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Time

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Introduction

It does not require any special knowledge or instruction to recognize how essential time proves to be for human existence. This essential bearing of time becomes acutely felt when we have not enough of time at our disposal, when we regret bygone days never to be regained, when we dread future days beyond our control, or when we seem to have too much time on our hands, not knowing what to do with ourselves. Ordinarily, even as we are continually preoccupied with the time of our lives, rare are those instances when we are bluntly confronted by the question “what is time?” We might indeed become attentive to time due to practical considerations, not having enough or having too much for our doings; we might become attentive to time given its varied rhythms, when we languish in boredom without end or stand amazed at how “fast” the time has flown; we might become attentive to time given our embodied existence, with the weariness of fatigue or unwelcome signs of aging; we might become attentive to time when we calculate the origins of the universe, discover prehistoric footprints of hominids, or visit Ancient Greek temples; we might become attentive to time with birth and death, or in those decisive transitions in between, days of crisis or nights of transformation, or with the daily hiatus from our waking lives in sleep and dreaming. Throughout these manifestations of time’s essential bearing for our lives, however time is experienced, calculated, managed, and represented, we still take it for granted, that time passes, and we along, and the world, as well. If time can be problematic for us in so many ways without ever having us question the fundamental sense in which time passes, what it would mean to question “what is time?”, rather than, more familiarly, what to do with time, how to calculate time, or where to get more time?

In contrast to engagements with the problem of time (calculating time, managing time, narrating time, etc.), what distinguishes a philosophical engagement with the question of time is the attempt to think through constitutive paradoxes of time that otherwise remain in our common experience of time unaddressed and, in this regard, unspoken for. We are able meet life’s incessant challenges as well as tackle the manifold problems of the world without ever having to worry about what it is for human life to exist, along with things of the world, in time. As Augustine formulated in the Confessions, to ask “what is time?” is to find oneself arrested in a questioning for which knowing how to deal with time in our everyday affairs does not inform us about how to respond. In this unknowing stance before
ourselves (as Augustine famously states: “What then is time? If no one asks me, I know what it is. If I wish to explain it to him who asks, I do not know”), our routine and rote abilities to decide, to calculate, to represent, to act, or simply: to wait – ways in which we deal in problems with time – seem to be of no avail. We find ourselves in a situation of questioning in which there is nothing else for us to do but think.

Among 20th-century philosophers, it is arguably Husserl and Heidegger, in their contrasting phenomenological efforts (transcendental for Husserl, ontological for Heidegger), who most substantially and influentially engaged time’s constitutive paradoxes in their questioning, thus making of their efforts a still unequalled thinking of time in its essential bearing for human existence. Although Husserl and Heidegger are comparable and contrastable in many ways with regard to method, terminology, aims, philosophical framework, and historical references, their respective discussions of time can be profitably seen as engaging four fundamental paradoxes of time, the constellation of which delineates and motivates what we should properly understand as a phenomenology of time.

Let us briefly identify these four paradoxes. First: What makes time ubiquitously familiar is temporal passage, often expressed as “flowing” or “streaming.” No matter how and what we experience in time, to be in time is to be articulated temporarily as past, present, and future. What is paradoxical about temporal passage (neither the future nor the past exist; the present exists only to no longer exist) is not fully captured with the commonplace intuition that “all things flow.” More significantly, the paradox of temporal passage resides with how time is just as much “the destroyer of all things” as well as the “creator of all things.” Time is both “order” and “disorder,” “bringing together” and “taking apart.” In Aristotle’s terminology, the past, present, and future structure time as τaxis and diaeresis. Second: It is a truism that we cannot create time in the sense that we could have more of time than afforded by the finite span of life allotted to each of us as mortal beings; we are created beings with a beginning and an end. We cannot reverse or undo time, nor halt its incessant passage; the past is irreversible, the future is unpredictable. Yet, it seems equally true that we necessarily constitute the sense of time’s passage: in our nostalgia for the past, we acutely sense the past as irreversible; in our anxiety before the future, we acutely sense the future as unpredictable. To sense time as passing is constituted by us, and yet it conditions us in a manner that we cannot unconstitute, or constitute otherwise. We would not be nostalgic if we could not constitute the sense of the past as irreversible while at the same time finding ourselves conditioned, and hence constituted by this very irreversibility. Third: Much of our dealing with time centers on our concern with the world in the mirror of caring for ourselves. Our sense of uniqueness as living beings, the axis about which our concerns and cares turn, would seem intuitively to be intrinsically bound to time. And yet, although we have but one life, we are able to live in many ways, and exist stretched across the time of our lives in such a manner that we might question whether within the oneness of life we are able (indeed: whether it is desirable) to achieve a sense of life as a whole, such that we might claim our life to have been one. Fourth: The protean ubiquity of time’s presence is marked by the peculiarity that time itself, in contrast to things or persons in time, does not seem to appear distinctly: we cannot perceive time as we see colors, hear sounds, or touch surfaces. As Aristotle proposed, although our sense for time would seem to be common to all sensory modes of perception, time itself is not a specific property of sensory perception or kind of sensory awareness. We see things in time, not time itself. The paradox of time’s palpable invisibility equally invokes a paradox of description. What are we describing when we speak of time? Are metaphors (and narratives) indispensable for any description, theoretical or otherwise, of time? Can we directly see the time of which we are speaking and thinking? Can we speak of time directly without having to see and think something else?
Husserl

Husserl's phenomenology of time inherits a traditional casting of the question “what is time?” reaching back to Augustine's *Confessions*. In this mold, the question “what is time?” implies the question “who am I?” Cashed out in phenomenological terms, our perception of time is inseparable from our awareness of ourselves in time; to ask how we experience time is to ask in the same breath how we experience ourselves in time. Husserl's point of departure is this ubiquitous experience of temporal passage: we hear music in time much as we perceive trees in time. How do we perceive temporal succession as a unified phenomenon (the melody as a melody as opposed to random notes or a chord)? How does the consciousness of temporal succession form within the temporal succession of consciousness itself? As any form of consciousness, the perceptual experience of time must be understood along the lines of intentionality. As Husserl stipulates, however, consciousness of an intentional object is at the same time a consciousness of itself, an experiencing of itself as perceiving an object. The way in which perceptual objects are manifest to consciousness is inseparable, yet distinct from how consciousness is manifest for itself. Both aspects – the object I perceive as well as the experience I have of myself as perceiving – are temporal; but, are they temporal in a similar sense? Both are structured by the passage of time, and yet, the *experiencing* of consciousness is distinct from the object of experience (a tree, a melody). Husserl reserves the term “temporality” (*Zeitlichkeit*) to speak of the former, while the term “time” (*Zeit*) refers the latter. Time is founded on temporality. The meaning of the temporal distinctions “past,” “present,” and “future” are founded in experiencing ourselves as past, present, future; to wit, through the temporal passing of our own awareness. Given that consciousness always experiences itself in a temporal manner, the consciousness of time cannot represent a particular kind of intentionality (as, for example, perception), but establishes the form of every form of consciousness whatsoever; whether we dream, perceive, imagine, remember, or think, we do so in a manner whereby our consciousness relates to its intentional objects as well as to itself in a temporal manner. What Husserl dubs “inner time-consciousness” is a fundamental form of consciousness within every form of consciousness, insofar as every form of intentionality, as other-related and self-related, is structured as time-consciousness. In this manner, “inner time-consciousness” is deemed the genuine “absolute” of transcendental subjectivity; the irreducible condition of possibility for experience as such. It is neither “subjective” or “objective,” but the structure in which intentionality, and hence, the relatedness of mind and world, becomes itself constituted. Absolute inner time-consciousness undergirds Husserl's principal insight into consciousness as “transcendence in immanence.” The paradox here, however, with which Husserl never found philosophical peace, is how transcendental subjectivity is both constituting and constituted, or, in other words, world-constituting as time-consciousness as well as itself constituted in the world of time.

If inner time-consciousness is the absolute form of every form of consciousness (i.e., intentionality), what distinctive phenomenological characteristics does it possess? Indeed, how can we speak, let alone see the phenomenon of time as such, as the intentional object of consciousness, given that time itself is nothing we can see, touch, or feel? What does it mean, with regard to time-consciousness, to “return to the matters themselves?” Kant argued that time is a pure form of appearance (not an appearance itself). Aristotle defined time as the number of motion with regard to the before and after on the basis of a *noetic* (cognitive) apprehension of temporal succession. Each rejects that time itself can be seen; for both, time is, strictly speaking, not a phenomenon, but the order of manifestation for phenomena (and for Kant: the a priori structuring of how consciousness forms for itself ordered and intelligible appearances). Contrary to this tradition, it is methodologically critical for Husserl's phenomenological approach that time can
be rendered into a phenomenon, or, in other words, that a description of time as the form of all forms of manifestation must be based on a description of the manifestation of time. Although time itself cannot be seen, the perception of things in time allows for a manner of seeing how time is nonetheless manifest in experience, not in terms of those properties of objects like color, sound, etc., but as the manner in which objects become manifest. The manifestation of time is overlooked to the degree that time (or more accurately: time-consciousness) is the transparent form in which any object achieves a form of manifestation, but which itself does not become manifest as any given form of object. In this respect, the traditional question of what time is becomes transformed into the genuinely phenomenological question of how time becomes manifest in the consciousness of how the world becomes given. Husserl’s primary concern is therefore not ontological, but transcendental, as an inquiry into conditions of givenness – conditions that are themselves retrievable from experience through a distinctive phenomenological method of reflection.

Towards this end, Husserl deploys the method of epoché and transcendental reduction to recover the constitutive functioning of inner time-consciousness within experience. This analysis takes the parallel form of an archaeology of the structuring of time-consciousness and a genealogy of structured experiences in time-consciousness. Husserl’s descriptive language combines re-minted metaphors (time-consciousness as flowing, the past as fading-away, etc.), phenomenological concepts (intentionality, hylé, etc.) and mathematical terms, with a marked proclivity for geometric figures (point, line, plane), as well as a series of time-diagrams. Throughout, Husserl insists that we must see the structures of temporalization brought into view through such descriptive means. Such descriptions are shaped by the signature method of eidetic variation and Wesenschau. Within the process of eidetic variation, the constitutive principles of retrieval, repetition, and forecasting makes of Husserl’s phenomenology of time-consciousness an exemplification of the self-temporalization of consciousness under (its own) description. The analysis of time-consciousness in this manner performs the “object” of its inquiry: the activity of thinking time-consciousness realizes the self-temporalization of inner time-consciousness itself. In this manner, Husserl’s phenomenology of time-consciousness is a νοήσεως νόησις. Phenomenology only realizes itself fully as thinking in the phenomenology of time-consciousness, not as divine intellect, but as transcendental Besinnung. No wonder, then, that Husserl repeatedly remarked that time-consciousness represented the most difficult, yet most fundamental problem for phenomenological thinking.

On the basis of a description of the commonplace experience of hearing a melody (or what Husserl calls a “time-object,” i.e., an object intrinsically constituted through time), Husserl argues that the duration of an object (the sense we have of the object as passing in time) is not based on the co-ordination of memory, perception, and anticipation. Already within the act of perception, yet without any reference to memory (as recalling what has already elapsed) or expectation (as anticipating what is not yet elapsing), Husserl discovers a temporally differentiated structuring of time-consciousness. In hearing a melody, I perceive in terms of what Husserl terms a “traverse-intentionality” the temporal extension of three notes as a unified time-object. Each note of the melody is perceived in the temporal sequence of before and after on the basis of the temporal distention of consciousness in terms of what Husserl calls “length-intentionality.” Inner time-consciousness is a double-intentionality: I hear the melody in time and experience myself (temporally) as hearing the melody. This living present of a perceptual act of consciousness is structured in terms of retention, original presentation, and protention. Every original presentation (consciousness of the now) is necessarily modified through a retention, or retentional consciousness; every now must necessarily pass away into the immediate past as just-now. Likewise, every original presentation forecasts a protentional consciousness awaiting, as it were,
a not-yet-now. While hearing a note as now, an earlier note becomes retained in consciousness as no longer present. “Retention” does not mean “holding onto something that is moving away,” but constituting the moving away, or passage, of the now: consciousness “absents” or “de-presences” itself in withholding itself from a presence that would not pass away. Husserl in this regard characterizes retention as a “de-presentification” and “emptying” of an original presentation. An original presentation is likewise characterized in terms “novelty” as the fulfillment of a forecasting protention. The genial insight here is that the passage of the now must itself be constituted in consciousness, even as consciousness itself, in its constitution of temporal passage, must suffer its own temporal passage. Consciousness both constitutes itself as time and becomes itself constituted in time; we have a sense for the passing away of the world because we ourselves are passing away.

Composed through the three-fold imbrications of retention, original presentation, and protention, the temporality of time-consciousness is neither circular nor linear. Within the perpetual streaming of time-consciousness, consciousness comes to have stand (i.e., intentionality) with regard to the world and itself. Husserl thus speaks of the living present as “standing-streaming” (die stehende-stromende Gegenwart). Life is “standing-streaming” in its self-presence and self-absence. This “standing-streaming” of time-consciousness must not be conflated with a “stream” or “flow” of chronological or mathematical time, both of which are in fact constituted within this more primordial temporality. Moreover, time-consciousness is neither activity or passivity: consciousness is not passively in the stream of time nor does the stream of time gush forth from consciousness. Consciousness “temporalizes itself” in temporalizing a world other than itself to which it is necessarily bound and directed. The intelligibility of the world, as constituted through – not “in” or “by” – time-consciousness does stand against the passage of time, but endures through the passage of time, but always with the intrinsic transcendental risk that crisis and ruptures of the world (and the constituting accomplishments of consciousness) are always possible, against which time itself offers the promise of renewal and retrieval. In addition to Husserl’s reflections on historicity, the implications of the standing-streaming of time-consciousness are apparent in his ethical thought. An ethical person is both a task or challenge (Aufgabe) and a drive (Trieb): an ethical life must strive to define and shape itself under an Idea of itself in such manner that life strives to attain consistency and unity among its beliefs and actions. Such ethical self-temporalization requires, on the one hand, habits and habitualizations and, on the other hand, constant readiness for self-renewal and self-bracketing (or what Husserl calls an “ethical époché”). An ethical life strives to achieve wholeness from its temporal streaming, yet this wholeness always remains an Idea – an infinite task – which thus perpetually keeps open a remainder, or surplus, in which life either measures itself as (nearly) fulfilled or as (nearly) divided from itself.

Heidegger

The meaningfulness of the world has always been intuitively grasped as inseparable from the manifold ways in which the world becomes in time. In its most basic form, what it means for something to be, whether ourselves, others, or things of the world, would seem to be bound up with what it means to be present. According to Heidegger, Western philosophical thinking, broadly subsumed under the heading “metaphysics,” has consistently defined the different senses of being (what it means to be) in terms of different senses of temporal presence (what it means to be present). One might divide what there is into beings that have beginnings and endings, beings that have neither beginnings or endings, beings that are created, or beings that are uncreated. Regardless of how many are the ways in which being can be said, the fundamental sense of
what it means to be remains understood as some form of “to be present.” Metaphysical thinking remains beholden to a metaphysics of presence. Yet, it is precisely this assumption that “to be” means “to be present,” and likewise, that “to be present” means “to be,” that Heidegger contends has in fact remained unthought, that is, unquestioned, despite a robust philosophical tradition dedicated to understanding what it means to be. The history of metaphysics is predicated on a forgetting of the question of being, but by the same token, a constitutive forgetting of the question of time. Heidegger’s thinking is driven by the attempt to retrieve and reanimate the question regarding the meaning, or meaningfulness, of being (die Frage nach dem Sinn des Seins) from its metaphysical forgetting. Hence the title of Heidegger’s magnum opus: Being and Time. The emphasis must be seen neither on either being or time taken either separately in relation to each other, but on the “and,” which designates less a conjunction of two distinct themes, as it marks the thematic locus for thinking anew the temporality of being and the being of temporality.

Rather than address the question concerning the meaningfulness of being directly, Heidegger proposes that the question must first be turned upon itself. We should not take the question of the meaningfulness of being as an historical or experiential given, but should begin instead by inquiring into who is that being for whom the question of being is at all meaningful, not in terms of already possessing an answer, but in the more questioning sense of there being at all a question of being. That being for whom “what it means to be” is at all a question is called Dasein, where the term “da” does not mean in the first instance “here” or “there,” but openness in being (In-Sein) and to being (Zu-Sein), not just its own being (as Dasein), but to being whatsoever (as Da-sein). The aim of Being and Time is thus to develop an ontological understanding of Dasein as a preliminary stage towards posing and pursuing the question of the meaningfulness of being. The aim of Being and Time, in other words, is not to answer the question of being; it is to understand how first to arrive at the question of being by way of an understanding of who that being is for whom being is at all in question. The argument proposed by Heidegger is here that the fundamental way in which Dasein exists is structured and delimited by temporality (Zeitlichkeit). Temporality is the horizon for how Dasein understands itself as being-in-the-world and, hence, the horizon for its understanding of what it means that there is being. As suggested by the term horizon, temporality belongs to Dasein in the structuring of its existence as openness to being but also circumscribes the disclosure of being for Dasein. As “two in one,” Dasein’s horizon of temporality both brings together and separates the “and” of being and time.

Given Heidegger’s gambit of retrieving a forgotten line of questioning from an obscuring history of philosophy, Heidegger’s efforts are keenly attuned to the problem of language. How one speaks in philosophy cannot be taken for granted given that our inherited modes of speaking are predicated on answering a question that remains fundamentally obscure. At the time, this obscurity could not be detected and silhouetted within the historical remembrance of philosophy without this remembrance, unable to remember what it had forgotten. History is haunted by the remembrance of what it could never have thought, the unthought. Heidegger’s analysis must therefore in same breath “destroy” or “dismantle” inherited ways of thinking (and speaking) while uncovering the primordial (i.e., ontological) dimensions of Dasein’s manner of existence in its temporality. With specific reference to temporality, Heidegger’s discussion eschews any reliance on metaphors of time as well as any claimed touchstone of “lived experience.” This reconfiguration of how to speak about time philosophically likewise strives to break the inherited grammar of time as sequentially structured in terms of “past, present, future.” The implicit geometry of time (whether as a line, a set of points, a spiral, or circle) within traditional philosophical accounts (from Aristotle to Hegel to Husserl) is equally conspicuously absent in Heidegger’s thinking. This does not represent a disconnection or divorce of spatiality from temporality. On the contrary, it represents a re-thinking of both spatiality and temporality.
through an ontological understanding of Dasein’s existence as a “spatializing” and “temporalizing” *ex-static movement*, where movement (*ex-stasis*) structures “possibilities” and “actualities.” Many of the terms employed in Heidegger’s thinking must be *read* in their literal and etymological sense (Zu-Kunft, Ge-Wesen, Gegen-wärtigen, etc.) Moreover, although opaque at first sight, much of Heidegger’s idiosyncratic vocabulary plays on idiomatic or intuitive meanings, often closely bound to possessing an ear for a given term. The point of this ingenious vocabulary is in keeping with the basic contention of Heidegger’s approach, namely, that he seeks to bring into thinking what is most self-evident and taken for granted, and thus, in that very condition, what is most distant and remote from us. Temporality is both that which most near to our being, in our being, and that which seems most distant from our being, insofar as our being is in time. Methodologically, this employment of a distinctive kind of discourse is coupled with an equally distinctive structure of argumentation in *Being and Time*. After having launched his enterprise, Heidegger examines *Dasein* as being-in-the-world and concludes with the discovery that the fundamental sense in which *Dasein* exists is “concern” (*Sorge*). The constitution of *Dasein* as concern is composed of multiple ways of being as well as “stretched out,” given that *Dasein* exists as a being with a beginning and an end to which it relates, imbued for its existence with either meaning or apparent lack thereof. The structure of “concern” does not deliver a primordial understanding of the wholeness of *Dasein’s* existence, which, in fact, must be discovered as grounded in its primordial temporality: the temporality that *Dasein* “exists” or “is.” This requires a *repetition* of the analysis of *Dasein* as “concern,” now uncovered from its ground in its own existential temporality. This repetition is, however, forecasted already, such that the encounter, or uncovering, of primordial temporality enacts the temporality of its own discovery. *Being and Time* is itself ex-statically structured by the ex-static temporality it itself uncovers and, in this sense, thinks.

Heidegger’s analysis becomes deployed in two installments. As a first installment, Heidegger undertakes an ontological analysis of *Dasein’s* being-in-the-world. The guiding thought is to understand the various senses in which *Dasein* exists “in” the world. What it means for *Dasein* to be “in” leads to an encompassing discussion of the “worldliness” of the world, which includes how *Dasein* engages with things of the world, how Dasein is always related to others (*Mitsein*), and how *Dasein* is always involved with itself (*Selbstsein*). Three important insights emerge from this ontological analysis in view of the issue of temporality. First: a defining manner of *Dasein’s* existence is to be both self-obscuring and self-revealing. In Heidegger’s vocabulary, *Dasein* loses itself to the world and in the They (*das Man*). In the condition of everydayness, *Dasein* exists outside of itself: it defines its own being through its worldly concerns and engagements, rather than define itself in the world with respect to its own singular being. Lost to the world, *Dasein* can nonetheless recuperate itself and resolutely reveal itself to itself in terms of what characterizes the singularity of its own being: its mortality. Rather than speak of time or consciousness as “flowing” or “streaming,” Heidegger instead characterizes the *ontological meaning of Dasein’s* existence as fluctuating between self-obscurity and self-revelation, or, in his language, “inauthentic” and “authentic” manners of being. Second: in dealing with things of the world, things of the world come to make sense in terms of *Dasein’s* projection of possibilities ahead of itself as well as always finding itself inscribed and involved with the world. What it is to understand is to continually encounter things of the world within this fold of possibilities; the ability to fluently handle the hammer attests to an understanding *in situ* and *in acta* in which I understand what the hammer “is” as a function of what a hammer is for, how I have already used it, and what situation I presently find myself in. Third: Heidegger identifies three existential manners of being within the constitution of *Dasein’s* being-in-the-world: *Befindlichkeit* (poorly and misleadingly given in English as mood or temperament), *Verstehen* (loosely: “understanding”) and *Rede* (speech,
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discourse). This three-fold structure represents the many existential ways in which Dasein can be said to be in the world.

By way of an analysis of what Heidegger calls the “foundational temperament” of anxiety (die Grundbefindlichkeit) – the way in which Dasein becomes anxious of its existence as a whole (rather than fearful of any determined object in the world) – we arrive at the insight that the fundamental sense of Dasein’s being is concern (Sorge). What it is for Dasein to be is to be concerned with things of the world, with others, and with itself in the world. Dasein is “stretched along” in its existence as concern, but not in terms of spatial extension or temporal succession, but in a two-fold sense of “self-obscuring” and “self-revealing” as well as constituted in terms of the three-fold existential manners of being. Dasein is “stretched along” in its concern with the world. As “stretched along,” Dasein’s existence not only spans a whole, but within that whole, is stretched along away from itself, fallen into the world through its everyday concerns (with things and others). Concern with the world amounts to a manner of existence in which Dasein does not define its being resolutely from and for itself, but from the world and for others. As self-obscuring, Dasein renders itself present to the world in giving of itself – literally: its own time – to the world: in finding things of the world interesting and caring for itself in the world, Dasein temporalizes itself as present to itself in the world. What Heidegger designates as “clock-time” or “world-time” defines time as an ordering of things in relation to the before and after of numerically distinct now-points. The basic form of world-time is to be present in the now. As the experience of compulsively checking our time-telling devices makes evident, chronological time is couched within the fundamental structure of Dasein’s being in the world as concern. We look to our watches because we are concerned with the world. In an ingenious turn of argument, Heidegger re-casts the image of temporality as the standing-streaming of consciousness into an existential manner in which Dasein has left itself behind in its own temporal self-manifestation as present to the world. Dasein has strung itself along in the time of the world, and exists in a “stretched now” (the now of the evening) that passes along without Dasein taking any notice of itself in its temporal existence. In dispersing itself in the world, Dasein is made to stand on par with the things of the world in the form of presence.

The being of Dasein as concern does not, on Heidegger’s argument, uncover the fundamental ground for Dasein’s wholeness or the sense in which Dasein exists as a being with a beginning and, most saliently, an end. An analysis of Dasein’s original temporality – the temporalization that Dasein “is” – promises to uncover the ground, or fundamental meaningfulness for the sense in which Dasein exists in its being-in-the-world as “concern.” What abides, or stands out, as both exceptional and forgotten, within Dasein’s in-streaming concern with the world, is the possibility of its own impossibility – an horizon of being-towards-death (Sein zum Tode) that lines from within every possibility of Dasein’s being-in-the-world, even as this horizon remains external to Dasein’s everyday concerns insofar as mortality is not owned up to as Dasein’s ownmost possibility for being. The possibility for the “whole-being” of Dasein remains unclear without an analysis of “being-towards-death” and original temporality. To be concerned with the world is ontologically to be concerned until death.

Heidegger identifies three “moments” or “ex-stasis” within Dasein’s original temporality. These three “ex-stasis” are “equi-primordial.” Each is, strictly speaking, neither before or after the other; each is contained in the other, that is, implied. The ex-static moment of what Heidegger terms Zu-kunft (literally: to or towards what is coming or arriving), on the basis of which Dasein can be ahead-of-itself in projecting possibilities, is emphatically characterized as not meaning a now that is not yet. Rather, it designates the “coming” (die Kunft) in which Dasein comes towards itself in its own-most being to be (Seinskönnen). A genuine sense of the future is not waiting for something to arrive, but first arriving at ourselves in our own-most, namely, our
running-head-long (Vorlaufen) towards death. In this sense, the “future” is the most originary and authentic temporality. The ex-stasis of “das Gewesen” (literally: “the has been” but also a tacit play on “essence” as “what is it what was, or has been”) likewise does not designate the past that we have left behind, retained, or abandoned. Dasein is only as having been, and in having been thrown into its own existence, Dasein can come back to itself in coming into its own-most, the future. The ex-stasis of what Heidegger terms Gegenwärtigen refers to the situation or encounter in which Dasein finds itself, straddled, as it were, within a future that has been and a has been that remains oncoming. The unity of these three ex-static moments composes Dasein’s temporality as two and one: as both the originary structure of being-outside itself, strung along in the world, and as returning for itself in deciding for itself in owning up to the possibility of its impossibility, or being towards death. In coming back to oneself as the singular death that Dasein can only be for itself, Dasein can encounter the whole once more in the assuredness of a meaningfulness that neither the world nor others can rob from it nor be responsible for it.