

Michael Eldred

On Human Temporality

Michael Eldred

On Human Temporality

Recasting Whoness Da Capo

DE GRUYTER

ISBN 978-3-11-113583-0
e-ISBN (PDF) 978-3-11-113594-6
e-ISBN (EPUB) 978-3-11-113615-8

Library of Congress Control Number: 2023952378

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie;
detailed bibliographic data are available on the internet at <http://dnb.dnb.de>.

© 2024 Walter de Gruyter GmbH, Berlin/Boston
Cover image: Mutsumi Okada *Prague Wind* 90 x 70 cm., oil on canvas 1997
Printing and binding: CPI books GmbH, Leck

www.degruyter.com

εἷς ἐμοὶ μύριοι, ἐὰν ἄριστος ᾖ

One is tens of thousands to me, if the best.

Herakleitos, Diels/Kranz Fragment 49

Contents

Foreword — XI

1 Imaginative essencing in three-dimensional time — 1

- 1.1 Temporally three-dimensional imagining — 1
 - 1.1.1 As such-and-such — 1
 - 1.1.2 The starting-point of Hegel's *Logik* — 2
- 1.2 The fourth temporal dimension — 3
- 1.3 Imagining a dynamic situation: movement along an imagined time-line — 4
 - 1.3.1 Derivative linear time — 5
- 1.4 Linear mental movement in the imagination — 6
- 1.5 Temporally three-dimensional absorption in a sensuously present situation — 7
- 1.6 Psychic power of imagination proffered by the three-dimensional temporal openness — 8
 - 1.6.1 Psyche not a thing — 8
 - 1.6.2 Individuation, individualization, dissociation — 12
 - 1.6.3 Psyche and mind according to Aristotle — 12
 - 1.6.4 The obliteration of the ontological difference and the partaking of living beings in the ψυχή — 14
- 1.7 Presenting and absencing — 18
- 1.8 Essencing essents — 21
 - 1.8.1 Presenting and absencing as essencing — 21
 - 1.8.2 Οὐσία as fundamental concept of Aristotelean ontology — 22
- 1.9 Psyche and mind singular, not plural — 26
- 1.10 Aporias of consciousness — 28

2 Temporality of mind and body — 31

- 2.1 Single-minded focusing in three-dimensional time — 31
 - 2.1.1 Ambiguity in the sense of mental presenting as focusing — 32
 - 2.1.2 Foreseeing the future — 34
 - 2.1.3 Aristotle on memory — 34
 - 2.1.4 Misconceived spatiality of time for the sake of artificial intelligence — 38
- 2.2 Mental hip-hopping through interleaved temporal dimensions — 38
- 2.3 Habituated presence-to-body in harmony with presence-to-mind: practices — 40

- 2.4 Temporality of space and refutation of interior consciousness — **43**
- 2.4.1 Consciousness and psyche distinct — **44**
- 2.5 Temporally trifocal mental presencing — **45**
- 2.5.1 Traditional treatments of physical movement in linear time — **48**
- 2.5.2 Divine three-dimensional temporal vision according to Boëthius — **48**
- 2.6 Sense perception, physical reality and bodily individuation — **50**
- 2.6.1 Sensuous presence loses its prerogative vis-à-vis temporally three-dimensional mental presencing — **53**
- 2.7 Places in space in time — **54**
- 2.8 Bodying as empsychment and entimement — **56**
- 2.9 Mental absencing distinct from concealment — **61**
- 2.9.1 Sensuously hidden whilst mentally deconcealed — **63**
- 2.10 Mental presencing distinct from deconcealment — **64**
- 2.10.1 Confusing concealment with absence and deconcealment with presence (Heidegger) — **67**
- 2.10.2 Deconcealing a hermeneutic cast as historical struggle — **70**
- 2.11 Presence and absence of essents in the world — **71**
- 2.12 Factual correctness vs. hermeneutic truth — **73**

3 All movement contradictory — 80

- 3.1 All physical movement and change driven by contradiction — **80**
- 3.1.1 Contradiction not resolved in ground — **82**
- 3.1.2 Self-movement of living things driven by contradiction — **83**
- 3.1.3 Contradiction not made to vanish by mathematization of linear time — **83**
- 3.2 Movement in the world — **84**
- 3.2.1 Movement of human life driven by contradiction — **85**
- 3.2.2 Contradiction over correct deconcealment as a driver of democratic power play — **86**
- 3.3 Physical productive movement as seen by the mind a contradiction — **88**
- 3.3.1 Motion one of four kinds of movement/change — **89**
- 3.3.2 Not all movement productive — **90**
- 3.4 Zeno's arrow — **91**
- 3.5 Principle of non-contradiction untenable — **93**
- 3.5.1 Non-contradiction according to Aristotle — **94**
- 3.5.2 Kant on formal non-contradiction — **95**
- 3.6 Non-contradiction in mathematics — **96**
- 3.6.1 Russell's paradox — **98**
- 3.7 The inherently ambiguous deconcealment of phenomena — **100**

- 3.8 Estimative deconcealing of essents — **104**
- 3.8.1 Cartesian estimation — **106**
- 3.9 Truth and power interplay — **107**

4 Antinomies in physics' conceptions of motion in linear time — 109

- 4.1 Motion of physical bodies in time according to Aristotle, Newton, Einstein — **109**
- 4.2 Mathematized access to physical motion — **111**
- 4.3 Perplexing 'earlier' and 'later' in counted time — **113**
- 4.4 Time spatialized as light-distance in relativity theory — **114**
- 4.5 Absoluteness of Newtonian time abandoned in favour of absoluteness of light-motion in Einsteinian relativity — **117**
- 4.6 Motion in relativistic curved space-time — **119**
- 4.7 Perplexities of quantum-mechanical movement — **120**
- 4.8 Mathematico-empiricist modelling in physics — **121**
- 4.9 An historically fateful casting of time in the beginning — **123**

5 Kant on the power of imagination — 128

- 5.1 Kant's antinomy of pure reason — **128**
- 5.1.1 Time as "inner sense", space as "outer sense" — **129**
- 5.2 Kant's antinomy of pure reason (continued) — **131**
- 5.3 Taking leave from Kant: Recasting the ontological difference as temporalogical difference — **136**
- 5.4 Kantian power of imagination deconcealed as originary three-dimensional temporality by Heidegger's critique — **138**
- 5.5 Kant's subjective objectivity further considered — **141**
- 5.6 Liberating the power of imagination from subjugation — **145**
- 5.6.1 Phenomenon of the dream — **149**

6 Temporalogical recasting in historical time — 152

- 6.1 Ideas as hermeneutic and the transformation of ontology into temporalogology — **152**
- 6.1.1 Categories — **154**
- 6.1.2 Factual reinterpretation — **155**
- 6.2 Hermeneutic recasting in historical time — **156**
- 6.3 Dialectic of concepts constituting an interconnected hermeneutic cast: speculative thinking — **158**
- 6.3.1 Commentaries on Hegel's *Logik* — **159**
- 6.4 Dialectical contradiction — **160**
- 6.5 The historical task of temporalhermeneutic recasting — **160**

7 Prolegomenary excursus on Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* — 165

- 7.1 Propriety, sympathy, approbation and disapprobation — 165
- 7.2 The role of imagination and three-dimensional temporality — 169
- 7.3 Self-reflection, self-approbation, self-esteem — 171

8 Recasting humanness through a temporology of whoness — 175

- 8.1 Factual and temporalogical truth of whoness — 175
- 8.2 The truth of human essencing — 178
 - 8.2.1 Existentials of whoness — 179
- 8.3 Who is the human? What-answers — 180
 - 8.3.1 Survival of the human species through sustainability? — 186
- 8.4 Temporalogical casting of whoness — 187
 - 8.4.1 Intermeshing of self-movements through estimative interplay — 191
 - 8.4.2 Contradictoriness of selfhood — 195
 - 8.4.3 Who or what: interplay or interaction among powers? — 200
 - 8.4.4 Taking care of living: conformity and aloofness (Heidegger) — 204

9 Sociation through the medium of thingified value — 208

- 9.1 The gainful game played atop the endlessly accumulative movement of thingified value — 208
 - 9.1.1 Contradictoriness and incalculability of elementary exchange-interplay as kernel of the gainful game — 214
 - 9.1.2 Temporology of the gainful game — 217
- 9.2 Social power and fairness of interplay — 224
- 9.3 Fairness as criterion of justice — 228
- 9.4 Right, law, legitimate state power — 232
- 9.5 Freedom — 234
- 9.6 Phallic whoness — 236
- 9.7 Estimating and esteeming the Earth — 240

10 Bibliography — 247

11 Index — 251

Foreword

...doubt wisely; in strange way
To stand inquiring right, is not to stray;
John Donne *Satyre III*

Da capo – once again from the beginning. Why a fresh start? This inquiry is an attempt to remedy an oversight that has beset the Western mind for millennia, since the very beginnings of philosophy. The oversight consists in the misconception of time, a phenomenon so subtle and elementary as to have misled thinking into confusing time with other phenomena as surrogates. Thus time itself has been conceived as a kind of movement and especially, for the sake of ease of conception, has been spatialized in a variety of different ways. A spatial movement is then counted off as time, the most superficial conception of time inherited already from Aristotle's *Physics*. The spatial movement from which time is counted off may that of the planets (Plato's *Timaios*) through to the motion of light in Einsteinian relativistic space-time. Despite the efforts of thinkers over two-and-a-half millennia, the phenomenon of time is highly susceptible to spatial relapse through which the phenomenon itself is lost. The spatialization of time leads to topsyturvy conceptions of the world and of ourselves, as I hope will become plain through a careful, patient reading.

On another path, the fundamental question initiating Greek philosophy, the question concerning being, was deflected into the metaphysical question concerning the being *of beings*, beings *as* beings or beings *qua* beings, i. e. their 'beingness' (οὐσία). The formulation in Aristotle's seminal *Metaphysics* reads τὸ ὄν ἢ ὄν, i. e. the being simply insofar as it is a being. It is fair to say that today's prevailing Anglo-American philosophy no longer understands this 'qua' (ἢ) that stands for the *ontological difference* between a being and its being. It knows of no ontological difference! This oversight is no mere oversight, but a wilful closure of the mind paving the way to practising a kind of philosophy that cuts off access to historical time as if, with the modern scientific age and a globalized economy, history had come to an end.

The question concerning how being *itself*, prior to any relationship to beings, is to be conceived remained unasked, hanging in the air, with a merely implicit, tacit connection with time that was not raised into the light of explicitness. 'Being' for the Greeks meant implicitly 'perduring, standing presence' (ständige Anwesenheit), a meaning that grants the present a preferential status among the temporal dimensions. Only as late as the twentieth century, with Heidegger's thinking, was the question concerning the meaning of being finally liberated from its metaphysical strictures as the investigation of beings in their 'beingness' to ask for the

meaning of being itself, that was shown to be temporal. The temporality of this originary time (“ursprüngliche Zeit” *Sein und Zeit* 1927), however, could no longer be conceived in the traditional way as derivative of any kind of linear movement, i.e. as any kind of linear succession, and thus linearly spatialized either as a straight line or a circle or some other linear variation thereof.

Rather, this originary time prior to any movement whatsoever is *existential*, which misleads modern philosophical and scientific thinking to classify it as ‘merely’ subjective, as a subjective ‘impression’, ‘experience’ or ‘feeling’ of time within subjective consciousness vis-à-vis an external, objective time that is pinned down ‘objectively’ by counting it off some physical movement or other. Hence the tendency within Anglo-American philosophy of science and in physics itself to regard time as an ‘illusion’, especially as an illusion generated by the brain. Subjectivity, objectivity, material cause, etc. all belong to the panoply of orthodox modern philosophy and science that feel no need to question their centuries-old clichés of thought, especially since they remain so unembarrassedly proud of the successful mathematization of the sciences.

The traces of originary, genuinely existential time can be found in the Platonic and Aristotelean conceptions of the psyche, or soul, that is open to the present through sense perception, to the past through memory and recollection with its regrets, remorse, celebration and commemoration, and to the future through phenomena such as expectation, hope, fear and longing. Even the Platonic conception of memory, in particular, is itself not free of spatialization. The psyche or soul – that may with care be recovered as the site for such three-dimensional temporal openness – has long since been renounced and abandoned in the modern age in favour of internal subjective consciousness that is both individuated and posited as confronting and encountering an external, objective world. This internalization of the psyche as individual consciousness introduces the dichotomy between inside and outside that characterizes today’s thinking, all of which is infected in one way or another by a Cartesian dualism between *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, subjectivity and objectivity, inside and outside. With the necessary care, starting from an alternative starting-point in the pure, pre-spatial, three-dimensional temporality of the psyche will allow the pitfalls of modern subject/object thinking to be skirted, pitfalls that inevitably lead back to ancient entrenched conceptions under another name. The individuation and individualization of the psyche, for instance, are not taken for granted in this inquiry as self-evident and beyond questioning, but are conceptually developed. And the psyche itself is not conceived as being located anywhere at all, neither inside nor outside.

The Hegelian conception that all movement and change is driven by contradiction and that all beings are infected by negation will be shown to be intimately related to the temporally three-dimensional focus of the mind. Thus, starting

with a conception of three-dimensional time is a kind of oblique substitute for the beginning of Hegel's speculative system with its dialectic of being and nothing that results in the category of becoming. As far as I am aware, no one has yet attempted to 'update' Hegel's starting-point for his system with pure being by bringing its temporal meaning into play.

In the Western tradition, starting with Aristotle's *Physics*, all physical movement and change in the world has been, and continues to be, conceived as movement along the time-line of one-dimensional time. As we shall see, time has to be linearized in order for the *absolute will to power over movement* of all kinds to gain and maintain its grip. By contrast, three-dimensional time frees movement along the one-dimensional time-line from its bedfellow, the linear concatenation of cause and effect, thus enabling a conception of free movement that pertains above all to us mortal humans as we exist in the world. This starts with a phenomenology of the free movement of the mind within the psyche that, by sticking to the phenomena as they show themselves without interposing theoretical constructs, ably defies neuroscientific attempts to bring mental movement under material, brain-based, causally explanatory control, thus extinguishing human freedom altogether.

It is the tacitly presupposed subjectivist metaphysics, with its unquestioned dichotomy between subject and object, that allows modern science, committed as it unconditionally is to 'objective' causal explanation, to confidently assume, by begging the question with an audacious *petitio principii*, that the movement of the mind within the psyche is 'merely' subjective. By jettisoning this dogma of the subject/object split that originated with Descartes, movement in the world itself is no longer (conceived to be or interpreted as) constricted by the Aristotelean ontology of productive, efficient movement. Rather, it is allowed to unfold in a kind of movement *sui generis* called *interplay* through which the sociating movement of mutual estimation can be conceived as free, albeit a freedom that necessarily encounters the reciprocal resistance inherent in power plays of all kinds.

In particular, power plays of mutual estimation are played out in the ubiquitous *medium of thingified value* that will be shown to be the medium sociating the dissociated individuals in modern, so-called 'market-based societies' in a globalized economy. The accumulation of thingified value turns out to be the hidden underlying circular movement – otherwise, with cunning ignorance, given the benign label of the "invisible hand" (Adam Smith) – that constrains, induces and even dictates the movement and pace of life of such societies, thus making a mockery of liberal freedom. Is this medium existentially toxic, tainting our humanity in many subtle ways, even beyond our strictly economic lives?

To follow through consistently with substituting the role of being in thinking with its temporal meaning requires gradually developing an alternative conceptual

terminology that begins already with a temporalizing of the traditional conception of *essence* as the substantial whatness of a being to a verbal *essencing*, no longer of beings, but of *essents*. Even the venerable concept of ontology eventually has to be temporalized as *temporality*. All this is part of a temporalological hermeneutic recasting da capo of the world, including human being itself *as* human essencing. This is in order to finally escape the hermeneutic orbit of today's entrenched subjectivist ontology in favour of a conception of essencing in three-dimensional time as *whoness*. The question then becomes: who are we, no longer as human *beings*, and certainly not fundamentally *as* a species of animal (a kind of *whatness*), but existentially *as* human *essents*?

A word on method: as a philosophical work, this inquiry employs the method of hermeneutic phenomenology that moves by successively conceptualizing phenomena in a connected way, rather than the subjectivist empiricist methodology of modern science or the favoured Anglo-American, adversarial method of -ism positions postulated and defended by argument. Empiricist methodology proceeds *epistemologically* from hypotheses formulated in the framework of an explanatory scientific theory that are verified or falsified by being tested *predictively* against experimental data. Truth is conceived as predictability of factual movement that, in turn, proves itself – above all, to be useful – through the effectiveness with which the applied theory controls movement, of whatever kind it may be. The crucial question of time focused on in today's attempts by modern physics to finally discover the 'holy grail' of a theory of quantum gravity uniting general relativity with quantum indeterminacy is dealt with as the quest for a thoroughly mathematized theory that can be empirically tested by observation of quantum and cosmological phenomena to verify or falsify it. The theory's mathematically formulated hypotheses themselves rely on uninterrogated preconceptions about how the phenomena of interest are to be approached and scientifically explained in a predictive, preferably strictly causal, manner.

By contrast, the method of hermeneutic phenomenology makes progress by going backwards to interrogate the tacitly in-built preconceptions through which the most elementary, foundational phenomena are preconceived – and thus appraised, estimated – in order to attain thought-through concepts. Everything hangs on how these elementary phenomena are *interpreted* conceptually, rather than asserting any postulates of one kind or another. Naïve preconceptions of elementary phenomena - to wit, of time and movement - already distort how they show themselves and are (mis)interpreted. The preconceptions are all embedded in a hermeneutic circle that is hard to escape because, once it is entered (and it is always already entered in a given historical age), it is consistent and therefore

self-reinforcing. In this sense, the hermeneutic circle is pernicious, and only the simplest of questions can break its spell.

The crucial point at issue in the present context is whether time itself is to be conceived as a linear dimension (it makes no difference whether the line is imagined geometrically as straight, circular or curved) or as a pre-spatial, three-dimensionally temporal openness, with all the radical consequences that flow from the latter option. It is no longer taken as self-evident, after two-and-a-half millennia, that time and space are on a par as elementary phenomena, thus allowing them to be tied together in a concept of space-time, whether mathematized or not, in which space inevitably is cast as the dominant partner. The concept of three-dimensional time can only prove its mettle by opening up an alternative understanding of the everyday existential world and ourselves that comes closer to the phenomena themselves in an alternative hermeneutic circle, rather than obscuring them with the constructs of scientific theories or basic postulates asserting the nature of what is called 'reality'. A path of conceptually thinking through the phenomena themselves in an interconnected way is offered to see where it leads. Entering upon such a path demands, of course, an open mind prepared to put its prejudices in abeyance in order, perhaps, to gain an alternative viewpoint that reverses the ingrained topsy-turviness of today's mind. Habits of thought are perhaps the hardest to overcome, especially when they have been handed down over millennia and are inculcated in each new generation from birth. Since thinking itself is a movement, it takes time for thoughts to – slowly – come to mind, and therefore demands patience.

ME Cologne, October 2023

1 Imaginative essencing in three-dimensional time

ἀδύνατον εἶναι χρόνον ψυχῆς μὴ οὐσίας

...it is impossible for time to exist if the psyche does not...

Aristotle *Physics* IV 14 223a26¹

1.1 Temporally three-dimensional imagining

Imagine a situation, simply, without any theoretical scientific construction upon it. It could be any kind of scene, whether visually vivid to the mind's eye or not. The situation, comprising all its occurrences (which are here not at all restricted to physical occurrences) could be temporally situated in the *past*, the *present* or the *future*, or even temporally indeterminate as simply imagined, as a situation that perhaps could be, thus coming from a vague future or even as already vividly present as, for instance, in a reverie. No matter how the imagination situates the situation temporally, it presents itself to the *mind* in the present. The imagination thus presupposes (for its conception) the three temporal *dimensions* themselves whence the imagined situation presents itself, coming to mind. These three dimensions (which must not be taken in the mathematical sense of dimension) must be given beforehand, and they must be given as dimensions *through* which the imagined situation can *pass* (Greek διαμετρεῖν) and thus come to mind and be *understood* as such-and-such a situation with all that occurs in it. Where they come to mind is the *psyche*, the seat of the imagination with its (active or passive) power of presencing from the three temporal dimensions and its mental capacity to understand interpretively.

1.1.1 As such-and-such

Hence the mind is that faculty of the three-dimensionally temporally open psyche which enables a temporally given situation to be understood or misunderstood in some way or other, *as* such-and-such. This 'as' is already an implied reference to the hermeneutic nature of all mental understanding. It has the consequence

¹ Many years of experience with published English translations have led me to doing all translations from the Greek and German myself.

that there can be no facts that are not already interpreted in one way or another. The most elementary categories of the understanding, too, such as ‘something’, are hermeneutic in nature, as we shall see. These elementary categories are hard to see explicitly as such and therefore are mostly taken for granted, even by thinking with a pretension to being philosophical. Without these constantly used, elementary categories to interpret what comes to mind, we would not understand anything at all. We would not be human.

The psyche’s faculty of mental understanding needs to come into view in its simplicity and not be *explained* in some way or other as emerging from or caused by anything else, or *why* it understands a situation the way it does, etc. Rather the focus has to be on seeing the simple phenomenon itself: the mind understands situations, occurrences that present themselves (or simply: presence) in the psyche *as* such-and-such.

1.1.2 The starting-point of Hegel’s *Logik*

Im Hinblick auf den Titel *Sein und Zeit* könnte man nun von *Ontochronie* sprechen. Hier steht χρόνος an der Stelle von λόγος. Aber wurden beide nur ausgetauscht? Nein! Es gilt vielmehr, alles von Grund auf und unter Übernahme der wesentlichen Motive der Frage nach dem Sein neu zu entfalten.

Martin Heidegger *Hegels Phänomenologie des Geistes* GA32:144

With regard to the title *Being and Time* one could now speak of *ontochrony*. Here χρόνος stands in the place of λόγος. But have the two only been swapped around? No! Rather, everything has to be unfolded anew from the bottom up, taking on board the essential motives motivating the question concerning being.

As is well-known, Hegel’s *Logik*, the foundation of his dialectical system, starts with being and nothingness, Sein und Nichts, which are initially indistinguishable; they are the same (dasselbe). One could say that for Hegel, the mind is initially a blank, imagining nothing, and nothing is the same as pure being, both lacking as they do any differentiation or determination whatsoever through negation to mark them off from each other: being is nothingness, and nothingness is being, and the dialectic of being and nothingness does not lead to any movement. Hegel calls on us to follow the mind initially thinking pure indeterminacy that admits no differentiation. This starting-point for the *Logik* is purportedly time-less. It is purely logical, an achievement of pure rational thinking prior to any experience of the world. It is moot whether thinking can ever be timeless. Is not pure indeterminacy for the mind pure presence? And does not thinking pure indeterminacy amount to the blank mind staring into dimensions of pure presence, into *unmoving* time itself? Does not the purity of this incipient thinking consist in its not thinking any-

thing, any thing, any entity? For his part, Hegel only comes to conceive time in his system with the *Naturphilosophie*, along with space, thus adhering closely to traditional thinking on time and space as on a par with each other. His treatment of time is a paraphrase of Aristotle's.² Hegel is also one of the thinkers who, like Plato in his *Timaios*, conceive a spatialization of time as the 'eternal' circling of the celestial bodies. One could say that Hegel misses the starting-point.

In stark contrast to Hegel's starting-point, mine is with the experience of originary, open, three-dimensional time itself that has only a superficial resemblance with traditional linear time. This will become apparent as we proceed. If, after Heidegger, being (der Sinn von Sein überhaupt, *Sein und Zeit* §83 and passim) means time,³ then this simple elementary phenomenon of originary, three-dimensional time (rather than the superficial conception of time as counted off movement) is the appropriate one to choose as starting-point. It is altogether prior to movement and therefore does not 'flow'. If it is originary, it must be thought through first of all, prior to any further phenomena whose thinking-through already presupposes a conception of more elementary phenomena, namely, in this case, the phenomenon of originary time in its simple, pure, temporally three-dimensional openness for presencing and absencing.

1.2 The fourth temporal dimension

The three temporal dimensions are given to the psyche's imagination as a *unity of three-dimensional time* that is passed through to the imagining psyche endowed with the mental faculty of, or capacity for, understanding. This latter passing-through (from Greek διαμετρεῖν, 'to pass or measure through, hence traverse', German: durchmessen) constitutes the *fourth temporal dimension*⁴ through which unified three-dimensional time passes and is proffered to the psyche, thus appropriating the psyche to three-dimensional time to which it then *belongs in an identity*. Although playing into each other, each temporal dimension is kept apart, distinct from the others, thus enabling the psyche's mental faculty to situate the imagined situation as one that is present *now* in the present, or one that was *earlier* and is therefore *refused* presence in the present, or one that *may* come to pass *later* from

2 For more detail cf. 'The Time of History' in my *A Question of Time* (2015b) and Heidegger *Sein und Zeit* § 82 a) footnote 1.

3 "Offenbart sich die Zeit selbst als Horizont des Seins?" ("Does time itself reveal itself as the horizon of being?" Heidegger *Sein und Zeit* § 83 final sentence. Cf. Eldred *A Question of Time* Chapter 4 'Being Time Space' (2015b).

4 Cf. Heidegger 'Zeit und Sein' (1962) in *Zur Sache des Denkens*.

the future and is therefore *withheld* from the present. Now, earlier and later are situated in the three open temporal dimensions of present, past and future, and, as we shall soon see, do not necessarily imply a movement from later through now to earlier, i. e. from the future through the present into the past. The temporal dimensions themselves are unmoving or, more precisely, prior to any movement whatsoever, including that of mental essencing (see below). For the most part it will be convenient to speak simply of three-dimensional time, the fourth dimension or unified ‘passing-through’ to the psyche being implicitly understood as the *psyche’s belonging to three-dimensional time in an identity*. They are thus ‘the same’ (τὸ αὐτό). Time is given to the psyche as a gift that is, ambiguously, both enpropriating and appropriating. The appropriating passing-through may also be conceived conversely as a stretching-out, or ex-tension of the psyche into the three temporal dimensions that also play into, interleave or even dovetail with, each other, as we shall see in more detail below. The psyche is exposed to ec-static time.

The fourth temporal dimension enables a *doubling of time* onto two planes by virtue of the mind’s being able to focus on occurrences in any of the three temporal dimensions of past, present and future from the present. In particular, occurrences in the present can be focused upon in a presence of mind, thus introducing a distinction between Gegenwart (the present) and Vergegenwärtigung (coming to presence in the mind). All three temporal dimensions are open to the focusing mind in its own presence of mind. Such *mental focusing* is the *primordial kind of movement*; ‘primordial’ not in the sense of ‘first in time, earliest’, but as first in the order of thinking through the phenomena themselves. Much more needs to be said about this focusing of the mind in the following. In particular, the doubling of time onto two mental planes is the condition of possibility for self-consciousness in subject-object metaphysics and self-reflection, in which the self bends back onto its own thoughts (cf. Chapters 7 and 8).

1.3 Imagining a dynamic situation: movement along an imagined time-line

In a provisional conception that will prove to be inadequate, an imagined situation is generally a dynamic one in which there is some sort of sequence or succession of occurrences, i. e. a dynamic event of some kind that takes place in the dimension of the past, the present or the future. No matter how the imagined dynamic situation is assigned to one (or more) of the temporal dimensions past, present or future, it will itself consist of a continuous sequence of occurrences for the presently imagining mind to follow that are imagined as passing through an imagined present from an imagined future into an imagined past with respect to the imagined pre-

sent which *itself* may be situated in either the past, present or future. The imagined dynamic situation is an imagined *movement*, even a continuous one, in one of the three temporal dimensions as a sequence of occurrences occurring one after the other along an *interval of the time-line* from later (not yet) through now to earlier (no longer). The sequentiality of the imagined occurrences allows their lining-up along an imagined time-interval that itself may be imagined as falling entirely within the past, within the future, or around the present (thus straddling also past and future). The imagined dynamic situation is imagined by the mind in the *present*, i. e. through its *present* focus, but as a movement along a time-interval translated to be encapsulated in one of the temporal dimensions or around the present.

1.3.1 Derivative linear time

The imagined time-interval of linear time is itself not originary but *derived* from imagining the sequence of successive occurrences along a line. That is, linear time is only derivative of movement, which is therefore more originary, whereas the three temporal dimensions themselves introduced above are given originally as altogether non-moving, prior to any movement, but, in turn, as enabling all movement to be temporally situated (for human understanding). So far, only the very restricted case of a linear movement of successive occurrences is considered. In tandem with a sequence of occurrences succeeding each other along linear time, the now (present moment) of time is conceived, somewhat incoherently, as being itself a moving sequence of present moments along a line (Jetztfolge) consisting almost entirely of moments that ‘are not yet’ or ‘are no longer’. Such a conception presupposes that ‘to be’ or ‘to exist’ means ‘to be present in a given moment’ (but to whom?). All occurrences that do not occur in the given present moment ‘do not exist’ according to this conception, and linear time itself is in this sense almost entirely ‘non-existent’. This represents just one of the antinomies of the traditional conception of time first investigated by Aristotle in his *Physics*, the science of moveable entities (κινούμενα) *as* (or *qua*) moving, especially movement with respect to place, i. e. locomotion (κίνησις κατὰ τὸν τόπον).

1.4 Linear mental movement in the imagination

So little imagination!

For the imagined sequence of occurrences occurring along an imagined time-line (often poorly conceived as a so-called ‘stream of consciousness’, as with William James) either in a presently imagined future, present or past, the focused, imagining mind, in its *own* present movement of the imagination, passes neatly through this sequence with one occurrence having already passed, followed by the presently imagined occurrence, followed in turn by the occurrence that has not yet occurred. Thus the occurrences are kept temporally apart and sequentially ordered in the imagining mind. This keeping-apart and ordering of occurrences along a time-line is to be distinguished from the distinctness in unity of the three open dimensions of ordinary time themselves introduced above. Nevertheless, the focusing of the imagining mind on a succession of occurrences is only possible because the unified three temporal dimensions have been passed through to it in the fourth temporal dimension. The genuinely three-dimensional conception of time will lead later to a deconstruction of the conception of mental movement along any sort of time-line and its *Aufhebung*⁵ (sublating, lifting) to a richer, more concrete, non-linear conception with more determinations. Such sublative movement in the concepts themselves is characteristic of dialectical thinking that ‘thinks through’ (διά-voια), thus bringing each phenomenon to its respective concept, successively bringing new aspects to light and thus raising it ‘to its truth’, as Hegel puts it. A phenomenon lacking its concept is like a loose cannon that can only cause confusion. It should go without saying that a concept must not be confused with a (theoretical, philosophical) ‘model’ or, even worse, with a ‘picture’ or ‘metaphor’.

The mind can imagine, for instance, by focusing in the present, the sequence of occurrences constituting a past traumatic event such as a car accident or the death of a close relative that can be relived presently in the imagination as ‘having been’ in a certain more or less continuous sequence. Or the mind can imagine a serious conversation that one is scheduled to have on an important matter and go through the motions (in the present) of an imagined sequence of what may be said in the to and fro of such a future discussion. Or one can imagine from the past what one should have said in a job interview that went badly, thus revising what has been with a view toward a possible imagined, improved, future interview. Imagining a movement as a more or less continuous sequence of occur-

5 *Aufhebung* in the Hegelian sense can be conveniently characterized by the threefold conceptual movement of waiving, saving and raising or annulling/suspending, preserving and elevating.

rences situated either in the past, the present or the future is only one way in which the mind imagines. The mind can also effortlessly skip its present focus (cf. 2.2 *Mental hip-hopping through interleaved temporal dimensions*) from one occurrence in a given temporal dimension to another one in another temporal dimension, each of which only reaches it by being passed to it as the unified three dimensions of time proffered to the imagining mind. The mental imagination is thus very free in its movement through three-dimensional time (indeed, it has *three temporal degrees of freedom*) and imaginative movement can happen not only when awake but also when dreaming.

The power of imagination is therefore given priority in these considerations because it encompasses all three temporal dimensions in its mental movement. This priority given to the imagination in its temporal fullness breaks with the priority traditionally given to the present and particularly to the sensuous present, as if 'to exist' meant 'to be sensuously present in the present'. The full temporal scope of the power of imagination is always at play, mostly inconspicuously, in our awareness of the world and it may even be said that most of what comes to mind whilst living in the world is precisely *not* sensuously present in the present.

1.5 Temporally three-dimensional absorption in a sensuously present situation

Apart from imagining a dynamic situation, one can be, and often is, also absorbed by a current situation happening in the present in whatever kind of action or inaction. The current situation presenting itself to the mind includes, but not exclusively, also occurrences presenting themselves sensuously in the present to the various senses along with bodily interplay with these sensuous occurrences. Such absorption in the matter presently at hand does not exclude, but rather in general includes also mental skipping back and forth between past and future occurrences that pertain to the current situation. Passive inaction allows the mind to freewheel in day-dreaming oblivious to the sensuously present in which the unbound imagination comes into play in the full scope of its three-dimensional temporality, skipping, hopping, flitting freely and non-linearly from one occurrence in one temporal dimension to another in another (cf. 2.2 *Mental hip-hopping through interleaved temporal dimensions*). Such hopping and skipping is only possible because the three temporal dimensions are independent of each other and do not necessarily have to line up in a single dimension. Absorption in a task at hand in the present relies also on the senses and bodily interplay (cf. 2.3 *Habituated presence-to-body in harmony with presence-to-mind: practices*) whilst incorporating occurrences from the past and future, for instance, recollections of how the task was last performed

or reference to the next task to be performed in the future or even to some other obliquely related future or past event. The mind is always stretched out into, or stands out ec-statically into the three temporal dimensions even when it is concentrated on a matter at hand, which will become more explicitly apparent later. Conversely, one could also say that the unified, independent three temporal dimensions are always proffered to the understanding mind. Insofar, the mind is always dependent upon the power of imagination passing through to its occurrences of any kind related to each other in a temporal situating by unified three-dimensional time.

1.6 Psychic power of imagination proffered by the three-dimensional temporal openness

To briefly reiterate salient points: the mind itself is the *faculty of understanding* situated within the psyche which is itself, first of all, the recipient of the unified *openness* of three-dimensional time proffered to it through the *fourth* temporal dimension. As such, the psyche *belongs* to the unified three-dimensional time passed through to it in which the psyche's power of imagination plays, employing its mental faculty to understand interpretively the situations it imagines in one way or another. In a certain way, one could even say, perhaps misleadingly, that the psyche 'is nothing other than' this temporal openness that is proffered to and reaches it through the fourth temporal dimension.

1.6.1 Psyche not a thing

The psyche is here initially conceived, fundamentally and simply, as the openness for the unified three dimensions of time passed through to it. With such a conceptual determination, the psyche is thought in a way close to the existential *Da* of *Dasein*, but with a shift of emphasis from revealing/concealing to presencing/absencing, which will be discussed in more detail further on (cf. 2.9 *Mental absencing distinct from concealment* and 2.10 *Mental presencing distinct from deconcealment*). Apart from the untranslatability of *Da* into English, the term also has unavoidable spatial connotations of 'here' or 'there' that obscure its properly pre-spatial, purely temporal character as developed in *Sein und Zeit* as temporality (*Zeitlichkeit*). The Western tradition is replete with conceptions of time that spatialize and thus miss it in various ways. The linear time-intervals discussed above are only one way in which the phenomenon of time has been (apparently conveniently) spatialized.

In the Western tradition, the psyche has also been conceived as the (immaterial) soul in an intimate relation with Christianity and is thus a term ‘infected’ with theological or spiritual connotations that here have to be held in abeyance. From the beginnings of philosophy, and prior to its intertwinings with Christianity, the human psyche has been conceived ambiguously. On the one hand, it has been determined as the *mode* of being, i. e. as the beingness (οὐσία, Seiendheit), of living beings, i. e. as the principle or origin of self-movement of a living being, be it plant, animal or human. But it has also, and usually, been conceived in the same breath as a kind of thingly being itself, thus reducible to a ‘what’ occupying even a physical location in the body, generally the heart or, since Descartes, more likely the brain as the seat of cogitation. Hence the crude conception that when the psyche leaves the body, the being dies. Since one signification of the Greek ψυχή is ‘breath’, there is even a phenomenal plausibility in this conception because it is a correct observation that animals die when they stop breathing. The Latin equivalent, anima, likewise signifies not only ‘soul, spirit, shade’, but also ‘breath, breath of wind, wind’. An ‘animal’ is therefore from its etymology a being enlivened, animated by an anima. The significations of ψυχή as ‘spirit’, ‘ghost’ and ‘shade’ also suggest a ‘scarcely material’ thing on the cusp of immateriality.

A material reduction of the psyche that avoids wispy spirituality seems obvious to the present hour in modern, increasingly neuroscientific psychology, for which the psyche, or its mental faculty, is conceived as materially brain-based, if not as synonymous with the synaptically firing brain at the core of the central nervous system, or at least as a kind of qualitative emanation from nervous activity mentally experienceable as a quale.⁶ Rather than deserving to be praised as a boon for humankind attained through scientific progress, in its smug, hubristic self-over-estimation, neuroscience is a calamity. Modern science even undertook (unsuccessfully) to weigh the psyche, an experiment that makes sense only if the psyche is preconceived as some kind of material, extended thing. The psyche conceived as the immaterial principle enabling self-movement of a material living being has remained a mystery giving rise to numerous conundrums concerning the relationship between psyche and body, as exemplified by the famous Cartesian dualism.

6 “A mental phenomenon that is consciously experienceable is a quale.” Ukachoke, (2018) Chapter 3 ‘Qualia, Conscious Awareness, and Conscious Experiences’ <https://mindtheory.net/chapter-3/>, last accessed 09 December 2023. The summary of this chapter reads, “The mind and its phenomena of qualia and consciousness are non-material entities with information and information processing as their essence. They evolved into existence to help increase the survival chance of the species that possess them”.

In his *Les Passions de l'Âme* (1649), Descartes pushed the conception of human being to the limits of the mechanical, but still had to resort to positing animal spirits (esprits animaux) as principles enlivening the body, in tandem with interactions with the soul as the seat of thinking and will that was said to be located in the pituitary gland at the base of the brain. These animal spirits nonetheless were conceived as very fine transpirations of the blood and hence as semi-material. Today, these esprits animaux would be nearer to hormones or genes (bits of DNA and RNA) being treated without further ado quasi as principles of life itself, whereby, according to the findings of neuroscience, various parts of the brain assume various roles for cognition and consciousness itself. Today's neuroscience has swept away any misgivings about a mechanical, dualist Cartesian conception of human being itself and proceeds dogmatically, employing only empirically established, but tendentially rigged, results of effectivity of its explanations. Other questions, such as Cartesian dualism, are relegated to the realm of philosophical speculation in today's worst, most contemptuous sense of the word.

Already by giving the psyche a temporal, pre-spatial determination, a break is made with any 'thingly' determination of the psyche. The Greek conception of the psyche is cast not only as the principle (ἀρχή) of self-movement of all living beings, whether they be microbe, plant or animal, including humankind as a species of animal, but also as the intimately connected seat of the openness for sense perception (αἴσθησις) of the world, starting with the most primitive sense, that of touch (ἅφή). The sense of touch is that primitive bodily sense through which a living being primally senses the resistance of physical things, that they are (present) at all. This sensual openness to the world is the hallmark of all living beings that enables also their self-movement in the world. Of sole concern on the present path of thinking is the psyche as the principle of liveliness or *existence* of *human* being (that will transform into temporal human essencing), without regard to the (modified) traditional hierarchy of (virus—microbe—)plant—animal—humankind. This hierarchy accords with the ontological build-up of the human being as a species of animal, τὸ ζῶον λόγον ἔχον, the rational animal. This is a fateful casting of human being that allows all Western thinking, with unrelenting virulence even today, to regard animality as basic – as if we humans could have insight into animal being prior to understanding our own humanity, i.e. *who* we are. It is a topsyturvy way of thinking altogether that, among other things, endows unwarranted primacy to the material human body with all its physiology that can be compared with other physical animal bodies (mice, drosophila fruit flies, earth worms, yeasts, microbes, etc.) in their mode of functioning. It should then come as no surprise that, with supreme hubristic confidence, modern scientific thinking then attempts to reduce the specific hallmark of human being, namely, its rationality, to

the neuronal cogitating of the material human brain that is amenable to material, quantitative investigation.

On the present path of thinking, precisely the opposite is attempted in order to see what this alternative starting-point brings to light, thus revolutionizing our conception of who we are. Hence the initial focus on the human psyche in its belonging to three-dimensional time. This focus nevertheless does not exclude some recognizable overlap with traditional conceptions. Within the psyche as the seat of sensuous, perceptual openness to the world in the *present* is situated, at least for humankind, also human understanding (*voũç*, reason, Vernunft) as the psyche's characteristic hallmark that 'specifies' humankind with its specific difference within the animal genus. Insofar, there is a natural linguistic association between psyche and mind already in the tradition of Western thinking, and both are thought as individuated, but also ambivalently as all-encompassing (e.g. Plato's world-soul, Anaxagoras' *voũç*, that later becomes interpreted as Hegel's Weltvernunft and Weltgeist). In the present study it is three-dimensional time that is all-encompassing.

With the onset of the modern age in the seventeenth century, the psyche was recast in an irremediably individuated way as consciousness that was even located in the body (to wit, the brain) along with a faculty of consciousness called cognition that has replaced a conception of *voũç*. Hence, for instance, in Kant's transcendental philosophy we find interiorized subjective consciousness (*Gemüt*) as the seat of pure, a priori intuition, on the one hand, and pure, a priori reason, on the other. Henceforth, both consciousness and cognition as individuated can, at most, only be collected, collectivized, gathered into so-called collective consciousness, collective intentionality, collective unconscious and the like, to construct anything faintly resembling a shared, historical Geist or mind. How such collecting is at all possible is a question left unposed by modern subject-object philosophy; it is thoughtlessly taken for granted as if, at first, there were individual subjective consciousness that then had to be collectivized in some way, such as collective, intentional will, to attain any notion of 'we', of a shared world. The Geist or mind of an age, its *voũç*, however, is the gathering (*λέγειν*) into a *λόγος* that already casts, prior to any collectivization, how 'we' understand an historical world.

A notion of individual cogitating subjective consciousness enables modern sciences such as psychology, cognitive science and neuroscience to investigate their subjects by individuating cognition, intelligence, etc. as functions of the brain in collaboration with the nervous system. This indispensable notion can then be carried over, via a modelling through artificial neural networks, to today's endeavours to build artificial intelligence around an artificial equivalent of the brain, namely, the central processing unit (CPU) processing information. To 'think' then is posited to mean 'compute' information, with Descartes' conception of the psyche as the

seat of thinking being translated into the computations carried out by a Universal Turing Machine.

1.6.2 Individuation, individualization, dissociation

To summarize and anticipate: in a move by thinking away from an entrenched tradition, the concern is not with the mode of being of living beings in general, but solely with human being and, ultimately, with human essencing, as we shall see. Priority is thus given to the Delphic motto, “Know thyself” (γνώθι σ’αυτό). This enables a pivot in thinking’s focus from the traditional fixation on whatness with its *categorical* ontological determination to whoness, whose mode of being or ontology (or rather: mode of essencing or temporalogy) has to be captured conceptually by *existentials*. The *individuated* human psyche as a *sociating* individual has to be regarded as the kernel of *whoness*, which is not yet the topic in focus (cf. 8 *Recasting humanness through a temporalogy of whoness*). Such individuation (Vereinzelung) of the psyche into many psyches, and thus many individuals, is conceived first of all as the intimate obverse of their sharing the all-encompassing universal psyche of an age with its fundamental moods and its ineluctably shared historical cast of mind. This individuation of the psyche into individuals goes along with its individuation by virtue of individual bodies partaking of the psyche (cf. 2.8 *Bodying as empsychment and entimement*). Individuals in the togetherness (Mitsein) of society become *who* they are in mutually estimative interplay that sociates them. This may be regarded as their *individualization* as selves. In a further step, in modern societies, individualized individuals are both *dissociated* by the medium of thingified value (in the guise of various forms of private property) and also sociated by it. Their *sociation* (Vergesellschaftung) through the medium of thingified value (cf. 9 *Sociation through the medium of thingified value*) is the precondition for the ideology of *individualism* that pervades today’s Western societies. This hint anticipates what is yet to come.

1.6.3 Psyche and mind according to Aristotle

The seminal text for Western thinking on the psyche and mind is Aristotle’s Περὶ Ψυχῆς (*De Anima, On the Soul*), where he investigates in detail the various capacities of all living beings comprising plants, animals and humans, starting with the basic powers of nutrition, through growth and decay, reproduction, locomotion to mind, with which only human beings are said to be endowed. Here I briefly consider the Aristotelean conception of psyche and mind only in relation to human

beings with their characteristic, inherent openness to the world. Significantly, Aristotle says that “in a certain way, the psyche is all things” (ἡ ψυχὴ τὰ ὄντα πῶς ἐστὶ πάντα. *De Anima* III viii 431b21) through its two principal modes of receptivity for beings in the world, namely, sense-perception (αἴσθησις) and intellect (νοῦς, mind) with these regarded first of all in relation to an individual human being (ἄνθρωπος) who, via its bodily, material, sense-organs (αἰσθητήρια), is able to take in the impressions of a being and sense it.

Receptivity, openness for the world thus stand at the centre of Aristotle’s conception of the psyche, albeit that sense perception signifies such an openness as mediated by the bodily senses only in the present, whereas a conception of the psyche first and foremost as an openness toward three-dimensional time does not suffer from this impediment. On the other hand, Aristotle’s conception of mind (νοῦς) is readily adaptable to a temporal conception, and even more his conception of the imagination (φαντασία).

Thanks to a third mode of receptivity, viz. the power of imagination (φαντασία), whose images (φαντάσματα) are conceived as being “like sense-perceptions, but without matter” (τὰ γὰρ φαντάσματα ὡςπερ αἰσθήματά ἐστι, πλὴν ἄνευ ὕλης 432a10), “the mind thinks the ‘looks’ of beings in images of the imagination” (Τὰ μὲν οὖν εἶδη τὸ νοητικὸν ἐν τοῖς φαντάσμασι νοεῖ 431b3). “The images of imagination occur to the thinking psyche like sense-perceptions. ... Therefore the psyche never thinks without an image from the imagination,...” (τῆ δὲ διανοητικῆ ψυχῆ τὰ φαντάσματα οἷον αἰσθήματα ὑπάρχει. ... διὸ οὐδέποτε νοεῖ ἄνευ φαντάσματος ἢ ψυχῆ... 431a14) The power of imagination thus provides the ontological images to the mind for its thinking, ontological images being the ‘looks’ of what a being is as such, i.e. its beingness or whatness.⁷ Noetic power relies on imaginative power. For Aristotle there are no *existential* images of *whoness* for the mind to see because the question concerning whoness was not yet explicitly on the philosophical agenda. In fact, the very term ‘existence’ (εἶναι) signifies for the Greeks in an underdetermined way merely that something ‘is’. The question regarding the meaning of being, i.e. the meaning of the little word ‘is’, was still millennia away from being posed.

When the mind thinks a thing knowingly, it is the same as that thing in its eidetic beingness: “Knowledge at work is identical with the thing thought.” (τὸ δ’ αὐτὸ ἐστὶν ἢ κατ’ ἐνέργειαν ἐπιστήμη τῷ πράγματι. 430a20 and 431a1); they belong together as one. Conversely, a being only properly *is* in its beingness, i.e. *exists as*

7 Two millennia later, Kant’s *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* will reiterate this mediating role of the power of imagination (Einbildungskraft) between pure sense perception and pure understanding; cf. 5 Kant on the power of imagination.