interpret the notion of *Mitsein* in *The Second Sex* – quite rightly, in my view, of course – as intersecting somehow with Beauvoir’s appropriation of Hegel’s master-slave dialectic. But because Bergoffen and Gothlin are operating with different understandings of what Hegel and Heidegger mean to Beauvoir, they vary sharply on the question of the role “*Mitsein*” plays in Beauvoir’s thought. While Bergoffen sees Beauvoir’s appropriation of the concept of *Mitsein* as in tension with her appropriation of Hegel, Gothlin sees the two appropriations as compatible – and yet ultimately separate.

On Bergoffen’s view, to appreciate the force of Beauvoir’s appeals to Heidegger one must see how they link up with her claims that women fail to demand a certain sort of Hegelian recognition from men. One reason for this failure, according to Bergoffen’s interpretation of Beauvoir, is that women are heavily invested in the primordial bond of reciprocity that exists between woman and man, one that, as Bergoffen understands it, “expresses the common sexual desire and desire for children of both men and women” (*The Philosophy of Simone de Beauvoir*, p. 167). If a woman believes that she is, from the outset, bonded with men (typically represented for her in the form of her heterosexual partner), then she is likely to devote herself to the requirements of this bond – those of, for example, friendship and generosity – rather than to demand some further species of recognition from men. This might be all well and good if, as Beauvoir on Bergoffen’s view claims, there really *were* a primordial *Mitsein* between the sexes. But, Bergoffen warns, there is not: “at best,” Bergoffen thinks, “it’s a (utopian?) hope, not something originally given” (p. 167; parenthetical question in original). And yet, Bergoffen ob-

serves, not only Beauvoir but indeed patriarchy itself not surprisingly *endorses* the myth of a primordial *Mitsein* between men and women, precisely because so doing keeps women from demanding recognition. In effect, patriarchy forces women to buy into the values of generosity and friendship while encouraging them not to demand these things for themselves. “According to the codes of patriarchy,” Bergoffen writes, “[woman] is required to subordinate herself to the requirements of the heterosexual couple. Once required, however, the generosity of nonrecognition is mutilated” and “becomes the ground of an ethics of exploitation” (p. 172).

Indeed, Beauvoir’s apparently straight endorsement of the idea that there is a primordial *Mitsein* between women and men is troublesome not just from a feminist point of view, according to Bergoffen. For the idea of a primordial *Mitsein* belies Beauvoir’s “Cartesian roots” as expressed in the view – and here I am quoting Bergoffen quoting the English translation of *The Second Sex* – “that every concrete human being is always a singular, separate individual” (Bergoffen, p. 174; *TSS*, xx; *LDS I*, p. 13).<sup>18</sup> To resolve this tension in her ontological commitments, Bergoffen argues, Beauvoir ultimately “puts the ethic of the bond of the *Mitsein* aside” (p. 172) in favor of the strategy that we begin ontologically not with some primordial Being-with but rather

with our differences from each other. The ethical question concerns the ways in which we negotiate these differences. For Beauvoir the key to this negotiation is the concept of reciprocity. To be moral we must cultivate the desires of reciprocal recognition (p. 175).

That is to say, on what Bergoffen takes to be Beauvoir’s considered view, we must be willing to forego the temptations of the idea of a primordial *Mitsein* between men and women in favor of demanding recognition from one another.

According to Bergoffen’s reading of the role of the concept of *Mitsein* in *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir’s appeal to Heidegger is, at best, dangerous. This is because, under patriarchy, at least, the idea that there is some primordial bond between men and women feeds right into the myth of the feminine: it serves to justify women’s role as, in Beauvoir’s words, “the inessential other.” If woman is invested in the idea that there is a deep, original bond between herself and man, then, Bergoffen claims, she can rationalize her failure to risk demanding recognition from men. Why bother when the bond is already there? And of course endorsing the notion of some sort of primordial bond between the sexes allows men to justify their subordination of women and at the same time, insidiously enough, to glorify the “feminine” ideal of generosity that characterizes women’s investment in *Mitsein*. “From this perspective,” Bergoffen writes, “the story of *The Second Sex*, as an account of the genealogy of patri-

archy, is the story of what happens when generosity and concern for awareness of the meaning of the bond is transformed from an existential insight demanded of all of us into a codified sexed position called mother and wife, and only required from some of us” (pp. 171–172). If we mistake Beauvoir’s appeal to the idea of a primordial *Mitsein* as a straightforward endorsement of it, Bergoffen seems to suggest, then we risk reinforcing the insidious workings of patriarchy.

Notice that this understanding of what Beauvoir means by *Mitsein* depends on the idea that the concept is inherently value-laden: it by definition entails some sort of commitment to the norms of, for example, harmony, friendship, and generosity. Now, Bergoffen has done ground-breaking work in showing how heavily invested Beauvoir is in these values – how they lie at the very heart of her faith in the possibility of reciprocal recognition between men and women. But it’s not clear to me that Beauvoir thinks of *Mitsein*, per se, as by definition characterized by these values. Beauvoir appeals to the concept of *Mitsein* only a handful of times in *The Second Sex*, albeit almost always at crucial junctures in the book.<sup>19</sup> And in none of these places does she suggest that *Mitsein* has some obviously positive or normative value. Again, my view is that, like Heidegger, Beauvoir conceives of our Being-with others, primordially, as a simple, if fateful ontological *fact*: the world of any single individual just is, inevitably and through and through, a world shared with others. And indeed, this fact creates at least as many philosophical problems as it solves: if it means that I no longer must find a way beyond the nightmarish Cartesian possibility that I am fundamentally alone, it also means that I must fight for my own identity – and indeed, fight for the courage to have the *desire* to have an identity – in a world in which the path of least resistance endlessly tempts me just to melt into the crowd. For Heidegger, if this limb I’m going out on can bear just a little more weight, *the* challenge to the human being, whose world is inevitably a world of human beings, is to negotiate a path to authenticity not only *through* the “bond,” in Bergoffen’s argot, but also *against* it (as when Nietzsche argues in *The Birth of Tragedy* that culture both constricts us, in some instances even to death, while at the same time serves as the medium through which we must develop our humanity).

The idea that Beauvoir’s appropriation of Heidegger’s notion of *Mitsein* is not necessarily one of generosity, harmony, cooperation, and friendship is to be found in the work of Eva Lundgren-Gothlin. Gothlin views the concept of *Mitsein* as “central to the philosophy of Simone de Beauvoir” (*Sex and Existence*, p. 220), and she thinks that what Beauvoir means to signify by it is the idea of *interdependence*. Although, as Gothlin observes, Beauvoir does not technically use the term *Mitsein* before *The Second Sex*, from her earliest philo-

sophical essays she espouses a picture of the human being as fundamentally, ontologically, dependent on and depended on by other human beings.<sup>20</sup> Unlike Bergoffen, Gothlin sees no inherent conflict between the Heideggerian and Hegelian strands of *The Second Sex*. According to Gothlin's Beauvoir, the apparent tension between the idea of *Mitsein* as interdependence and Hegel's insistence on the inevitability of conflict among human beings is to be resolved by paying heed to the essential *historicity* of Beauvoir's account of *Mitsein* (a historicity that itself is to be understood, Gothlin notes, as an homage to Hegel and his vision of the historical unfolding of the human spirit, or *Geist*).

On Gothlin's view, if I understand it correctly, Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* in effect appeals to three distinctive types of *Mitsein*, corresponding to three stages in human history. The first is an "original" *Mitsein* among human beings, and in particular among men and women. Of this first type or moment of *Mitsein*, Gothlin writes,

For Beauvoir, the human being, both in its infancy and in the infancy of humanity, is *Mitsein*. The human being does not originally experience himself or herself as separate, but as part of the All, in symbiosis with the mother, and as part of a collective, respectively (*Sex and Existence*, p. 221).

In a second stage of human history, this original *Mitsein*, characterized by what Gothlin calls "symbiosis," degenerates in the wake of conflicts produced by men's – male human beings' – demands for Hegelian recognition from one another (*Sex and Existence*, p. 222). And yet, Gothlin argues, Beauvoir identifies a second kind of *Mitsein* persisting even throughout such conflicts and functioning as a sort of cultural glue, one producing what Gothlin calls "common features and symbols in any given epoch among people living under similar social conditions" (p. 221). Because the idea of *Mitsein* as cultural glue is compatible with the idea of intra-cultural conflict, Gothlin argues, Beauvoir's superimposition of Hegel and Heidegger, although yielding a "somewhat ambiguous picture" (p. 221), nevertheless works. Heidegger's notion of *Mitsein* helps Beauvoir to analyze the shared social underpinnings of culture, while Hegel's conceptualization of social history as produced through conflict and struggle allows us to understand how these cultures evolve and, in particular, how women's oppression is to be transcended ("Simone de Beauvoir's Philosophy of History," p. 50). The hope Beauvoir harbors for this transcendence suggests to Gothlin that there is a third conception of *Mitsein* at work in *The Second Sex*, namely, the consciously created solidarity that follows in the wake of the resolution of various master-slave conflicts as human beings come to bestow reciprocal recognition upon one another. Although

Gothlin doesn't quite put the point this way, I think one could sum up her understanding of the crucial function of *Mitsein* in *The Second Sex* as follows: it gives Beauvoir an ontological basis for imagining that women's demands for recognition from men might ultimately issue in a sort of reciprocity between the sexes characterized by, in Bergoffen's idiom, generosity, the gift, and the bond. Unlike the Sartre of *Being and Nothingness*, whose Cartesian understanding of the ontological grounds of subjectivity is radically atomistic and who thus regards any sort of robust reciprocity of recognition as metaphysically impossible, Beauvoir's Heideggerian understanding of the human being as *primordially* and *socially* Being-with gives her the conceptual tools to reject Sartre's picture and to encourage us women to dare to demand what Gothlin calls "a consciously created *Mitsein*" (p. 222).

Still, Gothlin's compatibilist view entails no *inherent* connection between Beauvoir's commitment to the concept of *Mitsein* and her appropriation of a Hegelian understanding of how human beings come to achieve reciprocity with one another. While it is quite true that Sartre's picture of subjectivity leaves no room for the possibility of genuine reciprocity, one needn't conceptualize being human as Being-with in order to reject that picture. In and of itself, the lack of an inherent connection between Beauvoir's appropriations of *Mitsein* and the master-slave dialectic is of course unproblematic. But I would like to suggest that there is a way of understanding these appropriations that doesn't make them look quite so ad hoc in relation to one another.

My view, which I spell out in detail in *Simone de Beauvoir, Philosophy, and Feminism*, begins with the claim that in *The Second Sex* Beauvoir is attempting to understand why people, men and women, are so heavily invested in the fact of sex difference and why, in particular, men are tempted to play the role of Absolute Subject and women that of Inessential Other. Beauvoir's conclusion, I argue, is that both men and women are endeavoring to avoid something fundamental about what it is to be a human being, namely, that one is always both a subject (or "for-itself") and an object (or "in-itself") – and she clearly does retain at least this Cartesian distinction in *The Second Sex*. Even in her pre-*Second Sex* writings, Beauvoir, following Hegel, calls this condition of being simultaneously both subject and object *ambiguity*. But it's not until she starts thinking about ambiguity in the context of her inquiry into the nature of sex difference (and, specifically, of what it is or means to be a woman) that she begins to develop a detailed, convincing picture of exactly what this ambiguity is like and why it's so difficult for us to bear it. This picture deviates markedly from both Hegel's and Sartre's understanding of what horrifies us about our unstable status as subjects and objects: namely, the way that other people's judgments of me by their very nature reify – even petrify – me

and thereby deny my fundamental humanity. According to both Hegel and Sartre, the natural response to the objectifying pressure of another person's judgment – Sartre of course calls it the “Look” – is to try to get that person to recognize my fundamental humanity and not to freeze me as essentially the mere thing that the judgment claims I am. But what Beauvoir discovers in *The Second Sex* is that men and women, each, often, in their different ways, actually *desire* to be fixed in the eyes of others. They desire this, Beauvoir says, because this fixing spares them a sense of their own fundamental lack of a secure identity in the world – of, to put the point more simply, their freedom. Men, she tries to show, harbor the paradoxical wish to be objectified in the eyes of women as relentlessly existentially free – that is, as objects that are *essentially* non-objects. And women, she claims, are happy to pretend to reify men in this way, as long as it means that they can fantasize that playing this role absolves them of the need to embrace their own fundamental freedom. The danger of others' judgments for Beauvoir, then, I think, is not that they will make me feel objectified but that they will allow me to ward off a fear that is the other side of my existential freedom: namely, the fear that my relationship to the world is insecure. This means that for Beauvoir, unlike for Hegel and Sartre, the encounter with the “other” does not automatically lead to a demand for “recognition,” at least in Hegel's sense. Rather, it may well lead, especially when it comes to relations between the sexes, to an attempt to *seduce* another person into allowing you to reify yourself in his gaze.

The temptation to alienate yourself in the gaze of the other, to become something less than you are, is Beauvoir's version of the seductiveness of idle talk and the lure of inauthenticity that Heidegger so memorably describes in *Being and Time*. What the term *Mitsein* means for Beauvoir is not that human beings are primordially bonded together in some salutary way or even that they are interdependent – socially, psychologically, or biologically. Rather, *Mitsein* entails a huge threat to my assuming of my ambiguity (and, particularly, my freedom). My being-with others does not mean that I am no longer a Cartesian subject: to the contrary, it gives me the means to hide this fact from myself. For women, I think Beauvoir suggests, the lure of inauthenticity is likely to be particularly strong: in effect she argues that women are socialized to drown themselves in the *Mitsein*, to let others – men – tell them who and what they fundamentally are. But at the same time it is precisely *Mitsein* that affords women (and men) the opportunity for genuinely reciprocal recognition. My being-with others leaves open the possibility that I may invite them to judge me freely: not as I wish to be reified, but as they genuinely – in their own assumed freedom – are inclined to experience me. What the other's free judgment can show me, if this reading of Beauvoir is convincing, is that the

struggle for recognition that another person's judgments of me might provoke is a cover for a more essential struggle with myself: I struggle to avoid exploiting our being-with one another to get another person to provide me a false, fixed picture of myself. And it is in thereby finding the courage to let myself and the other be that I aspire to participate in – and not just to subject myself to – the human *Mitsein*.

## Notes

1. This paper began its life as a talk delivered in October 2000 at the annual meetings of the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy. I am grateful for feedback and encouragement from session participants and, particularly and as always, from my co-presenters, Debra Bergoffen and Karen Vintges. I also wish to thank members of the Boston-area Workshop on Gender and Philosophy, especially Sally Haslanger, Ann Ferguson, and Susanna Siegel, for their exceptionally helpful feedback. Finally, it's my pleasure to acknowledge a great intellectual debt to Eva Gothlin for her groundbreaking work on Simone de Beauvoir's appropriation of her forebears' philosophical writing.
2. Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, translated by H.M. Parshley (New York: Vintage, 1989), p. xxxv; translation amended. The French reads: «*nous pourrions comprendre à quelles difficultés elles [women] se heurtent au moment où, essayant de s'évader de la sphère qui leur a été jusqu'à présent assignée, elles prétendent participer au mitsein humain*» (p. 32 of volume I of *Le Deuxième Sexe* (Paris: Gallimard, 1949). Parshley's translation reads, "we shall be able to envisage the difficulties in their way as, endeavoring to make their escape from the sphere hitherto assigned them, they aspire to full membership in the human race." The translation of "mitsein *humain*" as "human race" of course preempts the question of why and how Beauvoir employs the Heideggerian neologism *Mitsein* in this climactic final passage of the introduction to *The Second Sex*.  
Parshley's tendency to obscure the philosophical roots of Beauvoir's thought is by now well known. The locus classicus of papers on the inadequacies of the English translation of *The Second Sex* is Margaret A. Simons's "The Silencing of Simone de Beauvoir: Guess What's Missing from *The Second Sex*" (*Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol. 6, No. 5, 1983), pp. 559–564. The paper is reprinted in Simons's book *Beauvoir and The Second Sex: Feminism, Race, and the Origins of Existentialism* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), pp. 61–71. See also Toril Moi's "(Mis)reading *The Second Sex*: Questions of Equality and Difference, Prefaced by Some Reflections on the General Tendency of Debasement of Beauvoir" (unpublished paper delivered at a conference on "The Legacies of Simone de Beauvoir" at Penn State University in November, 1999).  
Future references to *The Second Sex* will be cited as follows: *TSS*, [pp.]; *LDS* [vol. #, pp.]. I will use the abbreviation "TA" to indicate that I have amended the English translation.
3. Even a careful reader of the English translation of *The Second Sex* might be surprised to find the word *Dasein* on this list. Evidently unbeknownst to Parshley, the translator, the French phrase for the German *Dasein* (Heidegger's signature – and difficult – term of

art for what it means to be a human being) is *«la réalité humaine»*. Of course, the translation “human reality” would have been bad enough, given its unfamiliarity to Anglophone readers; but Parshley, disastrously, chooses the phrase “human nature”. Beauvoir speaks to this problem in a 1985 interview with Margaret Simons (reprinted in *Beauvoir and The Second Sex*, p. 94): “[Y]ou tell me that he speaks of human nature whereas I have never believed – nor Sartre either, and on this point I am his disciple – we never believed in human nature. So it’s a serious mistake to speak of “human nature” instead of “human reality”, which is a Heideggerian term. I was infused with Heidegger’s philosophy, and when I speak about human reality, that is, about man’s presence in the world, I’m not speaking about human nature, it’s completely different.”

4. Of course, whatever cachet Heidegger had in France in 1949 was complicated by vexing questions about the nature and significance of his collaboration with the Nazis. Mindfulness of this fact helps deflate the temptation to assume that Beauvoir’s use of Heideggerian concepts is merely gratuitous.
5. Notable revisionist readings of *The Second Sex* as a work of philosophy are to be found in the following works: Margaret A. Simons, *Beauvoir and The Second Sex*; the essays in Simons, ed., *Feminist Interpretations of Simone de Beauvoir* (University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 1995); Sonia Kruks, *Situation and Human Existence: Freedom, Subjectivity and Society* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990); Karen Vintges, *Philosophy as Passion: The Thinking of Simone de Beauvoir* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1996); Debra Bergoffen, *The Philosophy of Simone de Beauvoir: Gendered Phenomenologies, Erotic Generosities* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997); and Eva Lundgren-Gothlin, *Sex and Existence: Simone de Beauvoir’s The Second Sex* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press/University Press of New England, 1996).
6. The general lack of interest in exploring the connection is sometimes explicit and sometimes implicit. The Finnish philosopher Sara Heinämaa, who has done first-rate work on Beauvoir and Husserl, for example, vehemently denies that Heidegger’s philosophy plays any significant role in *The Second Sex*. Heinämaa’s view, voiced in panel discussions at a 50th anniversary celebration of the publication of *The Second Sex* in Paris in January 1999 and at the Eastern Division meetings of the American Philosophical Association in December 2000, is that since Husserl and (his former student) Heidegger were heavily critical of one another’s views in the wake of Heidegger’s publication of *Being and Time*, one cannot possibly maintain that Beauvoir appropriates the views of both thinkers. A central goal of the present paper, and of my book on Beauvoir’s philosophy (*Simone de Beauvoir, Philosophy, and Feminism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001)) is to challenge the conception of appropriation implicit in Heinämaa’s view.
 

Other of Beauvoir’s philosophically astute readers have accepted that Heidegger’s philosophy influenced Beauvoir but have evidently found the connection not worth exploring at any length. In her watershed book on Beauvoir and ethics, *Philosophy as Passion*, for instance, Karen Vintges unhesitatingly acknowledges Heidegger’s strong influence on *The Second Sex* (see, e.g., pp. 34, 42, 142–143, 146–147) but stops short of exploring details. See note 7 for a crucial exception to the rule that feminist philosophical readings of Beauvoir tend to ignore Heidegger’s influence on her thought.
7. In “Reading Simone de Beauvoir with Martin Heidegger” (unpublished talk delivered at the Eastern Division meetings of the American Philosophical Association in December 2000), Eva Gothlin hypothesizes that the reluctance of readers to take Beauvoir’s

appropriation of Heidegger's thought seriously can be traced to two factors: first, Heidegger's notorious flirtation with Nazism and the ensuing post-war debates among French intellectuals about how to read his philosophy, with or against his politics; and, second, the French publication in 1947 of parts of Heidegger's scathingly anti-Sartrean "Letter on Humanism." I regard my own speculation on this front as complementing Gothlin's. For several years now Gothlin has been for the most part shouting into the wind, arguing – absolutely correctly, in my view – that one cannot make the best sense of Simone de Beauvoir's philosophical achievements, in *The Second Sex* and elsewhere, apart from a willingness to take seriously the way Beauvoir appropriates certain key concepts in Heidegger's *Being and Time*. "Reading Simone de Beauvoir with Martin Heidegger" goes far beyond her previous attempts to drive this point home (for these attempts, see note 20). Those who are still loathe to accept Gothlin's view now face the daunting task of reckoning with the mountain of evidence that she so cogently interprets to support it.

8. Probably the most sustained attempt, at least in English, to work up such an understanding of *Mitsein* is to be found in Frederick A. Olafson's *Heidegger and the Ground of Ethics: A Study of Mitsein* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998). This reading of "*Mitsein*" rests on a straightforward interpretation (which I contest in some detail below) of Heidegger's explicit claim that the human being – or *Dasein*, in his idiom – by its nature comports itself in its Being-with-others (its *Mitsein*) in the mode of "care" [*Sorge*] and specifically in the mode of "solicitude" [*Fürsorge*]. The claim is proffered by Heidegger in section 26 of *Being and Time*, pp. 153–163 of the English translation by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962).
9. Toril Moi, whose command of the secondary literature on Beauvoir is unparalleled, reports that "the great majority of American feminists criticize Beauvoir for being male-identified in some way or other, and for failing to appreciate the virtues of women" (*Simone de Beauvoir: The Making of an Intellectual Woman* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1994), p. 182). One finds the "masculinism" charge expressed explicitly or implicitly in the writings of, for example, Stevie Smith (see "The Devil's Doorway," *The Spectator*, No. 6543 (November 20, 1953), pp. 602–603); Mary Evans (see *Simone de Beauvoir: A Feminist Mandarin* (New York: Tavistock Publications, 1985), pp. 56–57); and Jean Grimshaw (see *Philosophy and Feminist Thinking* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), pp. 45–46).
10. The question of exactly who the master and slave are for Hegel (archetypes? historical figures? everymen?) is beyond the scope of this paper. What matters for my purposes here is that Beauvoir appropriates the master-slave dialectic in an effort to understand the everyday dynamics between human beings, and especially between men and women.
11. Beauvoir doesn't just flatly assert either this claim or the one about women that follows. But to provide her argument for the idea that there's a gender gap here would be to take us too far afield. I provide a sketch of this argument and explore in detail Beauvoir's appropriations of Hegel's and Sartre's views in *Simone de Beauvoir, Philosophy, and Feminism*, chapters 6 and 7.
12. Cian Dorr, "Mereology as a Fiction," unpublished paper available online at <<http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/philo/faculty/dorr/papers/mereology2.pdf>>, pp. 13 and 14.
13. In my exposition of the hammer example, I am taking my cues from David Cerbone's excellent essay "Composition and Constitution: Heidegger's Hammer," *Philosophical Topics*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (Fall 1999).

14. I am not suggesting that we take Descartes' understanding of his motivations at face value. Sometimes – frequently, most likely – philosophers have at best a fuzzy or self-serving story to tell about why they're doing what they're doing. Thus, one can contend, as, for example, Susan Bordo does in her critique of Cartesianism, that what actually motivated Descartes and his ilk was a desire to push Mother Nature away in response to anxiety that she was trying to push *them* away herself. My point still stands. (See Bordo, "The Cartesian Masculinization of Thought," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*. Vol. 11, No. 3, 1986, pp. 439–456).
15. "Ready-to-hand" is a central term of art for Heidegger. It signifies the "for-us" nature of the things in the world (like hammers) with which we interact and is to be contrasted with the "present-at-hand" nature of such things, which comes to the fore only when we conceptualize or study them apart from the roles they play in our lives, as when they break down – or when we philosophize about them (in, of course, a non-Heideggerian way).
16. Until further notice, all quotations are from *Being and Time*, p. 158.
17. Here I see lines of affinity between Heidegger's views in *Being and Time* and those of Wittgenstein in *Philosophical Investigations*, although of course this is not the place to work out the exact nature of any such connections.
18. It seems to me crucial that here we've got another poor translation on our hands. The French reads as follows: «*tout être humain concret est toujours singulièrement situé*»; what has dropped out in the English version is the idea of being singularly *situated* – where "situation," it is easy to show, is a central technical term in *The Second Sex* (and in Beauvoir's earlier works and Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* for that matter). So Beauvoir is *not* saying that people are (metaphysically) separate individuals; she's saying that each person's "situation" is different. One needn't have an account of "situation" in order to see that Beauvoir is not at this juncture expressing her "Cartesian roots," to use Bergoffen's phrase.
19. Eva Lundgren-Gothlin says on p. 220 of her *Sex & Existence* that she counts seven uses of the word in *The Second Sex*. I can find only five, as follows:
  1. "These phenomena would not be comprehensible if *Dasein* was exclusively a *Mitsein* based on solidarity and friendship" (*LDS I*, p. 17; my translation; compare *TSS*, xxii, and note the fateful translation of "*la réalité humaine*," the French term for Heidegger's "*Dasein*," as "human society" in Parshley's translation).
  2. "It is within an original *Mitsein* that their [the male-female] opposition becomes apparent, and she [woman] has not broken it" (*LDS I*, p. 19; my translation; compare *TSS*, xxv).
  3. The sentence I cited at the beginning of this paper: "Then from woman's point of view we shall describe the world in which women must live; and we will be able to comprehend the difficulties with which they collide in the moment in which, trying to make their escape from the sphere hitherto assigned them, they aspire to participate in the human *Mitsein*" (*TSS*, xxxv; *TA*; *LDS I*, p. 32).
  4. "Here again the case of the human species cannot be reduced to any other; it is not as individuals that human beings define themselves in the first place; men and women have never defied each other in single combat; the couple is an original *Mitsein*, and itself always appears as a permanent or temporary element in a much larger collectivity" (*TSS*, p. 35; *TA*; *LDS I*, p. 75).

5. “Symbolism did not come down from heaven nor rise up from subterranean depths – it has been elaborated, just like language, by that human reality [*Dasein*] which is at once *Mitsein* and separation” (*TSS*, p. 47; *TA*; *LDS I*, p. 89).

I leave it to the reader to assess whether my interpretation of Beauvoir’s use of “*Mitsein*” illuminates these passages.

20. See Gothlin, “Simone de Beauvoir’s Philosophy of History in *Le Deuxième Sexe*,” forthcoming in a volume edited by Wendy O’Brien on Beauvoir and existential phenomenology. See also Gothlin’s analysis of “interdependence” in her “Gender and Ethics in the Philosophy of Simone de Beauvoir,” *NORA: Nordic Journal for Women’s Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (1995). Gothlin also convincingly connects Beauvoir’s interest in the activity of “disclosure” with Heidegger’s emphasis in *Being and Time* on “disclosedness.” See her “Simone de Beauvoir’s Ethics and Its Relation to Current Moral Philosophy,” *Simone de Beauvoir Studies*, No. 14 (1998). In “Reading Simone de Beauvoir with Martin Heidegger,” Lundgren-Gothlin (who goes by the name of “Gothlin” in this paper) implies that the notion of interdependence (*interdépendance*) plays the role of “*Mitsein*” in Beauvoir’s book *The Ethics of Ambiguity*. As Gothlin rightly observes, Beauvoir’s conception of *Mitsein* is in any event radically different from that of Sartre in *Being and Nothingness*, where *Mitsein* is interpreted as intersubjectivity and (since Sartre rejects the possibility of human intersubjectivity) is explicitly rejected as a useful philosophical concept. Sartre writes, e.g., that “the relation of the *mit- Sein* can be of absolutely no use to us in resolving the psychological, concrete problem of recognition of the Other” (*Being and Nothingness*, translated by Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Pocket Books, 1996), p. 334).

