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## The Ecstases of Time

“Ecstatic temporality,” or the “ecstatic interpretation” of “original,” “primordial” temporality, is one of the major achievements of the second division of Heidegger’s 1927 *Sein und Zeit*, *Being and Time*. When does Heidegger first come up with the idea of the “ecstatic”? What does he mean by it? Do we know where in the history of philosophy Heidegger may have found this idea? And was that idea ever applied to *time* in the way he applies it? If the ecstatic analysis of temporality is as remarkable as I believe it is, and if it alters in a fundamental way our idea of human existence in time, why does Heidegger soon drop it after the publication of *Being and Time*? And even if *he* drops it, does that mean *we* have to? These will be my questions not only today but throughout the series of the four Brauer Lectures.

Let me begin with section 65, and not with section 64. Section 64, on “Care and Selfhood,” seems to me highly problematic: its appeal to a self, an αὐτός or *ipse*, and especially to the independence and autonomy of that self, even to some sort of *permanence* of the self—all of these suggested by his emphatic and repeated use of the hyphenated word *Selbst-ständigkeit*—seems to me to be as problematic as all the other terms he urges his readers to avoid, namely, *spirit*, *soul*, *body*, *person*, *personality*, and *subject*. Indeed, the problematic notion of a standing self, problematic if only because it does not seem to be submitted to that *Destruktion* or “dismantling” of ontological notions on which Heidegger otherwise insists, accompanies Heidegger after *Being and Time* as well. In the 1930s, for example, he counts on such selfhood for the grandiose “decision” toward which he feels his times are compelling him.

No, let me begin with section 65, “Temporality as the Ontological Meaning of Care.” Three preliminary questions obtrude, however, before we begin to read section 65, which is where Heidegger first introduces his interpretation of “ecstatic” temporality. We have already heard these questions. First, when does Heidegger first come up with this idea of ecstatic

temporality? Second, do we know where in the history of philosophy Heidegger may have found this idea of ecstasy, which he was able to apply to time? Third, if the ecstatic analysis, along with the analysis of being toward death, or toward “the end” of our mortal existence, is the great achievement of Division Two of *Sein und Zeit*, why does Heidegger soon drop it?

When does he first come up with the idea? Apparently, quite late in the writing of *Sein und Zeit*. During the summer semester of 1925 Heidegger teaches a lecture course titled *Prolegomena to the History of the Concept of Time*, now published as volume 20 of the Heidegger *Gesamtausgabe*. Surprisingly, the words and the idea of ecstatic temporality do not appear there. Time itself is understood to be “the guideline” of his inquiry “into the being of beings” (20:8), and yet, remarkably, there is not a hint of the ecstases. It is not as though the theme of time were new to Heidegger, either in 1925 or 1927. Indeed, his *venia legendi* lecture in July 1915 is on “The Concept of Time in the Discipline of History.” Heidegger, we remember, serving as Husserl’s assistant, had as his special assignment the phenomenology of the historical sciences. We could hardly expect the word *Ekstase* to appear in the *venia legendi* lecture, but what does appear there, presumably for the first time, is the notion of time *proper*, “authentic” time, as it were, *die eigentliche Zeit*. In his preliminary discussion of time as the measure of motion and acceleration in modern physics from Galileo through relativity theory, Heidegger comments on what it means to declare a particular instant of time the starting point of a measurement: “We make an incision into the timescale, so to speak, thereby destroying time proper [*die eigentliche Zeit*] in its flow, and we cause it to cease. The flux freezes, becomes a plane surface [*Fläche*], and only as a plane surface is it measurable. Time becomes a homogeneous place-order, a scale, a parameter” (FS 366). Time for an historian, by contrast, is a matter of *qualitative* determinations, as Dilthey and Bergson have already insisted, qualitative in terms of (1) our assessing the authenticity of the historian’s sources, (2) elaborating the context of the period under discussion, and (3) estimating in some nonarithmetic way the distance of our own world from the world under discussion. Periods and distances in the historical sciences do not succumb to measurement. Heidegger is particularly attuned to the problem of the historian’s selection of themes for discussion and even his or her decisions about what counts as evidence; for these matters are shaped by his or her own history, indeed in ways that are seldom evident. By 1915 Heidegger is sensitive to issues of hermeneutics, although that word too does not yet appear.

Heidegger’s focus on questions of time and history is clearly visible in every course he teaches and in every text he writes between 1915 and 1927.

It is to *Being and Time* that we must now turn, and yet I find it impossible to finish discussing the *venia legendi* lecture before mentioning the final example Heidegger offers to show how the historian reckons with, but does not measure, time and time periods. Heidegger cites the twelve weeks that it took the Prussian general August von Mackensen to reach the Russian-Polish *Festungsviereck*, a recent event in World War I. Those twelve weeks assume their proper importance, Heidegger says, only insofar as they reflect “the vast and powerful thrust of our allied troops [*die ungeheure Stoßkraft unserer verbündeten Truppen*],” the assuredness with which the “operational target” was chosen, and the “resistance” of the Russian army (FS 374). Such military examples will not be missing from Heidegger’s lectures on Nietzsche two decades later, to say nothing yet of other texts from the late 1930s and early 1940s. They show how difficult it is for a philosopher as well as a historian to avoid those intrusions by contemporary events into one’s selection of themes and examples. Indeed, in *Being and Time* Heidegger will take pains to show how existential-ontological analysis, in the pursuit of its aims, has to purge itself of the news of the day, as of “everydayness” or “dailiness” altogether. These military examples also show how impossible it is for Heidegger to purge himself of his *deutsch-nationales Denken* and the militancy that clings to it. The very “principle” of historical conceptuality, Heidegger concedes at the end of his *venia legendi* lecture, lies in the “value relation,” *Wertbeziehung*, that permeates historical institutions such as the Church and the historians themselves. To repeat, these “value-relations,” are seldom visible to the historian—or philosopher—him- or herself.

I realize that I may be getting sidetracked by this, but I cannot drop the matter before mentioning that, at least according to some reports I have seen, Walter Benjamin hated Heidegger’s *venia legendi* lecture, which he may have heard—the two of them were students of Heinrich Rickert’s in Freiburg during the years 1912 to 1913—and which in any case Benjamin would surely have read. Nevertheless, it would be worthwhile to compare in detail Heidegger’s views in that lecture with Benjamin’s *Kunstkritik* essay and the “critical-epistemological preface” to his *Trauerspiel* book, both of which appear to conform with Heidegger’s main theses; it would be most instructive to compare that lecture with the late “On the Concept of History,” which, with its stringent critique of historicism, opens a gap between Benjamin’s mature conception and Heidegger’s early conception of historical time. Yet even here, for instance, in Benjamin’s criticism of our belief in progress and the “homogeneous” notion of time that underlies such a belief, we hear echoes of Heidegger’s most strongly held views. In the *Schwarze Hefte* (96:183) we hear Heidegger say, “Expelled to the farthest remove

from the truth of the historic are the historians,” and Benjamin would be hard put to disagree, even though his sense of the “historic” would differ sharply from Heidegger’s. But enough.<sup>1</sup>

Our second question was: Where in the history of philosophy might Heidegger have found, if only quite late in his writing of *Sein und Zeit*, the idea of ecstatic temporality? Not in Husserl, surely. And even though Heidegger does find Bergson’s *Données immédiates de la conscience* compelling reading, which does not mean to say that he always interprets it well or fairly, “ecstasy” is not there, even if something of Bergsonian *élan* is already present, and *élan*, as *Schwungung* and *Schwung*, will be important for Heidegger’s later thinking of time. Could it have been in Kierkegaard, then, or in the literature of mysticism? Perhaps. But there ecstasy would have to do with some sort of intervention of “eternity” into time, or at least with the temporary suspension of the temporal. Franz von Baader (1765–1841), in “On the Concept of Ekstasis as Metastasis,” defines ecstasy as the temporary suspension of the interlacing of body, soul, and spirit, in anticipation of their complete separation in death.<sup>2</sup> Whereas von Baader is an important source for Schelling, however, he is not such for Heidegger. Could it have been Schelling himself who gives Heidegger the word and the idea of ekstasis, inasmuch as Schelling uses the word ἔκστασις during his years in Erlangen? Let me take a moment to examine this possibility in detail.

Heidegger mentions “ecstatic temporality” briefly in the notes for his lecture course on Schelling during the Summer Semester of 1936. Among the three principal terms at the outset of Schelling’s 1809 treatise on human freedom—*Wesen*, *Grund*, *Existenz*—the last means not the being on hand of

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1. One more word on the question as to *when* ecstatic temporality becomes a theme for Heidegger. Even if ecstatic *temporality* is not discovered until quite late, it is important to note that both the “Dasein” of 1927 and the “factual life” of the early 1920s are “ecstatic” in many senses of that word. Dasein, as being in the world, is “out there”; and even when “factual life” bolts the door on its existence, preferring to live in dispersion and distraction (*Streuung*, *Zerstreuung*), something of its transcendence survives. Heidegger stresses that factual life is essentially “away from itself” and even “outside itself” (*Von-sich-weg*, *Aus-sich-hinaus*). It will therefore be a matter of remembering such ecstasies—as “everyday” and as “ruinous” as they may seem—when it comes to *time* and *temporality*. See my discussion of this at PO 40–41.

2. Franz von Baader, “Über den Begriff von Ekstasis als Metastasis,” in *Schriften*, ed. Max Pulver (Leipzig: Insel Verlag, 1921), 232–42. My thanks to Alexander Bilda for the reference.

a thing, or a thing's *existentia* as opposed to its *essentia*, but precisely what Heidegger calls *Ex-sistenz*, "that which steps out of itself," *das aus sich Heraus-tretende* (SA 129). What undergoes this stepping out? Heidegger replies, *das im Heraus-treten sich Offenbarende*, everything that "in stepping out reveals itself," or "enters into the open" (*ibid.*), and that of course means beings as a whole, not merely Dasein. By 1936, both "existence" and "ecstasy" have less to do with the unfolding of human temporality than with "the truth of beyng" as such and in general.

Yet temporality is also discussed in terms of Schelling's discussion of God's "becoming" (SA 135–36). Such divine coming to be cannot be measured in terms of Kantian "succession," *das Nacheinander*, inasmuch as a certain "simultaneity," or *Gleich-Zeitigkeit*, prevails in the divine. Heidegger adds, "The original temporal simultaneity [*Gleich-Zeitigkeit*: 'at or in the same time'] consists in this, that having-been and being-futural, and equally originally [*gleichursprünglich*] being-present, assert themselves as the plenitude of essence [*Wesensfülle*], coining themselves within one another" (SA 136). This odd phrase, "coining themselves within one another" tries to translate *selbst ineinander schlagen*. This last word means to strike or to imprint, hence, "to coin." It is a word Heidegger will use decades later in his interpretation of *Geschlecht* in the poetry of Georg Trakl. If I am right, it is not a word Heidegger uses in his account of ecstatic temporality in *Sein und Zeit*. Here in the Schelling course the stroke, imprint, or coinage (*der Schlag*) has to do with "appropriate temporality," or "temporality proper," which Heidegger identifies with the *Augenblick*. Thus, according to Heidegger, Schelling does not think of eternity as the *nunc stans*, "the standing now." Rather, he thinks of it in terms of a living, moving, processual eternity in which each temporal ecstasy is "struck" or "coined" in all the others. Heidegger later in the course identifies "the moment" in which future, having-been, and present collide, or mutually imprint one another (*zusammenschlagen*), as the moment of decision, *Entscheidung*. In it the human being achieves its freedom, indeed as a form of "resolute openedness," *Entschlossenheit* (SA 186–87).

In a later seminar on Schelling's treatise, taught during the summer semester of 1941, Heidegger takes some distance on Schelling's claim that the divine, in its ostensibly full and perfect freedom, "overcomes" time. Beyng, argues Heidegger, can never be independent of time: "Being is 'dependent' on ecstatic time; this is an essential characteristic of the 'truth' of being; but this 'truth' belongs to the essential unfolding [*Wesung*] of beyng itself" (SA 208). It is somewhat surprising to see the term *ecstatic temporality* still being used, yet an entire section of Heidegger's notes in 1941 bears the

title, “Temporality as Ecstatic Temporalizing” (SA 228–29). Here Heidegger calls time “a preliminary name for the region in which the truth of being is projected”; he adds, “‘time’ is the ecstatic between (time-space), not the in-which of beings, but the clearing of being itself” (SA 229).

When one turns from Heidegger’s own notes to Schelling’s texts, one notes initially that the word *Ekstase* is absent from the *Treatise on Human Freedom*. Nor does the word appear in the 1811, 1813, and 1815 versions of *The Ages of the World*, as edited by Heidegger’s colleague Manfred Schröter. Yet Schelling does use the word in an important way during his Erlangen lectures of 1820–21, and we will take a moment a bit later in the chapter to examine that use. But could Heidegger have found the term *ecstasis* anywhere in Schelling during the period in which he is writing *Being and Time*? That seems highly unlikely. He knew of Schelling’s 1809 treatise, and he may already have read *Die Weltalter*, to which he refers, albeit rarely, in the 1936 lecture course. Yet the Erlangen lectures were edited only much later (1969, 2002, and 2012–14 are important years for the new and more complete editions of the *Weltalter-Fragmente* and the Erlangen lectures), so that, to repeat, it is highly unlikely that Heidegger would have seen these materials.

Surely, we may say, indeed we *must* say, that Heidegger gets the idea of ecstasy from Aristotle’s treatise on time (chapters 10–14 of *Physics* Δ). Not only “ecstasy” but also the very word and thing called “existence” must have Aristotle as their origin. In the thirteenth chapter of Book IV of the *Physics*, Aristotle is discussing μεταβολή, “alteration” or “change” in the most general sense. He takes up the theme of “sudden” change, ἐξαιφνης, translated by Schleiermacher (in Plato’s *Parmenides* at 156d) as *der Augenblick* and *das Augenblickliche*, “the moment,” “the instantaneous.” The “sudden” seems to occur somewhere between motion and rest, and seems to be outside of the time series as such; it occurs too quickly for us to be able to count it, or to count on it. Rapid change seems to involve dispersion and scattering rather than languid alteration or augmentation through growth. Recall the words of the chorus of crazed Maenads in Euripides’s *Bacchae*, who want to see Pentheus dead. “But first,” they cry, “drive him out of his mind!” (l. 850: πρῶτα δ’ ἔκστησον φρενῶν). In his essay on memory, Aristotle designates those who confuse their fantasies with actual memories as ἐξισταμένα (451a 10). In his essay on the soul (406b 13) he uses the word ἔκστασις to mean “departure” or “displacement”: “All movement is displacement of that which is moved.” In his discussion of sudden or instantaneous change in *Physics*, Aristotle employs words related to ἐξίστημι and ἔκστασις three times in only a few lines, lines that must have struck Heidegger, who in

his early days was above all else a reader of Aristotle. Starting at *Physics* 222b 15, we read this:

The term ἐξαίφνης [“all of a sudden,” “instantaneously”] refers to what has departed from its former state in an imperceptible time [τὸ ἐν ἀναισθήτῳ χρόνῳ διὰ μικρότητα ἐκστάν]. . . . Yet all change is by nature a departing [or dispersing—and here for the first time the word ἐκστατικόν appears]. In time, all things come into being and pass away, for which reason some called it the wisest, whereas the Pythagorean Πάρων called it the most stupid, since in it we also forget; and his was the truer view. It is clear, then, that in itself time must be . . . the cause of corruption [φθορά] rather than of generation. For change in itself is a departure, whereas it is only accidentally the cause of becoming and of being.

I repeat, this *must* be the source of Heidegger’s notion of “ecstatic temporality.” Not only does Aristotle establish the relation of the ecstatic to existence in general, but he also sees that ecstasy entails departure and loss: the tragic tone of both his and Heidegger’s thinking would here be set in stone or, better, branded on the flesh of each.

And yet when Heidegger himself analyzes in detail Aristotle’s treatment of time he does not mention this passage: in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, from the summer semester of 1927, he would have had at least to mention it at either of two places (26:334–35 and 358–59). True, at 334 he discusses the “sudden” or “instantaneous,” but he pays no heed at all to either ecstasy or existence, no heed at all to time as radical departure and corruption. Fifteen years later, in a lecture course on Parmenides (54:223), Heidegger again discusses the meaning of ἐξαίφνης, and in the context of time, but he says nothing about the ecstatic analysis of temporality or the *Augenblick*, either as Schleiermacher’s translation or as “the moment of insight” in his own magnum opus; here, in the Parmenides lectures, it is a question of “incipient upsurge,” *das Anfängliche*, in the history of being, or of beyng.

Now, I know what you are thinking: you are thinking of those moments, not in your own treatment of a given text, but in treatments by colleagues who succumb to the temptation to suppress a reference in order to claim an insight as their own. Yet Heidegger is more likely to savor any and every connection with the Greek, proclaiming these connections rather than concealing them. Heidegger’s silence is therefore mysterious. And, as

if that were not enough, and as though to demonstrate the perhaps cryptic nature of what Aristotle is discussing here, Jacques Derrida, in his remarkably thorough essay “Ousia and Grammè,” an essay that often succeeds in showing what Heidegger seems to have neglected in Aristotle’s and in Hegel’s accounts of time, disregards this crucial passage altogether. It is as though Aristotle, writing for everyone in the history of philosophy to come, is here writing for no one. It is as though Paron were right, and time is incorrigible.

The third preliminary question was: If ecstatic temporality is a genuine achievement, why does Heidegger soon drop it? Why, after the end of the 1920s, is there scarcely a reference to it? Heidegger’s remarks in his “Letter on Humanism” and in his letter to Father Richardson do not satisfy me, although I will not take the time to review them once again here.<sup>3</sup> The 1930s are years dedicated to the thought of ἀλήθεια, “truth” as unconcealment. The theme of time withdraws in the face of Heidegger’s questioning of the history of metaphysics, better, the history of the truth of being. The meaning of being as presence, whether as παρουσία, *Anwesenheit*, or *Gegenwart*, seems from hence to be taken for granted, so much so that it could seem to Derrida that Heidegger had merely taken his place in the epoch of metaphysics as a history of presence. “Clearing” and “letting-come-to-presence,” *Lichtung und Anwesenlassen*, are the words that in Heidegger’s final years come to replace the notions of being and time, “clearing” and “coming to presence,” along with the vocabulary of *Ereignis*, “the granting” or “reaching” of time-space. The “interplay,” *Zuspiel*, of time-space “dimensions,” rather than “ecstases,” occupies his final reflections (IM 52–53). Yet why not *Ekstasen*, inasmuch as this word is so much richer than the shopworn word *dimensions*? We do not know. The truth is that neither Derrida nor I nor anyone else I know has genuine insight into the question as to why Heidegger abandons the ecstatic analysis. Yet, if I may repeat my adolescent remark, does Heidegger’s dropping it necessarily compel us?

Let me put these preliminaries aside so that we may begin to read section 65. We may well feel unequal to the task. Heidegger calls us there to “unbroken discipline.” For what we must get into our view, indeed, into our “undistracted existentially understanding view,” *im unzerstreuten, existenzial verstehenden Blick*, are (1) precisely that problematic autonomy and permanence of self mentioned a few moments ago, *Selbst-ständigkeit*, and (2) the totality of human existence, *die Ganzheit des Daseins*. Now, the notion of totality, for its part, has been problematized from the moment

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3. See IM, chapters 2 and 3, where I rehearse these “self-interpretations” of Heidegger.



it is introduced. If human existence, as possibility-being, is fundamentally futural, thrown toward the future that is coming toward it as its *Zu-kunft*, then there seems to be always something “still outstanding” about Dasein, some possibility that is not yet actualized, some debt that is not yet acquitted, some deed that is not yet done. If existence “stands out” as always ahead of itself, *sich vorweg*, it will be difficult indeed to understand it as a totality, and just as difficult to understand it as “standing” in its selfhood. How to think totality and permanence without turning Dasein into something present at hand? The moralizing undertone of the call to unbroken discipline—that cool, grave tone that Nietzsche so mercilessly exposes as the tone of the ascetic ideal in the scholar or scientist—lets us know that what is at stake here is the entire analysis of existence proper, *die Eigentlichkeit*, as of that recalcitrant notion of a *vorlaufende Entschlossenheit*, an open resolve that runs ahead, revealing to Dasein its being toward the end. Yet the stakes are even higher: Heidegger stresses that the *ontological* meaning of the temporality of Dasein will shed light on the temporality—and the finitude—of beings in general, hence on the very meaning of being as such: something like a horizon, a backdrop, ground, or upon-which (*Woraufhin*) onto which we project beings of all kinds, handy items in our everyday world or even scientifically investigated entities, discloses to us the being of beings (*das Sein des Seienden*). If the ontological meaning of care and concern lies in temporality, then the upon-which of all projection may well be time as such, and we will have arrived at the crux of the book called *Being and Time*.

Now, Heidegger has claimed that the fundamental projection of existence proper, that is, Dasein in its most proper mode, is the open resolve that runs ahead. The problem of such a claim, and Heidegger sees the problem (which he develops in section 62), is that all this talk of resoluteness and resolve, *Entschlossenheit*, seems to reflect an inherited ethics of some kind, a “factual ideal” that imposes itself on the analysis and that therefore needs to be dismantled and tested. It may help if we inquire into this odd *Vorlaufen*, “running ahead,” that is said to accompany resolve. (Note that when we translate *Vorlaufen* as “anticipation,” and *vorlaufende Entschlossenheit* as “anticipatory resolve,” we muddle Heidegger’s sense entirely: nothing about our ownmost possibility, our death, which is nonrelational, unsurpassable, certain and yet as certain indeterminate as to its “when,” can be “anticipated.” It may be that Heidegger takes the verbal form *Vorlaufen* from the current and readily understood modifier *vorläufig*, “preliminary,” as though resoluteness itself is proleptic, provisional, preliminal, even “preliminary.” Derrida will translate it, literally and brilliantly, as “precursory.”) Whither

does running-ahead run? Presumably, into its own future, the future that is coming toward it. The future of Dasein, as ability to be, as possibility-being, comes toward it, *auf sich zu*. That is the meaning of *Zu-kunft*. Yet as long as Dasein *is*, it has been undergoing this; its future *has been* coming toward it out there in the world all along. Dasein exists the way it always already has existed, and thus in moving toward its future it is in some sense thrown back on its factual having-been. Heidegger says that Dasein *existiert wie es je schon war*, “exists as it always in each case already was,” a phrase that seems to capture the Aristotelian notion of “essence,” τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι. It is important to note that the temporal ecstasy of the past, and it alone, receives a new designation from Heidegger. Not the past, *Vergangenheit*, is his theme, but the present-perfect *Gewesenheit*. This word, which contains the root *Wesen*, or *essence*, designates the ecstasy in which we come *back* to ourselves. Perhaps this is a part of the problem of the “self,” namely, that it has its primacy not only in the future of possibility-being but also in its factual having-been. Nietzsche might wonder whether there is something “monumental,” if not “antiquarian,” about the self, especially if it regards itself as “standing.”

Thrown into the future that is coming toward it, cast back on its having-been—where is the ecstasy of the present? We are always, replies Heidegger, while projected futurally and cast back on our having-been, “alongside” handy items in our everyday world, simply “with” them. These handy items dominate our present for the most part, we with our toothbrush, fountain pen, or iPhone in hand. What is surprising in this first exposition of the ecstases is that the present to which Heidegger refers here is not the “moment of insight” into our mortality, not *der Augenblick*, which would surely be the ecstasis of a resolve that runs ahead toward its most proper mortal possibility; rather, our present ecstasis opens onto the handy items of our everyday world, the world that ensnares us and to which we fall prey. Yet why does he mention the *Augenblick* at all? We do not need the “moment of insight” for our access to handy items in our everyday world. Indeed, Heidegger consistently associates the future with our *appropriate* existentiality, having-been with our *appropriate* facticity, but the present with *Verfallen*, our falling prey to or being ensnared in our everydayness. Whereas the future and past are projections of our proper self, the present seems to be the projection of our *inappropriate*, “inauthentic” mode of being. The problem then would be: When and how do the ecstases of future and past, in their ecstatic interaction and interpenetration, yield the all-important *Augenblick*? When does the present that is absorbed in its everyday concerns yield to the present of insight—sudden insight—into our mortal condition?

In general, what we most need to know is how inappropriate and appropriate ecstases interact, and especially how the inappropriate ecstases open onto, call up, invite, enable, allow in some passive way, yield or yield *to* the *appropriate* ecstases. For these too must unfold in and as temporality.

But we are going too fast, and things are already too confusing. In *Intimations of Mortality*, I began my discussion of section 65 by listing the four theses that Heidegger offers at the end of the section by way of summary, and it may be useful to list these four theses again. Section 65 argues for the following four points:

1. "Time is originally the temporalization of temporality [*die Zeitigung der Zeitlichkeit*], which makes possible the constitution of the structure of care."
2. "Temporality is essentially ecstatic."
3. "Temporality temporalizes originally out of the future."
4. "Original time is finite."

A few remarks, in all brevity, about each of these simply stated but infinitely complex theses.

1. Discovery of the care structure is the result of the entire first division of *Being and Time*. The word *Sorge* embraces every aspect of human existence, all its deeds and omissions. Formally defined, care is "being ahead of itself already in (a world) as being alongside (beings encountered in the world)" (SZ 327). In the words *ahead*, *already*, and *alongside* we hear the structures of existentiality, facticity, and ensnarement or falling prey. We also hear intimations of a temporality at work, with our being ahead (our existentiality) indicating the future, our being always already in a world (our facticity) indicating our having-been, and our being alongside or with handy items in the world (ensnarement) indicating the present. The structure of care implies a temporal unfolding, *Zeitigung*. Temporality is no sort of being at all, says Heidegger. It *is* not; rather, "it *temporalizes* itself" (SZ 328; 20:442). Temporality *is* not; it *ensues*, in Joyce's sense. Recall those remarkable lines from *Finnegans Wake* (I, 18), lines I entered into my copy of *Being and Time* decades ago: "In the ignorance that implies impression that knits knowledge that finds the nameform that whets the wits that convey contacts that sweeten sensation that drives desire that adheres to attachment that dogs death that bitches birth that entails the ensuance of existentiality." In case you were wondering, that is the structure of "care."

2. Heidegger now, at SZ 328–29, uses the word *Ekstasen* to designate what we otherwise would lamely call the “dimensions” of human temporality:

Future, having-been, and present display the phenomenal characteristics of the “coming-toward,” “the back upon,” and the “enabling to be confronted *by*” [“Auf-sich-zu,” “Zurück auf,” “Begegnenlassen *von*”]. The phenomena of the toward, onto, and with [or alongside: *bei*] reveal temporality as the ἐκστατικόν without qualification. *Temporality is the original “outside itself” in and for itself.* We therefore call the designated phenomena of future, having-been, and present the *ecstases* of temporality. Temporality is not prior to that a being that only later emerges out of *itself*; rather, its essence is temporalization in the unity of the *ecstases*.

Note the Hegelian tease: in-and-for-itself, that is, at the supreme moment of what Hegel would take to be dialectical insight, the moment of conscious interiority, intelligence, reason, and spirit as such, temporality is “the original ‘outside-itself,’” and it is outside itself, not at some early or intermediate stage, and not as a preliminary exteriority that will soon be swallowed by an all-consuming interiority, but as the very essence of temporality. We have to wonder whether an outside-itself can have an essence, or a self, or whether it can be named at all in terms of earlier metaphysical or logical systems. Not for nothing was the word ἐκστασις associated with the mysteries, with Demeter and Dionysos, and not with logic and metaphysics. For the young Nietzsche at Basel, ἐκστασις was the Dionysian actor’s stepping outside of his everyday self, speaking as the outside and sustaining the outside. For Schelling, to whose Erlangen lectures we ought to return if only for a moment, ἐκστασις is the radical displacement we call *astonishment*.

In his Erlangen lecture course of 1820–21, Schelling uses the word *Ekstasis* to designate the “stepping out of itself,” *sich heraustreten*, of what he calls “the absolute subject,” which we may understand as the subjectivity or personhood attributed to the God of Christian ontotheology.<sup>4</sup> The most rad-

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4. F. W. J. Schelling, *Initia philosophiae universae: Erlanger Vorlesung WS 1820/21*, ed. Horst Fuhrmans (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1969), 35. Hereinafter IP in the body of my text. For this and all references to Schelling, I am indebted to Alexander Bilda of Freiburg University, who is coediting with Philip Schwab the Erlangen lectures for the historical-critical Schelling edition.

ical departure in Schelling's interpretation is that this egression or emergence of absolute subjectivity, which he had earlier understood as "intellectual intuition," is *not* a kind of knowing, *Wissen*. It is not subjectivity projecting itself to the outside in order to "know" itself. Rather, it is "*E k s t a s e*, a 'being posited outside itself,' *ein "Außer sich selbst gesetzt werden* (IP 39). Or, if "posited" is too Fichtean a notion, let us translate Schelling's *gesetzt* as a being placed or even *propelled* outside itself. Schelling equates such ecstasis with Plato's θαυμάζειν, philosophical "wonder" or "astonishment," viewing it as a complete "surrender" of self, *Selbstaufgegebenheit* (ibid.; cf. 47). Such ecstasis is a "two-faced expression," a *vox anceps*, inasmuch as it may mean either an expulsion from what is properly one's own place or an emergence into that proper place (IP 41). Schelling is well aware of the Aristotelian sense of ἔκστασις as "displacement" and "departure," so that it is a question (as we say in English) of whether ecstasis is "a point of departure for" or a "departure from" what is proper to the absolute. For Schelling, and equally for the later Heidegger, the positive sense of ecstasis would be that which leads a human being "to the beginning of meditation," that is, to *Besinnung*, which is Schelling's own word for thinking (ibid.). Again, what is remarkable is Schelling's insistence that such meditation is not an interiorization, as it is with Hegel, but a removal to the outside, "*das außer sich*."

The "fragments" of notes surrounding Schelling's *Ages of the World* say precisely the same things about ecstasis.<sup>5</sup> A note in *Konvolut NL 94* describes the "free knowing" that one might identify with absolute subjectivity as a knowing that experiences everywhere a kind of defeat in the face of the power of beyng (*vielmehr erliegt es überall d[er] Macht d[es] Seyns*); the thinker of the absolute is thrown from the midpoint of his or her meditation and experiences beyng as central (*heraus geworfen aus dem Mittelp[unkt] u[nd] dagegen d[as] Seyn central*) (WF 297). Here too Schelling stresses the fact that "knowing" departs from (*hinweggeht*) its earlier position of mastery, such departure being precisely the sense of the Greek ἔκστασις (WF 301). Later in the same *Konvolut* Schelling describes ἔκστασις as related to intellectual intuition, precisely as the doubling of subject and object within consciousness; yet he now describes the ostensible interiority of such "intuition" as precisely a being thrown outside of oneself, "something," he adds, "that does not please the egoist" (WF 309). One is tempted to identify Schelling's notes on birth, especially the "birth that occurs in lightning,"

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5. F. W. J. Schelling, *Weltalter-Fragmente*, ed. Klaus Grotzsch (Stuttgart: Bad Cannstatt: Fromann-Holzboog Verlag, 2002), hereinafter cited as WF in my text.

which is to say, the birth of Dionysos of a Semele blasted by Zeus, with the ecstasis in question. Yet that is where the darker side of the *vox anceps* of ecstasy manifests itself: ecstasy may well be the movement (the *thrown* movement, Heidegger would say) of consciousness from freedom to necessity, from a superior form of being to nonbeing. “Here,” writes Schelling, in *Konvolut NL 81*, “the full concept of ecstasis—the great doctrine—illness [*Hier voller Begriff d. Ekstasis—grosse Lehre.—d. Krankheit*]” (WF 260–61). This would be the ever-living fire of Heraclitus interpreted as *Sucht*, that is, as both that for which one is searching or longing and that which eats away at one’s health. Once again we meet here the Schelling of *contagion*, the Schelling who meditates also on the dire forces of nature.<sup>6</sup>

Schelling’s language and thinking in the *Weltalter-Fragmente* and in the Erlangen lectures—with the sole exception of his reflection on illness—are so close to the later Heidegger’s understanding of the truth of being that one cannot doubt the force of Schelling’s “influence” on Heidegger. Yet, to repeat, such “influence,” when it comes to the theme of ecstatic temporality, cannot realistically be said to have begun by 1926 or 1927, the period during which *Being and Time* was written. And, in any case, Schelling is not applying the notion of ecstasis specifically to temporality. Let us return, then, to the second thesis of section 65, “Temporality is essentially ecstatic,” and ecstatic “in the unity of the *ecstases*.”

In the *unity* of the *ecstases*, says Heidegger. This leads to one of his most daring claims, one that seems to militate against his thesis that the future is primary for existence. He insists that the *ecstases* of time are “equally original,” *gleichursprünglich*. He has used this word before, to suggest the equal originality of *Welt* and *Wer*, that is, of *Dasein* as being-in-the-world and as answering to the personal pronoun, *who*. Likewise, the principal forms of *Erschlossenheit*, or disclosedness, are equally original: how one finds oneself to be, that is, caught up in this or that mood or attunement to the world (*Befindlichkeit*), understanding as a projection upon possibilities (*Verstehen*), and discourse (*Rede*). None of these can be derived from the others; all are interwoven *ab ovo* in our existence. At some point, all genetic or genealogical accounts must cease, says Heidegger:

The nonderivability of something original does not exclude a multiplicity of ontological characteristics that are constitutive of the original in question. If such a multiplicity shows itself, then

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6. See Krell, *Contagion*, Part II.

the characteristics are existentially equally original. The phenomenon of the *Gleichursprünglichkeit* of constitutive moments has often been overlooked in ontology on account of an unbridled tendency in the methodology to seek the birth certificate of each and every thing on the basis of one simple “primal ground” [*Urgrund*]. (SZ 131)

Yet even if we should overcome our lust for an *Urgrund* with regard to the temporal ecstases, we will still want to know more about their unity and their interweaving. Does not unity require some sort of enclosure? How enclose traits that in and for themselves are outside themselves? We will want to know more about this essential exteriority, which Schelling calls a birth by fire. For this would be the key to the animation of Dasein, the fact that it is not self-moving but is *set* in motion. Not “animation” but *Bewegtheit*, the past participle of *Bewegen*, is Heidegger’s word in *Sein und Zeit*. This important word designates the way in which Dasein is *moved*, presumably by the ecstases of time. Such “movedness” would give us the essential connection between “existence” and “ecstasy.”

Heidegger uses an equally strange word to suggest the kind of “movedness” (please excuse the odd English locution, especially if you have always thought of yourself as a self-mover) in which existence is caught up: in sections 68 and 69 (SZ 338–39, 350) he calls the ecstases of temporality *Entrückungen*, “raptures.” In section 69 he writes: “The ecstatic unity of temporality, that is, the unity of the ‘outside-itself’ in the raptures of future, having-been, and present, is the condition of the possibility of there being a being that can exist as its ‘there’” (SZ 350). When you finally get there, there isn’t any there there, but there there do unfold the raptures of temporality. Ironically, Heidegger’s raptures or ecstases are not there to propel us outside of time by way of some mystical experience that would bring time to a standstill. They temporalize as *finite* time itself. About which more in a moment.

3. Concerning the primacy of the future, that is, the priority of existentiality for Dasein, let me say only this. The primacy, priority, and perhaps even “apriority” of the ecstasis of the future, the *Zu-kunft*, is implied in my being able to confront my ownmost possibility; my existence is characterized chiefly by the *Umwillen*, the “for my own sake,” such that my being is always an issue for me. I am “involved” in it, even if I understand nothing of its whence and whither. The futural essence of “existence” Heidegger calls “existentiality”; the pleonasm or tautology is meant to be instructive. Yet it is important to note that this priority of the future becomes increasingly

dubious to Heidegger in the lecture courses immediately following the publication of *Being and Time*, and perhaps even in the final chapters of that book itself. It is of course difficult to see how the “equal originality,” *die Gleichursprünglichkeit*, of the temporal ecstases will allow the thesis on the priority of the future to stand. Yet Heidegger makes the primacy of the future even more problematic when he italicizes the following sentences (SZ 350): “*Temporality temporalizes completely in each ecstasis. That is to say, the totality of the structural whole of existence, facticity, and ensnarement, that is, the unity of the structure of care, is grounded in the ecstatic unity of any given complete temporalizing of temporality.*” What could the “completeness” of “any given temporalizing” mean? And how can temporality temporalize “completely” in each of the three ecstases? Why are there three, if any one of the three includes all three? Did I say *includes*? Is there, must there not be, only one “outside-itself”? “In-and-for-itself”?!

4. The finitude of original time is perhaps the most difficult of the four theses for us to affirm, inasmuch as Heidegger says so little about it, fails to *demonstrate* it in his otherwise remarkably systematic work. Yet how could one demonstrate such a thing? And what does *finitude* even mean? Heidegger is not theorizing about cosmic time, the time-space of astrophysics. From the outset he takes such theorizing to be derivative with respect to a suppressed or repressed “original” time, the time that does not submit to measurement (as Bergson would agree), but that we get a sense of when we say that someone’s time is “up.” The time that runs out, that is exhausted or perhaps truncated quite suddenly, the time that Paron felt was really stupid is what Heidegger means by “original” time. Again, it is difficult to say why such time is “original,” “more original” than the time that can be measured by clock and calendar. Finitude of time? There can be no doubt about the seriousness with which Heidegger argues for it, no matter how recalcitrant the notion and how resistant to demonstration. For, in all modesty, even without high-flying references to astrophysics, we all will admit that time is bigger than we are, and that when our time is up “infinite” time will go marching on as it always has—recall that sea, after the *Pequod* has gone down, rolling on as it rolled five thousand years ago, and think of those stars that will still be enjoying their parallax a million years from now; think even of humankind bungling its way along without you or me to some unseen destiny and probable if unpredictable catastrophe. Such “infinite” time seems to be the “original,” with you and me as mere epigones. This is precisely what Heidegger denies. One of the most stringent statements of his book is the following: “The problem cannot be: how does ‘derived,’ infinite time, ‘in which’ what is at hand comes to be



and passes away, become original, finite temporality; rather, the problem is: how does *inappropriate* temporality spring from finite temporality proper, and how does inappropriate temporality *as* inappropriate temporalize a *non-finite* time from finite time?" (SZ 330–31). Original time is—we *know* not how—finite.

The word *endlich* has appeared earlier in the book. Section 53, "Existential Projection of an Appropriate Being Toward Death," while elaborating the third characteristic of the existential conception of death, which is ownmost, nonrelational, *unsurpassable*, certain, and as certain indeterminate as to its *when*, takes the *Unüberholbarkeit* of death to be an essential marker for the finitude of *time* as well. The end of Dasein that we call *death* cannot be overtaken on the highway of life. That is why we never get a good look at it. Similarly, time as futural cannot be overtaken: *my* time is forever on the hither-side of the finite time that advances toward me. By running ahead in resolute openness, Dasein heeds Zarathustra's remonstrance (KSA 4:94) not to grow too old for its truths and its victories. Heidegger adds that by running ahead (*Vorlaufen*) Dasein becomes free "for the ownmost possibilities that are determined on the basis of the *end*, and that means possibilities understood as *finite* . . ." (SZ 264). *Endlich* here could be translated as *final* and even *end-like*. Yet the "end" is not simply the place where Dasein ceases to be. Indeed, Heidegger will later say that existence has "another" end: the "other end" of Dasein is *birth*. This birth-end will later, in chapters 3 and 4, occupy us at some length. However, even the death-end is not some point that is still outstanding. Rather, *Dasein existiert endlich*, "exists finitely" (SZ 329). True, time marches on even when any given Dasein, you or I, is no longer "there." Yet this is no objection, Heidegger says, "to the finitude of original temporality" (SZ 330). He adds, driving his analysis to the twin peaks of paradox and oxymoron:

The question is not what all can transpire "in a time that goes on," nor what we might encounter in letting something come toward us "beyond this time"; the question is how this coming toward us *itself and as such* is originally determined. Its finitude does not suggest primarily a cessation, but is rather a characteristic of temporalizing itself. The original and appropriate future is coming toward itself, toward *itself*, existing as the unsurpassable possibility of nullity [*Nichtigkeit*]. The ecstatic character of the original future lies precisely in the fact that it closes [*schließt*] our ability to be, which means that the future itself is closed [*geschlossen*] and that as such the future makes possible the

resolutely unclosed [*entschlossene*] existentiell understanding of nullity. (Ibid.)

How the *closed* future *opens* us to the insight that we ourselves are the ground of a nullity (SZ 283–85) is perhaps the ultimate question of the second division of *Being and Time*. For this too is the very meaning of *Zukunft*: the *zu* of *Zu-kunft* means the advent of what is *closed*. In German, one closes the door, *zu-machen*. What is closed in the present case? Our ability to be anything other than a nullity.

The burden placed on the temporal analysis here seems to be strained to the breaking point. What would happen if Heidegger himself were to come to doubt the relation between our future, as the primary ecstasis, and our finitude? For this is indeed what seems to happen as soon as the book is published. In a lecture course of 1928–29, Heidegger is still keen to demonstrate the finitude of human existence, but he dwells less on time and its “closed” future than on the uncanny finitude of philosophy: “Because philosophy is essentially a human possibility, that is, a finite possibility, there is a sophist hiding in every philosopher” (27:24).<sup>7</sup>

In *Being and Time* itself the thesis concerning the finitude of time is still closely tied to that of the primacy of the future. Heidegger writes, “The future proper, which temporality primarily temporalizes insofar as it makes out the meaning of the resolve that runs ahead, thus reveals itself *to be finite*” (SZ 329–30). As I am thrown toward my future precisely as my future comes toward me, I come to myself as possibility-being (*Seinkönnen*); yet my ownmost possibility “is the insurmountable possibility of nullity” (ibid.). If the fourth thesis (on the finitude of time) is closely tied to the third (on the primacy of the future for existential analysis), and if this third thesis becomes less and less tenable to Heidegger himself, how is the finitude of temporality—indeed, the finitude of original time as such—to be reconfigured? If the priority of the future ecstasis cannot be maintained, what can possibly conjoin ecstatic temporality and the finitude of time? It may occur to us that our being bound to a factual past is also strong testimony on behalf of the finitude of time, and the way my present enables me to fritter away my time with things that are infinitely pointless may also testify to such finitude. You may recall Emerson’s rueful confession that

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7. That is, Martin Heidegger, *Einleitung in die Philosophie*, Winter Semester 1928–1929, 2nd ed., *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 27, ed. Otto Saame and Ina Saame-Speidel (Frankfurt-am-Main: V. Klostermann, 2001 (1996), 24.

the only demonstration of finitude we need comes when we correct our page proofs. Yet let us search for other testimonies, other witnesses. A key witness might be the very notion of ecstasy. Or perhaps that other word, used four times in *Being and Time* to describe the motion or the movedness of ecstasy, namely, *Entrückung*.

Let us examine the four appearances of the latter word, *Entrückung*, but not before asking again one of our preliminary questions: Whence the notion of *Entrückung*, sudden seizure or “rapture”? Could it be Augustine? Here again Heidegger does not reveal the source of his *Entrückungen*, either in terms of the verb *rapere*, “to seize,” or the adverb *raptim*, “rapidly, suddenly,” even though at one point he himself “translates” the German *Entrückung* with the Latin word *raptus*. When Heidegger refers to Augustine’s *Confessions* in his 1924 lecture, *The Concept of Time*, he cites the passage from chapter 27 of Book XI, in which Augustine speaks of “the times that I measure in my mind,” but he says nothing of *rapere*, *raptus*, and *raptim* in their many appearances throughout the *Confessions*. We know that in Heidegger’s own education Augustine plays a key role: in a 1925 lecture course he explains that seven years earlier, that is, in 1918, he “stumbled across” the notion of *Sorge*, “care” or “concern,” in Augustine, namely, as *cura* (20:418). As far as I know, however, there is no such attribution on Heidegger’s part, no such “stumbling across,” in the case of *rapere*, *raptus*, or the adverb *raptim*. In the Marburg lecture courses on “the phenomenology of religion,” published as volume 60 in the *Gesamtausgabe*, in which Augustine plays a major role, there is talk of “sudden temptation,” “sudden fall,” and the equally sudden *kairotic* moment of grace; yet here too there is no explicit reference to *raptus*. This is surprising in the light of Augustine’s *Confessions*, in which the suddenness of both the fall into sin and the upsurge of a saving grace is what lends the text so much of its tension.

In chapter 15 of Book XI, Augustine is in search of the *fleeting* present of time; he notes that whatever can be called “present,” no matter how minute, “flies suddenly out of the future into the past”: *raptim a futuro in praeteritum transvolat*. This sudden flight can scarcely have escaped the notice of Heidegger the young phenomenologist—for whom, it is true, the care and concern of existence itself had not yet been expressly understood in terms of temporality. When, after those seven years have passed, he begins to sketch out *Being and Time*, and when, three years later, he refers explicitly to *raptus* as a word for the metabolic movement of time, it *must* be that both Aristotle and Augustine have been remembered.

If the key Augustinian reference to the temporality of the sudden is *raptim . . . transvolat* (XI:15), other uses of *rapere* in the *Confessions* are

nonetheless instructive. Our senses snatch images quite suddenly in order to lock them away in our memory, whereby both the suddenness of the action of our senses and the perdurance of the vestiges in our memory never cease to amaze us: images *quibus sensibus raptae sint*, “seized by our senses,” have a staying power that Augustine struggles to understand. Likewise, the sudden seizures by which we *learn* and spiritually grow are also ambivalent in the extreme. Their ambivalence, which is appropriate to the mystery of time as such, comes to the fore in two apparently opposed instances of rapture. First, Augustine confesses himself “ravished away by lust,” seized, *rapiebat*, by the raptures of Eros; during one period of his life, theater plays propel him into ecstasy, *rapiebant* (II:2; III:2). And we know what staying power such seizures had, especially those tenacious raptures Augustine suffers at the hands of women. Second, Augustine records his long conversation with Monica at Ostia, in which the two of them review the supreme pleasures of both carnality and spirituality. Their conversation soars ever higher and flies ever more swiftly until they are seized by a singular exultation that ravishes them both, *rapida cogitatione attingimus . . . haec una rapiat* (XI:10). Whether one learns from one’s sainted mother or from a ravishing woman, in either case, the learning involves rapture. Indeed, rapture comes into play even when one learns from one’s father. Earlier in Book IX, Augustine marvels at how suddenly, *subito*, it became easy for him to accept the embraces of his heavenly father, embraces that released in him a flood of tears. At the end of Book IX, the son is once again suddenly seized by a fit of weeping—this time for his dead mother. Whether the torrents of joy and sorrow, the overflow of tears, *transfluebat in lacrimas*, can be tied to the ecstatic flight of time, *transvolat*, I cannot say; that the violence of mourning in particular, *violento animi imperio*, is a violence in and of time, I do suspect, and for the most excellent Augustinian reasons (IX:12). But it is time to abandon Augustine too, inasmuch as we are uncertain as to whether any of this played a role in Heidegger’s understanding of the raptures of time.

Let us now look at the four instances in *Sein und Zeit* where *Entrückung* or “rapture” appears. Because the German word is the nominalization of a verb, let us translate it, not as *rapture*, but as the action or animatedness of *enrapturement*, however awkward and ugly that rendering. If we imagine Bernini’s extraordinary Santa Teresa, some of the ugliness of the word may be charmed away. First, in section 68a, on the temporality of understanding, *Entrückung* is used to describe the moment of insight, the *Augenblick* that is so important to Heidegger. *Der Augenblick* is itself an ecstasis, says Heidegger (SZ 338). “It means the openly resolved, but in resoluteness the