

To think of time—of all that retrospection,  
To think of to-day, and the ages continued  
henceforward. . . .  
Is to-day nothing? Is the beginningless  
past nothing?  
If the future is nothing they are just as  
surely nothing.

Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*

### (Un)doing Time in Time Un(doing)

In my time, many a time, I have heard myself and others speak of a *lifetime*. This compound dis/plays the juxtaposition of life and time so elemental to our way of being in the world: what most impresses our thinking about the life-that-is-passing is the passing-that-is-life, a passing that lies at the root of our rootlessness. We are perpetually cast in the mold of temporal beings, always, it seems, being in time for the time being. Time flies, runs, flees, passes too quickly, too slowly, and yet at the end of day—invariably the beginning of night—the question persists: where did the time go? The seemingly trite wording of the query should not be overlooked: the emphasis is on time's going, that is, one attempts to take hold of the passage of time.

From the philosophical position known as temporal realism, and according to the somewhat more sophisticated theory of four-dimensionalism—the hypothesis that material reality consists of spatial and temporal parts, that objects persist in spacetime through the manifold combinations of perdurance, endurance, presentism, and eternalism<sup>1</sup>—it is the “progress of events, the coming to pass of one thing after another, and not just a timeless tapestry” that grounds the distinction between past, present, and future and thereby accords legitimacy to the proposition that time is real.<sup>2</sup> Stated less technically, the signposts that mark one's entry into and departure from the world are temporal in their comportment, birth at one end, death at the other. Nothing, it would

seem, is more basic to the scripting of the egological narrative—the I “am” of what “is”<sup>3</sup>—than the time it takes one to die, an insight familiar to the philosophically attuned from Heidegger’s infamous notion of *Sein zum Tode*, being-into-death—the (not)being that is(not), present all too pervasively in its absence.<sup>4</sup>

Interestingly enough, this philosophic discernment, often considered elitist and removed from mundane social reality, is supported by archaeological and ethnological evidence from the dawn of human culture indicating that Paleolithic humans were acutely aware of the temporal nature of existence. Anthropologists have even argued that the ability to view time in its twofold dimension, the present as an outcome of the past and as a platform for the future, is one of the principal ways in which *Homo sapiens* is distinguished as a distinct species of primate.<sup>5</sup> Even in preliterate societies the preoccupation with temporality—specifically, the quest to commemorate time and thereby overcome the ravaging aspect of mortality—was concretized in rituals that celebrated birth and death as the bookends of life’s journey. Although these rites might seem “primitive” to the critical eye, ideationally they were no less sophisticated than the most convoluted postmodern discourse that depicts human temporality as caught between recollection of the beginning anticipating the end and anticipation of the beginning recollecting the end. Robert Lauer, a sociologist by training, astutely observed:

Indeed, if one were to write a history of concern with the temporal, one would find oneself compelled to probe into the primordial consciousness. Even at the most primitive level of human life, we have evidence of human awareness of and concern with temporality. . . . In the mythical consciousness of the archaic human, there was an inner sense, an intuitive grasping, of the temporality of life. . . . Human awareness of and concern with temporality is particularly evident in our unique concern for the dead—a distinctively human trait that has apparently characterized all people in all places and in all times.<sup>6</sup>

Besides maintaining a concern with temporality from time immemorial, humans have also been compelled to inquire about the nature of time. What sense of time is conveyed when one speaks of a *lifetime*? No sooner spoken that another question suggests itself: How does one distinguish the time of telling from the telling of time? To discourse about time is to be caught in a circle: one cannot speak of the being of time except from the standpoint of the time of being, nor of the time of being except from the standpoint of the being of time. As Julia Kristeva noted in her exposition of “the experience of time embodied” (*l’expérience du temps incorporé*) in the thought of Marcel Proust, “Whether we are lost

in time, losing time, or losing our lives without discovering anything in death, we are made of the same substance as time because it defines the boundaries of our speech. Speaking about time while time passes is a problem that circles in on itself, producing a painful cyclical motion in which the problem disappears in order to attain a rapture beyond words—and beyond time.”<sup>7</sup>

In the effort to discern time the mind comes to the rim of reason, the limit of language. Aristotle, it will be recalled, lucidly laid out some of the paradoxes that arise when one attempts to account for time—paradoxes that, according to Simplicius, the sixth-century Neoplatonist, were not successfully resolved by either Aristotle or his expositors.<sup>8</sup> Many centuries later, in *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, the text of a lecture course delivered at the University of Marburg in the summer of 1927, Martin Heidegger offered the following assessment: “No attempt to get behind the riddle of time can permit itself to dispense with coming to grips with Aristotle. For he expressed in clear conceptual form, for the first time and for a long time after, the common understanding of time, so that his view of time corresponds to the natural concept of time.”<sup>9</sup>

The first of Aristotle’s paradoxes renders the very existence of time impossible, since something whose parts do not exist cannot itself exist—and in the case of time, its parts do not exist. The past is no longer, the future is not yet, and the present cannot be considered part of a larger whole, for, in the absence of past and future, time is dimensionless, an instant with no measurable duration and consequently erased from the imprint of memory in a flash, (be)coming in passing. The second paradox deals with the impossibility of determining whether the present, ostensibly the bridge that links past and future, is always the same or always different. If the former, there would be no way to establish simultaneity so one could discern a pattern in the unfolding of temporal events; if the latter, there would of necessity be absolute simultaneity, the coincidence or “compresence” of all moments in the present, and hence “nothing would be before or after anything else.”<sup>10</sup> Plotinus began his treatise on eternity and time on a similar note, remarking that “we think that we have a clear and distinct experience of them in our own souls, as we are always speaking of them and using their names on every occasion. Of course, when we try to concentrate on them and, so to speak, to get close to them, we find again that our thought runs into difficulties.”<sup>11</sup> But surely the most celebrated passage enunciating the dilemma of determining the nature of time appears in the *Confessions* of Augustine: “What is time? Who can explain this easily and briefly? Who can comprehend this even in thought so as to articulate the answer in words? Yet what do we speak of, in our familiar everyday conversation, more than of time? We surely know what we mean when we speak of it. We also know what is meant when we hear someone else talking about it. When then is time?”

Provided that no one asks me, I know. If I want to explain it to an inquirer, I do not know.”<sup>12</sup>

To articulate the character of time is to freeze the river in motion, but the river thus frozen is not the river one set out to freeze. In the history of Western philosophy, Zeno’s well-known paradoxes are based on the assumption that movement as such cannot be comprehended without contradiction.<sup>13</sup> Extending this point to the issue of time more generally—an extension justified by the seemingly inextricable link between motion and temporality—it is impossible to delineate in word or concept what is constantly on the way to not being what it has become. In Augustine’s own words, “At the moment when time is passing, it can be perceived and measured. But when it has passed and is not present, it cannot be.”<sup>14</sup> To (be)hold the time of flux, one would have to stop the flux of time, but if one were to stop the flux of time, there would no longer be a time of flux to be(hold). The conventional triadic division of time offers the illusion of a temporal trajectory traversing through one fixed point to the next in a linear pattern, but the experience of the flowing currents of time, swerving this way and that way, cannot be accounted for on the basis of spatially-conceived instants, momentary units that are measurable, decipherable, commingled yet discrete. As Simplicius put it, “As to what time may be, then, to this question hardly the wisest would be able to find an answer.”<sup>15</sup>

In the course of the passage of much time, the same sentiment has been expressed by many of the finest philosophical minds. To mention two examples from the twentieth century, Alfred North Whitehead wrote: “It is impossible to meditate on time and the mystery of the creative passage of nature without overwhelming emotion at the limitations of human knowledge.”<sup>16</sup> Heidegger, too, observed: “Although we constantly reckon with time or take account of it without explicitly measuring it by the clock and are abandoned to it as the most commonplace thing, whether we are lost in it or pressed by it—although time is as familiar to us as only something in our Dasein can be, nevertheless, it becomes strange and puzzling when we try to make it clear to ourselves even if only within the limits of everyday intelligibility.”<sup>17</sup>

Heidegger, however, provides a method to deal with the aporia, a path to cut through the ostensible obstruction of having no path: “What we need first of all is a many-sided orientation toward the time phenomenon, following the clue of the traditional time concepts. After that it becomes pertinent to inquire in what way the interpretations of time from which these concepts have sprung themselves took sight of the time phenomenon, how far they took into view the original time phenomenon, and how we can achieve the return passage from this time phenomenon first given to the original time.”<sup>18</sup> The appeal to multivocality, therefore, is a stepping-stone to attain the “original time,” which

Heidegger further identifies as the temporality (*Zeitlichkeit*) that is the “ontological condition of the possibility of the understanding of being.”<sup>19</sup> I shall return to Heidegger’s thought subsequently; it is adequate to note that he belongs to the class of philosophers who believe in the possibility of establishing the “true” nature of time.

In *Unreality and Time*, Robert S. Brumbaugh reasonably challenges “the notion that there can be any single nature of time, to which the law of contradiction will apply as it does to substances or flowing qualities.” “We are,” he continues, “dealing with a complex sequential relationship which will not exhibit any property of quantity, or quality, or relation, or modality. The assumption that we can find a suitable model, formal or mechanical, to serve as a paradigm fails as well.”<sup>20</sup> The second part of this statement accords with Heidegger’s petition to assemble multiple views on the nature of time expressed by thinkers through the course of time, but the justification for this venture, specified in the first part of the statement, underscores the significant difference between the two. For Brumbaugh, polysemy is a consequence of aporia; for Heidegger, it is the impetus to slash through the aporia. Brumbaugh identifies four analyses of time that have been operative in occidental metaphysics (beginning with Plato) and attempts to show how none is adequate to deal with the complex phenomenon of time.<sup>21</sup> Although no single conceptual model, whether derived from mathematics, physics, or philosophy, is sufficient to explain time, Brumbaugh does not consider the quest to do so meaningless. To treat Brumbaugh’s work in the manner it demands and deserves lies beyond the scope of this chapter, but suffice it to say that he builds on Whitehead’s insight, which bears similarity to Husserl’s,<sup>22</sup> in understanding time to be a directional process constituted by irreversible “patterns of concrecence” rather than self-sustained, intermonadic moments sequentially strung on a time-line.<sup>23</sup>

The relevance of Brumbaugh’s perspective to my own imaginal thinking about time will become apparent later. For the moment let us return to Augustine and consider more carefully the context of his remark cited earlier. The reflections on time in book eleven of the *Confessions* come directly after the affirmation of the Christological doctrine of creation by the eternal Logos. Significantly, Augustine’s musing on the first verse in Genesis, “In the beginning God created heaven and earth,” precedes the discourse on this creed. Augustine notes that although he knew only Latin and not Hebrew, he would have understood the truth (*veritas*) of these words even in Moses’s own Hebrew, for truth “uses neither mouth nor tongue as instruments and utters no audible syllables,” and thus it can be stripped of any particular linguistic attire.<sup>24</sup>

One cannot fail to note the ironic twist in Augustine’s thought. The scriptural truth that the medium of creation is the word of God finds its ultimate

justification in an intuition beyond the Logos in its ocular and verbal representations. The only way to transcend the word, however, is through the word. To support his point exegetically, Augustine cites the words attributed to the voice that spoke from the clouds to Peter, James, and John while they were witnessing the transfiguration of Jesus and his standing in the company of Moses and Elijah: “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him” (Matt 17:5). Augustine detects here a reference to the mystery of incarnation, which he expounds in temporal terms: “Therefore it is clear and evident that the utterance came through the movement of some created thing, serving your eternal will but itself temporal [*quod creaturae motus expressit eam, serviens aeternae voluntati tuae, ipse temporalis*]. And these your words, made for temporal succession, were reported by the external ear to the judicious mind whose internal ear is disposed to hear your eternal word.”<sup>25</sup>

The “eternal word” (*aeternum verbum*) by which all things were created is identified as Jesus, the beginning (*principium*) that is wisdom (*sapientia*), the silence (*silentio*) apprehended by way of the “inner ear” (*interior posita*), the temporal instantiation of the eternal will. The word, the instrument of creation, is described, therefore, as temporal but also as coeternal with God. Insofar as the Logos participates in the divine substance, its “true eternity” and “true immortality” are set in diametric opposition to “time and change,”<sup>26</sup> and hence we cannot speak of the word as a “transient utterance” (*transitoria voce*);<sup>27</sup> it is, rather, the primordial saying voiced in the “simultaneity of eternity” (*simul ac sempiternae*): “You call us, therefore, to understand the Word, God who is with you God (Jn 1:1). That word is spoken eternally, and by it all things are uttered eternally.”<sup>28</sup> Speaking that has no inception or terminus, no succession or interruption, is not a speaking with which we are familiar, a speaking determined by change and mutability,<sup>29</sup> a speaking sounded in time, which is inaudible without transition and movement; only eternal silence can be spoken eternally. The speaking of the Logos, consequently, is “successiveness which never has any constancy.”<sup>30</sup> How can that which is without constancy lay claim to being successive? If nothing is constant, there is nothing to succeed, and with nothing to succeed there can be no successiveness except perhaps the succession of inconstancy, though this, too, would depend on the constancy of succession.

This paradoxical quandary illumines the fact that, for Augustine, the mystery of the word made flesh problematizes the alleged antinomy between time and eternity, motion and rest.<sup>31</sup> On the one hand, the word is coeternal and thus not subject to generation or decay; on the other hand, the word transpires in time, the incarnation of the word bespeaks the temporal manifestation of the eternal will, always in and of the moment—indeed the momentum of the moment is conceived from the vantage point of the enfleshment of the flesh beyond flesh,

the envisioning of the image beyond image, the “immanence of infinitude in the finite.”<sup>32</sup> On this basis we can grasp why Augustine exegetically links the mystery to the verse “Today I have begotten you,” *ego hodie genui te* (Ps 2:7), a verse that was already applied to Jesus in Hebrews 5:5. God’s eternity is characterized by a today that “does not yield to a tomorrow, nor did it follow a yesterday,” that is, the today is the fullness of a present that has neither past nor future.<sup>33</sup> To speak of the word being born “today” signifies the begetting of what is coeternal with God, the eternal coming-to-be of what has everlastingly been. The incarnation semiotically encodes the a/temporal transition from immutable to mutable that makes temporal creation on the part of the timeless God possible.<sup>34</sup> The transition cannot occur in time since it is the process that provides the very conditions for time. Alternatively expressed, the word eternally begotten—clearly a stumbling block to reason since the eternal cannot be begotten nor can the begotten be eternal—is the ontic source of temporality. It follows, then, that there cannot be a time when time did not exist, *nec aliquo tempore non erat tempus*.<sup>35</sup> In the Word, “everything which begins to be and ceases to be begins and ends its existence” precisely because it is the “eternal reason [*aeterna ratio*] where nothing begins or ends,”<sup>36</sup> the eternal law (*lex aeterna*) that manifests the reason (*ratio*) of the timeless deity in the transitory world.<sup>37</sup> Augustine opines further about this matter in his explication of John’s statement concerning Jesus, “They sought therefore to seize him, and no one laid hands on him because his hour had not yet come” (Jn 7:30):

He was waiting for the time when he would die, because he also waited for the time when he was to be born. The apostle, speaking about this time, said, “But when the fullness of time came, God sent his Son” (Gal 4:4). That is why many ask: Why did not the Christ come before? To them it must be answered that the fullness of time had not yet come, inasmuch as he, through whom times were made, regulates [them]; for he knew when he ought to come. . . . Finally, when the fullness of time came, he who was to free us from time also came. For, freed from time, we shall come to that eternity where time is not. And there it is not asked, when will the hour come? For the day is everlasting and is not preceded by a yesterday nor closed out by a tomorrow. . . . And so we ought to love him through whom times were made, that we may be freed from time and fixed in eternity where there is no alteration of time.<sup>38</sup>

The hour of Christ’s coming is designated the *fullness of time*, the “everlasting” day that is “not preceded by a yesterday nor closed out by a tomorrow.” The mystery of incarnation embodies the temporalization of the eternal—the timeless being through whom all times are made—that yields the possibility for the

eternalization of the temporal, the possibility for the human being to partake in the fullness of eternity realized in the simultaneity of the ever-recurring present that “flies so quickly from future into past that it is an interval with no duration.”<sup>39</sup> Precisely because “nothing is transient” in the eternal, the “whole is present” therein.<sup>40</sup> Augustine thus writes of God’s dwelling in the “sublimity of eternity which is always in the present,”<sup>41</sup> a state that is before all things past and beyond all things future. Nothing in time can claim to be present in this way since “all past time is driven backwards by the future, and all future time is the consequent of the past, and all past and future are created and set on their course by that which is always present.”<sup>42</sup> By contrast, the moment of eternity, the eternal moment, “occupies no space,” for there is no “tension between past and future” in the present of divine activity. God does not suffer human consciousness’s “distension” of time, the “stretching in feeling and in sense-perception” from past memories to future expectations.<sup>43</sup> Even for human beings the present is privileged as the mode in which all perspectives on time are apprehended, that is, memory of past experiences, perception of present sensations, and expectation of future events are discerned only from the present. In a sense, then, the only time that is real is the present. In Augustine’s own language, “Perhaps it would be exact to say: there are three times, a present of things past, a present of things present, a present of things to come. In the soul there are three aspects of time, and I do not see them anywhere else. The present considering the past is memory, the present considering the present is immediate awareness, the present considering the future is expectation.”<sup>44</sup>

Augustine challenged the customary way of referring to three temporal tenses, for, in his opinion, past and future are only “real” as they are experienced in the present—in the one case as recollection and in the other as anticipation. In a move that had major ramifications in the history of philosophy, especially in the philosophical phenomenology formulated by Husserl, Augustine, following Plotinus, identified the soul as the *place of time* or, to be more specific, time is defined as a quantity in the soul (*distentio ipsius animi*).<sup>45</sup> For Augustine, therefore, human experience of time is not linked to external space, a mode of temporality that he ascribes, in a passage in *De Genesi ad litteram*, to the angels, incorporeal beings not situated in space who nevertheless perform acts in a temporal sequence. In that context, the angelic beings are positioned between the Creator, who is beyond all time and space, and corporeal beings, who act in time and space.<sup>46</sup> Even though human beings are corporeal bodies located in space, their temporal comportment nonetheless is non-spatial (and hence angelic) inasmuch as the locus of the measure of time is in the immaterial soul and not in external matter.

If we divest Augustine’s view of its theological language, we recognize it as

a philosophical foundation for Husserl's phenomenology of time. On this score, it is of interest to recall the words of Jean-François Lyotard, "From book XI of the *Confessions* Husserl reads off the phenomenology of the internal consciousness of time. In this book Augustine sketches from below a libidinal-ontological constitution of temporality."<sup>47</sup> Leaving aside the provocative characterization of time in the conclusion of Lyotard's remark, for our purpose what is most significant is the recognition of the impact of Augustine's demarcation of the soul as the site of temporal constitution on the phenomenological conception of time proffered by Husserl. Time, for Augustine, is indicative not of external objects but of the psychic mode through which these objects are represented in the human mind. The measurement of time, accordingly, applies to what endures in the consciousness of the present, not to the stream of past or future events.<sup>48</sup> That the soul is the locus of temporality is underscored by the emphasis Augustine placed on the narrativity of recalling the past as well as predicting the future. Although he did not articulate it fully, Augustine seemed to have grasped the intractable link between the tempo of time and the narrative structure of human consciousness exemplified in our inability to conceive of time in the absence of narrative or narrative in the absence of time. I will return to the more fully developed version of this theme in the thought of Paul Ricoeur later in this chapter. What is crucial to underscore here is that, for Augustine, even though the human soul is the ground of time, as it were, the character of temporality embraces a paradox that is, in the end, an inscrutable scandal to reason, a paradox inscribed most peculiarly in the incarnation of the eternal word in the body of Christ.

We may gauge Augustine's insight into the incomprehensibility and ineffability of time better if we consider his thoughts on encountering the proposition that "God is truth" (Jn 14:6) in the eighth book of *De Trinitate*. When the mind *hears* that truth, it *sees* the light of God (1 Jn 1:5), but this intellectual vision, occasioned by internal hearing,<sup>49</sup> is ephemeral, an instantaneous knowing of interminable truth that is subject to neither critical inquiry nor rational analysis.<sup>50</sup> Augustine instructs the reader: "Do not ask: 'What is Truth?' [Jn 18:38]. For at once the mists of bodily images and the clouds of phantasms will obstruct your view, and obscure the brightness which shone upon you at the first flash when I said 'Truth.' Remain in it, if you can, but if you cannot, you will fall back into those wonted early thoughts."<sup>51</sup> In the continuation, Augustine answers his own rhetorical question by noting the lamentable state of the human predicament, which prevents us from persisting in the luster of everlasting truth. The decisive point is the affinity in Augustine's thinking between the texture of time and the contour of God's truth: Just as one cannot ask about the proposition that God is truth, as this truth is grasped intuitively,

so one cannot ask about time, as the truth of time, manifest most pristinely in the *nunc stans*, the moment that becomes eternally in the ephemerality of being, is not rationally discernible.

Prima facie, the comparison might strike one as dubious, given the unequivocal distinction Augustine draws between the fixity of eternity and the mutability of time, the constancy of God and the variableness of creation,<sup>52</sup> a perspective that can be traced conceptually to Plato's exposition in the first hypothesis of the *Parmenides* that the One, the ultimate principle of metaphysical unity, does not come to be and is thus not a "tensed being," subject to the fluctuations of time.<sup>53</sup> Any attempt "to taste eternity" when one's heart is "still flitting about in the realm where things change and have a past and future" proves futile.<sup>54</sup> The logic underlying the binary opposition is transparent: A being that suffers generation and decay, the law of the temporal order, necessarily changes, but the simplicity of the divine being—characterized variously by Augustine as "that which is" (*id quod est*), "what truly is" (*id quod vere est*), "true being" (*vere esse*), "being itself" (*ipsum esse*)—cannot be subject to alteration and thus cannot be affected by ephemeral occurrences.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, every existent being must be either that which truly is or ontically dependent on that which truly is. Hence, the being that truly is comprehends everything in its own being; and since that being is simple and immutable, it must contain everything in an eternal present that precludes complexity or alteration. Therein lies the crucial difference between time and eternity, but also their point of contiguity: "In the eternal, nothing is transient, but the whole is present. But no time is wholly present."<sup>56</sup>

For Augustine, eternity is not infinite duration, for infinite duration, though infinite, is duration nonetheless and is consequently measurable; the eternal, by contrast, must be immeasurable, the absolutely timeless as opposed to the unendingly time-bound.<sup>57</sup> Augustine's analysis of time leads him to the conclusion that the moment itself, the only temporal tense we can affirm as real, is analogously without duration and hence incalculable. The present time, which can never be the time of presence, is the eternalized instant that "is not a distention to immeasurability but is rather its outside," in the manner that silence is outside, and thus still part of, the province of language.<sup>58</sup> Eternity, therefore, is the perpetual reappearance of what repeatedly disappears, a present that has no past or future, memory without memorable imprint.<sup>59</sup> Significantly, Augustine describes his intellectual vision of God in these very terms: "So in the flash of a trembling glance it attained to that which is. At that moment I saw your 'invisible nature understood through the things which are made' (Rom 1:20). But I did not possess the strength to keep my vision fixed."<sup>60</sup> In spite of the seemingly incontrovertible divergence between eternity and time on philo-

sophical grounds, in theological terms—that is, in the language of faith—the one informs us about the nature of the other; to see the light that is God, one beholds with the mind’s eye the flow of time in the flight of eternity. Echoing the Augustinian position many centuries later, Kierkegaard surmised that the “moment is really time’s atom, but not until eternity is posited, and this is why one may properly say that eternity is always *ἰν ἐν ατομῶ* [in the moment].”<sup>61</sup>

Augustine’s quandary, as Husserl correctly understood, is a matter of interpretation, not experience, that is, the difficulty of determining the nature of time lies not in suffering the events themselves—“we all know what time is”—but in giving an adequate “account of time-consciousness, to put objective time and subjective time-consciousness into the proper relationship and to reach an understanding of how temporal objectivity—and therefore any individual objectivity whatever—can become constituted in the subjective consciousness of time.”<sup>62</sup> In a similar vein, Wittgenstein observed that what is perplexing to the mind is not the phenomenal experience of temporal duration as such but discerning the “kind of statement” (*die Art der Aussagen*) appropriate to articulate it.<sup>63</sup> The reasonableness of the distinction notwithstanding, the telling of time—recounting events in an extending and purportedly continuous chain of remembrance and anticipation—is not easily separated from the experience of time. But what is it that we experience? Having thought through the labyrinth of logical puzzles connected to reflection on the nature of time, Augustine holds fast to the conclusion that it is inexact to speak of three tenses, since neither past nor future exists independently of the present; thus, if one is to accord meaning to the customary way of speaking about time, the three times will be interpreted as three aspects of the moment, “a present of things past, a present of things present, a present of things to come. In the soul there are these three aspects of time, and I do not see them anywhere else. The present considering the past is the memory, the present considering the present is immediate awareness, the present considering the future is expectation.”<sup>64</sup> For Augustine, therefore, the true reality of time is not adduced from the measure of bodies in motion but from the distension of mind, the vital force of being manifest in the successive spreading out of the soul between recollection and expectation,<sup>65</sup> a psychological process that mimics the foundational mystery of Christian faith, the incarnation of the eternal Word at a particular point in time, an historical event that summons an abiding-in-being-born rather than the passing-away that is characteristic of all things ephemeral.<sup>66</sup>

In some respects, Augustine anticipated the view of Henri Bergson for whom time is expressive of the creative impulse of being, the *élan vital*, the “pure duration,” which he contrasts sharply with measured time, casting the two in a series of antinomies—succession and simultaneity, alteration and homogeneity,

intensive magnitude and spatial representation. Science demonstrates unequivocally the human mind's capacity to measure time mathematically—though, in point of fact, real time is never so measured—a tendency to “empty” the “content” of time “into a space of four dimensions in which past, present and future are juxtaposed or superimposed for all eternity.” In the spatialization of time, “conscious duration and real motion” are replaced—Bergson's language is precise, “replaced” and not “translated”—by the “mathematical point that has been carried over from space to time.” What we call time is but a contrived artifice that “infuses living duration into a time dried up as a space.”<sup>67</sup> Real duration is experienced as an unfolding of time that cannot be measured unless it is spatially converted. This experience, moreover, is not subject to articulation, since language cannot affix meaning to the temporal flow without arresting its mobility.<sup>68</sup>

Going beyond the Bergsonian notion of time as inner duration in the direction of the more technical phenomenological analyses of Husserl, temporal fluidity is ascribed to the intentional structure of internal time-consciousness.<sup>69</sup> Husserl would have agreed with Bergson that reflection imposes the form of objective time upon an evanescent living present, but, in his mind, even the present has to be construed as a constitution of temporal intentionality striving for—though never finally achieving—a unitary object in the flux of manifold lived experiences.<sup>70</sup> The present is not an “impressionist point” lodged between past and future but rather a “concatenation of temporal phases” composed of retention and protention.<sup>71</sup> I shall revisit this aspect of Husserl's conception of time. Worth underscoring here is his acute sensibility that human consciousness displays a hybrid nature, as it both constitutes and is constituted by an ego-self<sup>72</sup> that is constricted within necessarily limited boundaries, embodied, as we are, in an encasing that comes-to-be and passes-away, that is, an embodiment that is of necessity mortal and thus evidently time-bound.<sup>73</sup> Is there anything more basic to human experience than the *temporal socialization* that gives scope and meaning to the span of individual and communal life?<sup>74</sup> “Doing time” is what we are primordially, not in the sense of chronological priority but in the manner of persisting in time as the evolving self (more process than substance) acutely attuned to bearing the destiny of being the being that is yet to become no more.<sup>75</sup>

## Internal Time-Consciousness and Temporal Coherence

One of phenomenology's most significant contributions to the history of philosophy is the privileged status accorded to time in determining the nature of

human consciousness—and, reciprocally, the privileged status attributed to human consciousness in determining the nature of time.<sup>76</sup> Merleau-Ponty hit the mark when he insisted that we should no longer think of time as a “datum of consciousness,” that it is more precise to say “consciousness unfolds or constitutes time.”<sup>77</sup> The phenomenological consideration of time has as its focus the “intersection of time and human experience, where time is human and human experience is temporal.”<sup>78</sup> This orientation is rooted in Plotinus, whose meditations on time rest on two presuppositions: first, an elaboration of the Platonic conjecture that time is the “moving image of eternity”<sup>79</sup> and, second, a rejection of Aristotle’s demarcation of time as the measure of the motion of bodies with respect to a “before” and an “after.”<sup>80</sup> For Plotinus, still indebted to Aristotle, determining the nature of time centers on understanding the relationship between movement and distance, a relationship that is tied to the matter of number. As he puts it, “Movement which extends over a distance and the distance covered by it are not the actual thing, time, but are in time. But if someone were to say that the distance of movement is time, not in the sense of the distance of movement itself, but that in relation to which the movement has its extension, as if it was running along with it, what this is has not been stated. For it is obvious that time is that in which movement has occurred.”<sup>81</sup>

The decisive feature of temporality is extension, “spreading out” (*diastasis*), and consequently the ability to compute the duration and passage of events is central to the human experience of time. “So the spreading out of life involves time; life’s continual progress involves continuity of time; and life which is past involves past time.”<sup>82</sup> Unlike Aristotle, however, Plotinus locates the primary site of extension in the psychic rather than somatic domain. Hence it is proper to speak of time as the “life of the soul in a movement of passage [*kinesei metabatike*] from one way of life to another.”<sup>83</sup> To be sure, Aristotle himself was aware that our sense of time’s passage is dependent on the mental experience of movement and change; thus, as he states explicitly, when one is conscious of no change, it seems as if no time has elapsed.<sup>84</sup> Centuries later, Hobbes reiterated the Aristotelian conception: “As a body leaves a phantasm of its magnitude in the mind, so also a moved body leaves a phantasm of its motion, namely, an idea of that body passing out of one space into another by continual succession. And this idea, or phantasm, is that, which (without receding much from the common opinion, or from Aristotle’s definition) I call Time.”<sup>85</sup> Nevertheless, it is important to recall that Aristotle understood time more precisely as the measure of the movement of bodies, not souls, in space. Time is not simply an idea or phantasm; it is the idea or phantasm that corresponds to the measure of the motion of a body periodically moving and resting in space. By contrast, Plotinus spoke of time as the movement of a soul from one state to another.

In the fifth century, Proclus elaborated the Plotinian perspective on time in language worthy of our consideration. Echoing the view that time is the measure of things in motion, Proclus argued, “All that is measured by time either in its existence or in its activity is in the process of coming-to-be in that respect in which it is measured by time.”<sup>86</sup> As a necessary corollary, what moves perpetually cannot be measured by time, for it can never be said to come to be, and consequently it can have no temporal origin or end. What moves perpetually is imperishable, incomposite, and self-constituted,<sup>87</sup> transcending all that is measured by time.<sup>88</sup> Following an etymology proffered by Aristotle<sup>89</sup> and reiterated by Plotinus,<sup>90</sup> Proclus defines the “eternal” (*aionion*) as that which “always is” (*aei on*), in contrast to the temporal being that incessantly comes-to-be.<sup>91</sup> Applying his theory of causality based on a tripartite system of participation—the unparticipated (*amethekton*), participated (*metechomenon*), and participant (*metechon*)<sup>92</sup>—Proclus establishes two principles of being to articulate the contours of our temporal comportment in the world: “Prior to all things eternal there exists Eternity; and prior to all things temporal, Time. . . . For the eternal things are many, and likewise the temporal: all the former have an eternity by participation, all the latter a time which is parcelled out. But prior to these are the undivided Eternity and the one Time; these are Eternity of eternities and the Time of times, since they generate the participated terms.”<sup>93</sup>

Rather than positioning eternity and time in an antithetical binary, Proclus views both as “measures of life and movement in things”—eternity the measure of things interminable and time the measure of things terminable.<sup>94</sup> Concerning the latter, it is necessary to distinguish, moreover, between substances that have permanent duration and thus exemplify the character of “perpetual time” (*aidios chronos*) and others that have a temporary existence and therefore partake only of a “part of time” (*pote en merei chronou*). Insofar as transitory beings cannot be considered truly real, since true being is not subject to coming-to-be, it follows that time is the measure of that which perpetually comes-to-be, for in virtue of “its perpetuity it imitates the eternal nature.”<sup>95</sup> Two kinds of perpetuity are differentiated by Proclus: “the one eternal, the other in time; the one a perpetual steadfastness, the other a perpetual process; the one having its existence concentrated in a simultaneous whole, the other diffused and unfolded in temporal extension; the one entire in itself, the other composed of parts each of which exists separately in an order of succession.”<sup>96</sup> On the basis of this differentiation, three levels of being may be distinguished: the “impartible perpetuity” (*aidiotes ameristos*)<sup>97</sup> of eternity beyond time; the perpetuity of “intransitive intellection” (*ametabatos noesis*)<sup>98</sup> attributed to the intellect, the eternal image of eternity, time at rest; and the temporal, which is always in motion and hence is perpetual in a derivative sense.<sup>99</sup> Proclus speaks of three successive

entities: the “one being” (to hen on hos), the “monad of all being” (monas tōn onton), which, in virtue of its absolute oneness, is beyond attribution; “eternity” (aion), the dyad that “always is” (o aei on); and “the eternal” (to aionion), which participates in the conjunction of “always” and “existence” but not with the same degree of durability as in the case of eternity.<sup>100</sup> In contrast to the “friends of Plato,” that is, Plotinus and other Neoplatonists, who considered time an “obscure notion” linked to the motion of the soul that is measurable,<sup>101</sup> Proclus insists that time’s essence is more divine than that of the soul.<sup>102</sup> Certainly, he accepts the proposition that if something partakes of soul, it partakes of time; but for him the converse is not true, as there are beings without soul that partake of time, and thus one must conclude that “time is beyond the soul” (chronon epekeina psychēs).<sup>103</sup> Time is engendered from the desire of the Intellect, identified as the Platonic demiurge, to overflow and to fill all things,<sup>104</sup> and in this sense it is the imitation of eternity, though it is actualized in the physical world by the principle of self-motion enacted in the Soul. The nature of time appropriate to the Intellect is imparticipable (amethektos chronos), that is, the monadic, and consequently motionless, time, for what is truly one is incomposite and hence cannot be subject to change, whereas temporal extension, the ceaseless motion that emulates the steadfastness of eternity, is located in the soul. As Proclus puts it, “Every intra-mundane soul, having movement and exercising a temporal activity, will have a periodic motion, and also cyclic reinstatements (since in the case of things perpetual every period ends in a reinstatement of the original condition).”<sup>105</sup> Psychic motion exhibits the character of perpetuity, which is associated in Hellenic thought with the rotation of a sphere, considered to be the most perfect form of movement. E. R. Dodds has cogently outlined the Aristotelian principles underlying the Proclean theorem: “The physical universe is finite save in the sense that finite bodies are potentially divisible *ad infinitum*. . . . And movement in a finite space can continue through an infinite time only by returning periodically to its starting-point. Hence the only movement which is both continuous and perpetual is a circular movement, like that of the heavenly bodies.”<sup>106</sup> For Proclus, the way of the soul mirrors the way of the heavenly bodies, and thus, as he further adduces, “every psychic period is measured by time”; the soul is characterized by circular motion, continuous and perpetual, and it is in this sense that time is the image of eternity. The way of the soul, like the spiritual power (*dunamis*) of being more generally, undergoes procession and reversion in relation to its source.<sup>107</sup> In his commentary on Plato’s *Parmenides*, Proclus reiterates this point by noting that what is nonreceptive to time applies to the One and not the Soul, “for all soul partakes in time and uses periods measured by time. The One, indeed, is superior to Soul because all Soul partakes in time, and the One will be shown now not to partake in time; but Intellect

also is different from Soul for the same reasons, being pure from all temporal activity, so that by means of these distinctions we are able to discern and recognise the three ruling hypostases.”<sup>108</sup>

Time is understood most elementally as the measure of the motion of the soul’s journey, a narratological conception that Reiner Schürman traces to the visionary poem of Parmenides, a philosophic unveiling of truth, or perhaps more accurately, an unveiling of the unveiling, a path that “integrates concealing into unconcealing,” the one way of “concealment/unconcealment, for which the word *alétheia* suggests our wresting ourselves away from contrary representations and the conquest of a unitary point of view.”<sup>109</sup> The experience of time is intimately coupled with the computation of the mythic account of the psychic voyage,<sup>110</sup> the verbal gesticulation that reveals the soul’s passing through the gates of night and day to cross the threshold from the “way of seeming” to the “way of truth,” the flight of mind from transient objects of sense (*aisthetā*) to eternal objects of contemplation (*noeton*).<sup>111</sup> There is much to say about Parmenides and his impact on the history of Western philosophy, but most relevant here is the point that Plotinus’s demarcation of soul as the locus for the measure of time may be viewed as an embellishment of the Parmenidean conception of originary time.<sup>112</sup> Needless to say, there are fundamental differences; most significantly, for Plotinus and like-minded Neoplatonists, time applies not only to individual souls but also, indeed primarily, to the “first soul,” that is, the world soul of the Platonic tradition.<sup>113</sup> In a universe thought to be closed, limitless motion—the quality experienced in the flow of time—can express itself in the recurrent coming-to-be and passing-away of the soul, the perpetual return whither it must always have never been. The most perfect mode of temporal activity, therefore, the place where time and eternity intersect, where eternity is eternally temporal and time temporally eternal, is assigned to the world soul. Proclus, accordingly, asserts that “the soul with which temporal measurement begins has the whole of time for measure.”<sup>114</sup>

This account of the interiorization of the temporal unquestionably influenced Augustine’s definition of time as a distension of the mind (*distentio animi*),<sup>115</sup> a position that approximates the present-day emphasis on the locus of temporality in internal time-consciousness.<sup>116</sup> In modern philosophical discourse, Kant established the foundation for the phenomenological viewpoint, or what has been felicitously called the “reflexive temporalization of time,”<sup>117</sup> by insisting on the “transcendental ideality” of the temporal sensibility.<sup>118</sup> To be more precise, Kant identified both space and time as “pure forms of sensible intuition,” the “two sources of cognition” that impart the necessary conditions for the synthetic knowledge that shapes all human experience. Yet he accorded a privileged status to time, for space is “limited as an *a priori* condition merely to outer intu-

itions,” whereas time, being linked to the inner sense, is the “a priori formal condition of all appearances in general.”<sup>119</sup> The logic behind Kant’s assessment is clear enough: All mental representations, even if they correspond to external objects, are determinations of the mind and thus belong to the inner intuition, which cannot be understood except through the modalities of time; we cannot think of consciousness in the absence of time, nor time in the absence of consciousness.<sup>120</sup> Indeed, for Kant, we cannot account for human experience without presuming the unity of self-consciousness—the hypothetical construct of *transcendental apperception*—the “I think” that accompanies all representations and thereby holds manifold sensory data together in time.<sup>121</sup> “I am an object of inner sense and all time is merely the form of inner sense. . . . For it really says no more than that in the whole time in which I am conscious of myself, I am conscious of this time as belonging to the unity of my Self, and it is all the same whether I say that this whole time is in Me, as an individual unity, or that I am to be found with numerical identity, in all of this time.”<sup>122</sup> Time, therefore, is given epistemological preference over space as the form of intuition that provides the structure of the phenomenal datum as such: time cannot be removed from appearances without there ceasing to be appearances.<sup>123</sup> John R. Searle captures the point succinctly: “Since Kant we have been aware of an asymmetry in the way that consciousness relates to space and to time. Although we experience objects and events as both spatially extended and of temporal duration, our consciousness itself is not experienced as spatial, though it is experienced as temporally extended. Indeed, the spatial metaphors for describing time seem almost inevitable for consciousness as well, as when we speak for example of the ‘stream of consciousness.’”<sup>124</sup> The privileging of time would prove to have a profound impact on subsequent philosophical and scientific speculations on the nature of being.<sup>125</sup>

Husserl elaborated on the Kantian position in a 1905 lecture—published in 1966 as volume 10 in the *Husserliana* series with the title *Zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewußtseins (1893–1917)*—on his signature notion of the internal time-consciousness (*inneren Zeitbewußtseins*), which deals, more specifically, with the “double intentionality of retention and the constitution of the flow of consciousness.” “This prephenomenal, preimmanent temporality becomes constituted intentionally as the form of the time-constituting consciousness and in it itself. The flow of the consciousness that constitutes immanent time not only exists but is so remarkably and yet intelligibly fashioned that a self-appearance of the flow necessarily exists in it, and therefore the flow itself must necessarily be apprehensible in the flowing.”<sup>126</sup> In the flow of consciousness, which cannot be isolated from consciousness of the flow, constituting and constituted coincide.<sup>127</sup> Mathematical time, like geometric space, is an idealized abstraction, a

logical substructure constructed and imposed on the concrete forms of the intu- itable life-world (*Lebenswelt*), the world of experience (*Erfahrungswelt*), revealed from the surrounding precategorical world (*Umwelt*).<sup>128</sup> “Immanent time” thus “becomes objectivated into a time of objects constituted in the immanent appearances . . . in the multiplicity of adumbrations of the sensation-contents understood as unities belonging to phenomenological time.”<sup>129</sup> In the second of his *Cartesianische Meditationen* (written in 1929 but first published in French translation in 1933), Husserl offered a slightly different account of the matter:

The all-embracing cogitatum <of reflection> is the all-embracing life itself, with its openly endless unity and wholeness. . . . The *fundamental form* of this universal syn- thesis, the form that makes all other syntheses of consciousness possible, is the all- embracing *consciousness of internal time*. The correlate of this consciousness is immanent temporality itself, in conformity with which all the life-processes belonging to the ego that can ever be found reflectively must present themselves as temporally ordered, temporally beginning and ending, simultaneous or successive, within the constant infinite horizon: immanent time. The distinction between <internal> time itself and the consciousness of <internal> time can be expressed also as that between the subjective process in internal time, or the temporal form of this pro- cess, and the *modes of its temporal appearance*, as the corresponding “multiplicities.” As these modes of appearance, which make up the consciousness of internal time, are themselves “intentional components of conscious life” [*“intentionale Erlebnisse”*] and must in turn be given in reflection as temporalities, we encounter here a paradoxical fun- damental property of conscious life, which seems thus to be infected with an infi- nite regress.<sup>130</sup>

The “consciousness of internal time” is made up of “intentional components of conscious life,” but these intentional components themselves can only be “given in reflection as temporalities.” The paradox is expressed in slightly different terms in Husserl’s depiction of the intentional constitution of the “empirical ego” by the “phenomenological ego” in *Logische Untersuchungen* (1900–1901):

When I say “cohered continuously with it in unity,” I refer to the unity of the concrete phenomenological whole, whose parts are either abstract *aspects* . . . or pieces from whose nature spring forms of coexistent unity, . . . These “unities of coexistence” pass continuously into one another from one moment to the next, composing a unity of change, of the stream of consciousness, which in turn de- mands the continuous persistence, or no continuous change, of at least one aspect essential for its total unity, and so inseparable from it as a whole. This part is played by the presentative form of time which is immanent in the stream of consciousness, which later appears as a unity in time (not in the time of the world of things, but

in the time which appears together with the stream of consciousness itself, and in which the stream flows). Each instant of time is given in a continuous projective series (so-to-speak) “time-sensations”; in each actual phase of the stream of consciousness the whole time-horizon of the stream is presented, and it thereby possesses a form overreaching all its contents, which remains the same form continuously, though its content steadily alters. This accordingly forms the phenomenological content of the ego, of the empirical ego in the sense of the psychic subject. Phenomenological reduction yields the really self-enclosed, temporally growing unity of the stream of experience.<sup>131</sup>

The “phenomenological whole” is located in the “unities of coexistence,” which cohere to form the stream of consciousness. The oneness experienced therein is “unity of change,” that is, unity that emerges from the constancy of change, the novelty of each instant, recurring enduringly as the present having passed in the immediate presence of what has never been.<sup>132</sup> For Husserl, the “presentative form of time” is the intentional structure that provides the temporal synthesis required for one to become aware of objects persisting through time.<sup>133</sup> The very possibility of comprehending a “temporal object” (*Zeitobjekt*), therefore, is dependent on a “temporalizing” (*zeitigend*) of the original flow (*Fluß*) of prereflective consciousness, which constitutes the external objectivity displayed in the duration of things that appear as well as the internal subjectivity by which the flow of consciousness itself endures.<sup>134</sup> In the final analysis, Husserl’s phenomenological method of the epoché—the suspension of judgment with regard to the actuality or nonactuality of the contents of consciousness—seeks to disclose world and ego without being ensnared in the traditional binary of objectivity and subjectivity. To the extent that the “world” is alive as a datum of consciousness, it coheres immanently as an intentional form of subjectivity in the world; analogously, to the extent that the “subject” is constituted by the structure of intentionality, it inheres transcendently as a constructed object of the world in subjectivity.<sup>135</sup>

In *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie: Eine Einleitung in die phänomenologische Philosophie* (composed from 1934 to 1937 though not published until 1954), Husserl deals with the juxtaposition of “subjectivity in the world as object” and the “conscious subject for the world” under the rubric “paradox of human subjectivity: being a subject for the world and at the same time being an object in the world.”<sup>136</sup> Acknowledging that as a consequence of the phenomenological reduction “everything objective is transformed into something subjective,” Husserl is quick to point out that “this cannot be meant in such a way that through this method the existing world and the human world-representation are set over against each other and that, on the

ground of the world, taken for granted as actually existing, we inquire into the subjective, i.e., into the psychic occurrences in men through which they gain experience of the world, everyday or scientific opinions about the world, their particular sensible and conceptual 'world-pictures.'" Notwithstanding the attempt to distance his own perspective from an idealistic reduction of all beings to mental constructs, Husserl is not able to free himself entirely from the grip of this philosophic orientation. The nucleus of Husserl's transcendental idealism is expressed in his remark that "in the pure attitude focused upon correlations, created by the epoché, the world, the objective, becomes itself something subjective."<sup>137</sup>

Within the brackets of the suspension, therefore, the world is transformed into a "transcendental phenomenon," which "is from the start taken only as a correlate of the subjective appearances, views, subjective acts and capacities through which it constantly has, and ever attains anew, its changeable [but] unitary sense. . . . The epoché, in giving us the attitude *above* the subject-object correlation which belongs to the world and thus the attitude of focus upon the *transcendental subject-object correlation*, leads us to recognize, in self-reflection, that the world exists for us, that is, our world in its being and being-such, takes its ontic meaning entirely from our intentional life through a priori types of accomplishments that can be exhibited rather than argumentatively constructed or conceived through mythical thinking."<sup>138</sup> But it is here that the epistemological difficulty emerges, as we confront a seemingly insoluble paradox: on the one hand, human consciousness assumes the task of a "world-constituting subjectivity," yet, on the other, it is "incorporated in the world itself."<sup>139</sup> Simply put, how can the self be the agent of the construction of the world when it is a component of the world so constructed?

Husserl's resolution of the paradox depends on discerning that notions of subjective identity such as "soul" or "psychic life" belong to the "phenomena" of the world as a constituted pole of the transcendental subject-object correlation, and, consequently, the "I" that is attained in the epoché—a modality of consciousness that precedes the dyadic division precipitated by the structure of intentionality—is called "I" only by equivocation.<sup>140</sup> "The epoché creates a unique sort of philosophical solitude which is the fundamental methodical requirement for a truly radical philosophy. In this solitude I am not a single individual who has somehow willfully cut himself off from the society of mankind. . . . All of mankind, and the whole distinction and ordering of the personal pronouns, has become a phenomenon within my epoché; and so has the privilege of I-the-man among other men."<sup>141</sup> The "I" ascertained within the phenomenological bracket exhibits "uniqueness and personal indeclinability" (the *always singular* "I") but it is at the same time a "privileged member" of

the “transcendental intersubjectivity” (one “I” among others), the community of “cosubjects” constituting the world as “world for all.” Husserl elucidates the matter by examining the process of “self-temporalization” through the prism of the “transcendental exposition of recollection”:

Thus the immediate “I” performs an accomplishment through which it constitutes a variational mode of itself as existing (in the mode of having passed). Starting from this we can trace how the immediate “I,” flowingly-statically present, constitutes itself in self-temporalization as enduring through “its” pasts. In the same way, the immediate “I,” already enduring in the enduring primordial sphere, constitutes in itself another as other. Self-temporalization through derepresentation [*Ent-Gegenwärtigung*], so to speak (through recollection), has its analogue in my self-alienation [*Ent-Fremdung*] (empathy as a derepresentation of a higher level—derepresentation of my primal presence [*Urpräsenz*] into a merely presentified [*vergegenwärtigte*] primal presence).<sup>142</sup>

Husserl describes the “I” of the immediate presence of the present, which is identified as the time of the “enduring primordial sphere,” in the evocative elocution “flowingly-statically present,” a turn of phrase meant to traverse the polarities of stasis and motion, substance and process, thing and event. Inasmuch as the “I” of the present constitutes itself as enduring through its past, self-temporalization is said to occur through “derepresentation,” that is, the recollection in the immediate presence of what is no longer present, the absent presence—presently absent, the present absence—absently present. In the same manner, Husserl speaks of “self-alienation” to account for the discernment of the other in the constitution of self. The “derepresentation” of one’s “primal presence” into a “merely presentified primal presence” marks the shift from the singular “I” to the communal “I” of transcendental intersubjectivity, a transformation that makes possible the eidetic correlation of subject-object in the noetic/noematic field of consciousness before the distinction of subject and object, and the presumed constitution of the latter as an expression of the former.

Time, in its phenomenological comportment as immanent temporality, serves as the bridge that links the two aspects of the *Lebenswelt*, the egoic stratum of intentionality and the hyletic stratum of the universe, without reducing one to the other—the metaphor of the bridge is employed to preserve the differences of what are joined together—and thereby lapsing into a contrived choice between realism and idealism. The possibility of representation is dependent on the living presence of the time of the present, but this presence embraces the past as a presence no longer present, a presence retained as the absence recollected in the present time projected into the future. The “continuous persist-

ence” of internal time-consciousness is thus glossed as “continuous change,” for only change persists in time. By the same token, in and through the streaming of time the self comes to be threaded together, as it were, into a semblance of unified identity by the “intensive components of conscious life.”<sup>143</sup>

In *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie* (1913), Husserl characterized “phenomenological” time, in contrast to “objective” or “cosmic” time, as a “unitary form of all experiences within a single stream of experience (that of one pure Ego).”<sup>144</sup> Temporality, we are told, “indicates not only something that belongs in a general way to every single experience, but a necessary form binding experiences with experiences.”<sup>145</sup> In the domain of internal time-consciousness, change is invariable, the flux binding. As Husserl says in the second book of the *Ideen*, which focuses on the phenomenology of constitution (a treatise he kept revising until 1928 that was published for the first time posthumously in 1952 by the Husserl-Archives):

All the unities we have discussed are unities in reference to a pure Ego, whose stream of consciousness they belong to and as whose “possessions” they are constituted. And the stream of consciousness, as a totality, builds itself up as a phenomenal unity. All my lived experiences, the successive and the coexisting, on which I focus, have the unity of a flux of time. That which belongs immanently to a flux of time possesses a perceivable, adequately graspable, unity. The unity of immanence is the unity of a constant flux, in the nexus of which all immanent duration and change are constituted.<sup>146</sup>

The “unity of immanence” arises not through stringing together a series of discrete moments but through the co/herence of successive and coexisting lived experiences in consciousness, the time-flow, which is always consciousness of the present, even though that present is compresently past and future. In thinking the presence of the present, we bring to mind the absence of past and future as the boundaries by which the present is formed.<sup>147</sup> This idea, and particularly the focus on the concept of boundary or limit (*die Grenze*) in assessing the intentional character of temporal continuity, was expressed by Husserl’s teacher, Franz Brentano.<sup>148</sup> Describing the nature of temporal relations in a discourse dictated relatively late in his life (February 22, 1915), he remarked: “It seems certain that we can never think of anything without thinking of something as present, that is to say, however, as on a boundary line which exists as the connecting point of an otherwise non-existent continuum or as providing its beginning or its end.”<sup>149</sup> Our intuition of time, according to Brentano, is linked exclusively to the moment,<sup>150</sup> the point of the present that divides the continuum into potentially limitless parts that converge transcendently in the bound-

ary of boundless temporal determinations but in so doing allows a sense of continuity between what has come before and what will come after.<sup>151</sup> The presumption of continuity is necessary to account for the fact that intended objects of human experience appear in consciousness under the guise of the three temporal modes of presentation (*Modi des Vorstellens*): past, present, and future.<sup>152</sup>

Now it is true that everything which is in time is present, existing now. But nevertheless it is not something existing in isolation in and of itself. It is rather continuing, or ending or beginning. It cannot exist without a relation of continuity [*Kontinualrelation*] to what is earlier or later and it is thereby connected with things which are separated from it, some by a greater and some by a lesser interval. . . . Having a finite far-ranging connection of this sort with other things is part of the concept of the present. Without this relational character it could not be conceived nor could it ever be an element of something with temporal duration and development.<sup>153</sup>

According to Brentano, the temporal modes of presentation are acquired in an “original” experience of association, an inner perception that he calls *proter-aesthesia*, described in a brief excursus (dictated in 1914) on the “temporally continuous” nature of the “real”—a term that alludes to Brentano’s reism, the doctrine that the object of thought must be considered a “real thing” (*Reales*) whether it is presented in the mind directly (*in recto*) or obliquely (*in obliquo*)<sup>154</sup>—as the “boundary-sensation which experiences the primary object as present” but also as “continuously manifold.”<sup>155</sup> On the one hand, temporal experience is of necessity constricted to a present that is isolated from past and future, but, on the other hand, the point of the present “cannot be set apart for itself because it is a mere boundary.” Brentano draws the logical conclusion: “So also perceiving cannot possibly exist for itself in a single isolated point in time so as to be reduced to a temporally punctual perceiving. . . . For after all, everything else that is temporal exists only in a point without existing isolated in this point—in virtue of its connection in infinitesimal transition with what is past or future.” The “temporal point,” therefore, can be grasped “without our grasping any preceding or following stretch of time, in spite of the fact that the temporal point itself cannot be without that which precedes or follows.” The “boundary-character” of the present “allows us to recognise its belonging to something that it bounds. Yet this boundary-character requires no specific magnitude of extension; it does not even require the existence of any specific second point in time, however close this might be for the first. And thus the grasping will perfectly well be capable of being limited to what is in the present; indeed it must be so limited already for the sake of its evidence, as also because of the infinite complication which would otherwise ensue.”<sup>156</sup>

In the terms Husserl used in the passage cited earlier, the stream, though ever-evolving, can be conceived as a “totality,” a “phenomenal unity,” a “unity of constant flux, in the nexus of which all immanent duration and change are constituted.” The coherence—what Husserl refers to as *temporal determination*, the duration of a thing as temporally extended<sup>157</sup>—embraces a threefold noetic structure that can be accounted for psychologically and ontically. That is, Husserl speaks of three primary types of intentional experience, retention, imagination, and expectation, that parallel the division of time into past, present, and future.<sup>158</sup> In the structure of ego the three converge, as imagination cannot function without retention or retention without expectation. Analogously, when we speak of consciousness, it is always consciousness of the present, but a present informed by the confluence of three temporalities; indeed, what presents itself as the flowing now-point is illumined from the shadow of what has been and springs forth from the ground of what shall be. “In each primal phase that originally constitutes the immanent content we have retentions of the preceding phases and protentions of the coming phases of precisely this content. . . . These ‘determinate’ retentions and protentions have an obscure horizon; in flowing away, they turn into indeterminate retentions and protentions related to the past and future course of the stream. It is through the indeterminate retentions and protentions that the actually present content is inserted into the unity of the stream.”<sup>159</sup> From this perspective it is correct to say that, for Husserl, the transcendental constitution of objective time and the consciousness of temporal immanence are intentional acts of human imagination.<sup>160</sup>

### Making-Present/Temporal Emplacement

In *La Voix et le Phénomène* (1967), Derrida remarked that, for Husserl, the “now,” or the “punctuality of the instant,” is affirmed as the “nondisplaceable center,” “eye,” and “living core” of temporality.<sup>161</sup> Derrida correctly noted that the now-point (*nunc stans*) so conceived is a “spatial or mechanical metaphor” related to the “metaphysical concept” of “self-presence,” but he has not done justice to the complexity of Husserl’s conception of the present (and thus of temporality more generally) as consisting of intermonadic moments linked in a continuum of retentions and protentions that makes up our experience of duration, an expanding chain extending to and beyond the “horizon of futurity.” In other words, Husserl’s *nunc stans* is far from being a mechanical or spatial metaphor. On the contrary, in a manner that actually anticipates Derrida’s critique of understanding presence in terms of an adequately given present, in Husserl’s view the living now is not a fixed point with discrete boundaries.<sup>162</sup> “It is evident that each time-point has its before and after, and that the points and extended sections that

are before cannot be compressed in the fashion of an approach to a mathematical limit, such as the limit of intensity. . . . A now is always and essentially a border-point of an extent of time.”<sup>163</sup> Acknowledging that the claim that the “flow of consciousness” (*der Fluß des Bewußtseins*) is a “succession” (*Aufeinanderfolge*) depends on fulfilling the conditions for “the possibility of the consciousness of succession” (*der Möglichkeit des Bewußtseins der Folge*), Husserl nevertheless insists that it is incorrect to speak of ultimate consciousness as temporal, let alone to posit that the present moment should be considered a time-object (*Zeitobjekt*) that persists in consciousness. In his own unambiguous language:

The flow of the modes of consciousness is not a process; the consciousness of the now is not itself now [*Der Fluß der Bewußtseinsmodi ist kein Vorgang, das Jetzt-Bewußtsein ist nicht selbst jetzt*]. The retention that exists “together” with the consciousness of the now is not “now,” is not simultaneous with the now, and it would make no sense to say that it is. . . . Memory [*Erinnerung*] is an expression that always and only refers to a constituted temporal object. Retention, on the other hand, is an expression used to designate the intentional relation (a fundamentally different relation) of phase of consciousness to phase of consciousness; and in this case the phases of consciousness and continuities of consciousness must not be regarded as temporal objects themselves.<sup>164</sup>

The very structures necessary to the constitution of time-consciousness are “nontemporal, that is to say, nothing in immanent time.”<sup>165</sup> Husserl’s conception of the flow of experience (*Erlebnisstrom*), moreover, presupposes temporal irreversibility,<sup>166</sup> that is, each moment displays the character of a monad that cannot be repeated.<sup>167</sup> Hence, we cannot say of the past that it returns; reminiscence of the past is predicated precisely on its no longer being present. The irreversible character of time precludes the possibility of reverting to the past in the present or of repeating the present in the future, but these very impossibilities facilitate the re/presentation of past and future in the present. Enzo Paci sagaciously summarized the “temporal dialectic” implicit in Husserl’s thought: “Since everything originates in present life, in this dialectic the *origin as past*, in passing from the *origin of the present*, becomes the *origin as future*, and therefore *telos*. . . . We shall describe the fundamental operation of the outlined dialectic as that operation whereby, in the present, the past reverts into the future.”<sup>168</sup> We would do better, then, to conceive of the present time as a field that is always in the making through retention of what has passed and protention of what is coming.<sup>169</sup> “The further an experience proceeds,” wrote Husserl, “the more it inherently supports more differentiated protentions, ‘the style of the past becomes projected into the future.’ . . . The course of the retentional branches (or the pres-

ent intentional content of the retentive branch) influences protention, determining its content, and prescribes its sense.”<sup>170</sup>

The field of time is unified in the protentional relation between past and future, the meeting of our expectations in the fulfillment of what has already been what is yet to come. In Husserl’s words, “Every retentive momentary continuity contains a protention directed to the following [retained stretch] and, in continuous mediation, is directed to those [retained stretches] that follow. Genetically put: when, again and again, continually new core data appear, the old do not just sink down retentionally; rather a protentional consciousness ‘grows,’ which advances towards the new primary data and, terminating with them, fulfills itself.”<sup>171</sup> As Pierre Keller correctly observed, “Husserl’s theory of time-consciousness not only attempts to mediate between the alternatives of thinking of temporal experience as consisting of intervals or of moments. It also combines an account of temporal experience, and indeed of time itself, as a temporal becoming of successively real past, present, and future experiences with an account of time that bases the structure of time in tenseless relations between events.”<sup>172</sup> The flux of consciousness, which cannot be known except through the consciousness of flux, exemplifies a unity of retentive, impulsive, and protentional activities, which correspond to three phases of time.<sup>173</sup> The inherently temporal comportment of consciousness renders the constitutive process of imagining time genetic in its composition.<sup>174</sup>

The province of music supplies a metaphor suitable to capture the dual intentionality of the stream of consciousness and its correlation with the movement of time.<sup>175</sup> Thus, in his 1905 lectures on the phenomenology of internal time-consciousness, which were compiled and published by Heidegger, his former student,<sup>176</sup> in 1928, Husserl wrote:

When we speak of the analysis of time-consciousness, of the temporal character of objects of perception, memory, and expectation, it may seem, to be sure, as if we assume the Objective flow of time, and then really study only the subjective conditions of the possibility of an intuition of time and a true knowledge of time. What we accept, however, is not the existence of a world-time, the existence of a concrete duration, and the like, but time and duration appearing as such. . . . To be sure, we also assume an existing time; this, however, is not the time of the world of experience but the *immanent time* of the flow of consciousness. The evidence that consciousness of a tonal process, a melody, exhibits a succession even as I hear it is such as to make every doubt or denial appear senseless.<sup>177</sup>

The flow of internal time-consciousness is described as a “tonal process,” for the arrangement of notes in a melody provides an apt image to portray the suc-

cession of moments that cohere as a continuous stream, each moment wedged between past anticipation and future retention, a present understood as the expectation that lingers in the lingering of expectation. Identity is spun from the web of momentous experiences, that is, experiences lived in and of the moment, enduring in their passing. “I-am . . . is as ‘I am’ in the living streaming, and this is a streaming having present and the streaming present itself.” Consciousness of self, expressed by the egological utterance par excellence, “I am,” is constituted by/in the course of immanent time, and thus it is described metaphorically in the threefold manner, “living stream,” “streaming having present,” and “streaming present itself.” The stream of time interminably streams forth in consciousness, or more precisely, the stream of time that interminably streams forth is consciousness. Making-present (*Gegenwärtigen*), presenting (*Präsentieren*), *appresence*, that is, the possibility of “bringing the object, in continuous original perceptions, to primal presence,” is the temporalizing (*Zeitigung*) that lies at the base of intentional consciousness.<sup>178</sup>

Inner-time is thus privileged phenomenologically, for through it the world-structure in both its spatial and temporal dimensions is constituted. Consider, for example, the distinction between “immanent time” and “objective time” offered by Husserl in his account of the temporalization of the psychic:

Pure consciousness is a genuine temporal field, a field of “phenomenological” time. This must not be confused with “Objective” time, which is constituted, along with nature, by consciousness. It is through the psychic apprehension that the conscious lived experiences obtain the sense of psychophysical states and consequently their insertion into Objective time, the form of Objective nature; to localization corresponds temporalization. Since phenomenological time, immanent in the stream of consciousness, is a uni-dimensional “constant” manifold of properties that are exactly analogous to the properties of the time which *presents* itself (“appears”) in the lived experiences of the perception of something physical and “corresponds” to the latter point for point, and since in this appearing time in the ultimate Objectivation the “absolute” world-time manifests itself, so the temporalization of the time of consciousness is an especially deep one, insofar as the latter perfectly coincides, in a certain way, with absolute time.<sup>179</sup>

In contrast to the view (traceable to Aristotle) that time is to be measured as a series of isolated, interchangeable now-points, Husserlian phenomenology (in consonance with the philosophy of William James)<sup>180</sup> envisions the consciousness of time as a stream whose flow “is not a mere ‘one after the other,’ but rather a ‘one out of the other,’ a becoming according to laws of a necessary sequence.”<sup>181</sup> For Husserl, the unique character of temporality lies in the inten-

tional act of making-present, appresenting, re/presenting the present. However, the present, punctilious though it may seem, cannot present itself without the continuum that extends from past to future. Memory and anticipation are necessary structural elements of the stream of consciousness, for representation is not possible without retrospection and expectation. “In the impressional momentary field,” wrote Husserl, “we have the unities that crystallize and achieve prominence through particular simultaneous mergings, those [unities] that in the streaming, between the streaming [up] and streaming away, concretely continue to endure as the duration continually ‘builds up’ or constitutes impressional (perceptual) unities. The constitution of a unity signifies the constitution of a persisting present in the streaming.”<sup>182</sup> Time as it appears, that is, the temporal experience of temporality, embraces the paradox that only that which endures changes and only that which changes endures. “The tone and every time-point in the unity of the enduring tone certainly does have its absolutely fixed position in ‘objective’ (even if immanent) time. Time is fixed, and yet time flows. In the flow of time, in the continuous sinking down into the past, a nonflowing, absolutely fixed, identical, objective time becomes constituted.”<sup>183</sup> I note, parenthetically, that a similar view was expressed by Hermann Weyl, a substantially less-known German phenomenologist whose work was familiar to Husserl, with whom he exchanged some letters.<sup>184</sup> Distinguishing between time as the “original form of the stream of consciousness” and space as the “form of material reality,” Weyl noted that the “contents of consciousness present themselves not as merely being . . . but as *being-now*, filling the form of the enduring now with a continually changing content. When in reflection we tear ourselves out of the stream and posit its content as an object over against us, the stream becomes for us a temporal flow whose individual phases are related to one another according to the relation *earlier* and *later*.”<sup>185</sup>

At this juncture, let me cite Husserl’s own summation of the lecture on the “exclusion of objective time” as a way of presenting his notion of internal time-consciousness succinctly: “Phenomenologically speaking, Objectivity is not even constituted through ‘primary’ content but through characters of apprehension and the regularities which pertain to the essence of these characters. It is precisely the business of the phenomenology of cognition to grasp this fully and to make it completely intelligible.”<sup>186</sup> As Husserl put it in a manuscript entry dated March 1931 from what is known as the C-series: the “proto-condition” for the sense of being attributed to everything that exists is the “I-am,” that is, the “living streaming” of the transcendental ego, a “streaming having-present” that is the “streaming present itself.” This wakeful “I” is not an abstract subject but a “living actuality” that perforce includes the “all-encompassing world-structure.” The “concrete being of the I . . . is living temporalization with the I-pole . . . and

what is proper to it at that level is inseparably one with that which is first existent for it primarily, with the temporalized as such, or with the living temporalization in which the temporalized is unitarily constituted.” The “proto-livingness” is thus a “continual temporalization . . . by which all and everything that is this-moment present [*das aktuelle Gegenwärtige*] for me, is; but that must be correctly understood and delimited. The world that is there for me, as in the way it holds for me now, is in the now, in a temporalization that belongs to the living present.”<sup>187</sup>

The primary task of the phenomenological method is to elucidate the manner in which objects of experience are continually constituted by characters of apprehension, ideal essences that inhere in the conscious I-pole. Making-present, appresenting, relates precisely to the cognitive ability of human consciousness to instantiate atemporal ideals through the temporal variance of intentional acts. Husserl identified this as the psychic apprehension—perhaps “attunement” would be the better word—of internal time that makes possible the constitution of objective time.<sup>188</sup> The latter is correlated with localization in space, the former with temporalization in consciousness. It follows (contra some interpreters of Husserl, including Derrida to whom I refer above) that spatiality assumes a secondary and derivative status vis-à-vis temporality.<sup>189</sup> Husserl’s view is reminiscent of the stance taken by Schelling—and reaffirmed by the early Heidegger, as will be seen shortly. Schelling, in dialogue with Kant,<sup>190</sup> affirms that space and time are the “necessary conditions for all intuition,” one being imperceptible without the other. Although space and time cannot be severed phenomenally—space without time would be extension without limitation and time without space would be limitation without extension—logically, it is possible to conceive of limitation without extension, but not the reverse, and hence priority is bestowed on time as determinative of the borders and contours of space,<sup>191</sup> a position that accords with Kant’s designation of time, not space, as the “universal pure intuition” that is the “a priori formal condition of all appearances.”<sup>192</sup>

In *Erfahrung und Urteil* (1938), Husserl affirms a comparable position, albeit in a different terminological and conceptual register. Two kinds of horizon can be distinguished for everything given in experience, a first level, which is the “internal horizon,” and the second level, which is “an infinite, open, external horizon of objects cogiven . . . all real things which at any given time are anticipated together or cogiven only in the background as an external horizon are known as real objects . . . from the world, are known as existing within the one spatiotemporal horizon.”<sup>193</sup> The hyphenated demarcation of the external horizon as “spatiotemporal” underscores Husserl’s discernment that the two cannot be separated in lived experience. As Husserl puts it in another passage from this

work, “The world, every possible world, is the universe of realities, among which we count all objects individualized in spatiotemporality, as the form of the world, by their spatiotemporal localization.”<sup>194</sup> The essential inseparability of the spatial and temporal notwithstanding, Husserl seems to privilege the latter in its tripartite intentionality as the phenomenological ground of the intentional structure of human consciousness: “In this unique world, everything sensuous that I now originally perceive, everything that I have perceived and which I can now remember or about which others can now remember or about which others can report to me as what they have perceived or remembered, has its place. Everything has its unity in that it has its fixed temporal position in this objective world, its place in objective time.”<sup>195</sup> The emplacement in time does not bespeak the spatialization of the temporal but rather the temporalization of the spatial.

### Being-There/Insi(gh)ting the Moment

Husserl’s perspective was elaborated upon and modified by Heidegger in his existential-analytic inquiry on time and space in *Sein und Zeit* (1927). The “specific spatiality” of Dasein (being-there, the technical expression for human existence) “must be grounded in temporality” inasmuch as the “constitution of Dasein and its modes of being are ontologically possible only on the basis of temporality.”<sup>196</sup> In *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, based on lectures delivered the same year as the publication of *Sein und Zeit*, Heidegger, betraying his indebtedness to Nietzsche’s critique of traditional Western metaphysics and its implicit resentment of time,<sup>197</sup> characterizes the essential nature of temporality by noting that the “ontological condition of the possibility of understanding of being is temporality itself. . . . Temporality takes over the enabling of the understanding of being and thus the enabling of the thematic interpretation of being and of its articulation and manifold ways; it makes ontology possible.” *Temporalität*, which he contrasts with *Zeitlichkeit*,<sup>198</sup> represents the determinative factor in how human beings inhabit and experience the world, a major component of Heidegger’s phenomenological ontology: “It [*Temporalität*] means temporality insofar as temporality itself is made into a theme as the condition of the possibility of the understanding of being and of ontology as such. The term ‘Temporality’ is intended to indicate that temporality, in existential analytic, represents the horizon from which we understand being.”<sup>199</sup>

As the title *Sein und Zeit* clearly indicates, Heidegger gave temporality priority of place in his hermeneutical project of thinking about being from the perspective of time. His choice marks a decisive shift from the phenomenological focus on time-consciousness to an ontological assumption regarding the temporal

character of human existence. The temporalizing character of human experience, therefore, is not a consequence of the intentional structure of consciousness, as Husserl insisted; rather, it indicates the prenoetic manner in which human beings are ontologically situated in the world.<sup>200</sup> Yet in spite of this crucial shift, Heidegger, like Husserl, emphasizes time as the distinguishing feature of the human comportment. Recently, Alejandro Vallega has made an impressive attempt to consider more seriously the “figure of spatiality as a deconstructive element in Heidegger’s discourse on temporality,” that is, to view the experience of space as the “decisive interruption (*Ent-scheidung*) of thought’s claim to metaphysical and transcendental principles as the ground and root of the question of being that this very question will begin to be experienced in its alterity.”<sup>201</sup> The marginality of space accords it special significance as it “punctuates the development or delimitation of Heidegger’s discourse on temporality. Throughout Heidegger’s book spatiality appears as a constant aporetic element in his discourse, which ultimately proves to be insurmountable. Spatiality appears not only explicitly and thematically, but also implicitly through various interruptions of the main discourse that point to difficulties that later will lead Heidegger to abandon his attempt in *Being and Time* to articulate spatiality in terms of the essential temporality of the question of being.” Spatiality thus “appears as an exilic figure in the discourse on temporality, and at the same time, when engaged, it indicates issues beyond that discourse. In light of the character of spatiality as a figure of alterity and exilic thought, the alterity of the question of being in *Being and Time* and the exilic character of that thought are made apparent by remaining with Heidegger’s struggle for the question of being in his difficulties with spatiality.”<sup>202</sup>

There is much to commend in Vallega’s study; he has opened up a hitherto untrodden pathway into the thicket of Heidegger’s thinking, a pathway that takes seriously the conception of space as the enactment of alterity—the disruption that opens thought to its own other. Notwithstanding the welcomed contribution and achievement of this approach, I would contend that time remains the privileged mode of experience in Heidegger’s understanding of *Dasein*’s way of being in the world because it is from this vantage point that the world-structure in its temporal-spatial magnitude is constituted. Consider Vallega’s own remark: “The issues of alterity and exilic thought are figured by the moments of suspension, interruption, and indeterminacy that punctuate the discussions of spatiality.”<sup>203</sup> The untimely use of a temporal metaphor, no doubt an inadvertent slip of the pen, points to the difficulty for one engaged in Heidegger’s thought in overcoming the bias toward the interpretation of time as the ecstatic-horizon of our understanding of being. As Heidegger put it in his notes for the lecture series “*Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs*,” delivered at the

University of Marburg during the summer semester of 1925, human existence finds its ontological grounding in the “phenomenon of the presence of what is of concern in the authentic sense, to the analysis of being-in-the-world in its particular sense as concern, which has the mode of being of pure letting-become-present—a remarkable kind of being which is understood only when it is seen that this making present and appresenting is nothing other than time itself.”<sup>204</sup> The proximity to Husserl’s language is obvious: the essential feature of time is making-present, or appresenting.<sup>205</sup> Heidegger, however, reframes the discussion by relating the phenomenon of presence to the disposition of concern or care (*Sorge*), which he thematizes in *Sein und Zeit* as existentiality, facticity, and falling prey, the three-fold structure fundamental to the way of being of *Dasein*.<sup>206</sup>

In *Vom Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit: Einleitung in die Philosophie*, a text first published in 1982 but based on a lecture course delivered at the University of Freiburg in the summer of 1930, Heidegger wrote again of the “primordial connection between being and time.” He identified time as the light that illumines being and allows it to be understood as “constant presence,” the self-contained ecstasis of each instant, the *present-at-hand*, an occasionalist challenge to the conception of time as a continuously flowing sequence of now-points.<sup>207</sup> The fundamental question of philosophy, therefore, is “what is the essence of time, such that it grounds being, and such that the question of being as the leading question of metaphysics can and must be unfolded within this horizon? . . . The schema for this perspective has come into view: being and time—time—constant presence—being—beings as such—positive freedom.” The focus of the fundamental question is on the “and” in the formula “being and time.” Heidegger is of the view that in this case the conjunction does not signify an “external relation which merely juxtaposes two things,” but it points to a “primordial relation” that “must originate equiprimordially from the essence of being and the essence of time.” Hence, we may conclude that being and time are interwoven with one another. “The ‘and’ signifies a primordial co-belongingness of being and time from the ground of their existence.”<sup>208</sup> Although Heidegger acknowledges that when we inquire into time, we generally inquire as well into the nature of space, he still maintains that time is indicative of being in a manner not replicated by space. Drawing on traditional philosophical treatments of time—he specifically mentions Aristotle, Augustine, and Kant—Heidegger marks the distinctiveness of time in terms of the fact the human subject is the locus of time. From this he concludes that an inquiry into the essence of time is necessarily an inquiry into the essence of the human being. “The fundamental question concerning being and time forces us into the question concerning the human being. . . . When the problematic of being and time forces us to the question of man, we inquire into man not just as a being within the multiplicity of beings, but into man insofar as time—the ground of the most radicalized ontological problem—belongs to man.”<sup>209</sup>

In “Zeit und Sein,” a lecture delivered at a later stage in his career, Heidegger acknowledged that the attempt in *Sein und Zeit* “to derive human spatiality from temporality is untenable.” He opted instead to comprehend Being (for which he uses the technical term *ereignis*, “appropriation” or “enowning”) as the extending of time-space (*das Reichen von Zeit-Raum*).<sup>210</sup> In his post-phenomenological ontology, “time-space” is Heidegger’s term for the *Abgrund*, the ground attained by leaping (*das Sich-den-Grund-erspringen*),<sup>211</sup> the originary leap (*Ur-sprung*), the inception and initiation (*Anfang*), as opposed to the beginning (*Beginn*) wherein time and space transpire in their calculatedly represented affiliation.<sup>212</sup> In *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*, written between 1936 and 1938, Heidegger stretched the limits of language when he described time-space as “arising from and belonging to the essential sway of truth [*entspringend aus dem und gehörig zu dem Wesen der Wahrheit*], as the grounded jointure of removal- and charming-moving-unto (joining) of the t/here [*als das so gegründete Entrückungs-Berückungsgefüge (Fügung) des Da*]. . . . The site for the moment and the strife of world and earth. The strife and sheltering of the truth of enowning.”<sup>213</sup> The translators have sensibly rendered *dem Wesen der Wahrheit* as “the essential sway of truth.” The continuation of the sentence, however, defies precise translation, as the poetic flourish of Heidegger’s rhetoric overflows the vessels of the German language he summoned and was summoned by, *als das so gegründete Entrückungs-Berückungsgefüge (Fügung) des Da*. Time-space lays the ground of *Dasein*’s relationship to being by way of the “strife and sheltering of the truth of enowning” (*Der Streit und die Bergung der Wahrheit des Ereignisses*). Strife and sheltering, words juxtaposed by way of opposition,<sup>214</sup> convey coming-together in pulling-apart, drawing a boundary in the giving/withholding of the fourfold (*Geviert*), the rebuff of strife that enframes the sheltering of embrace.<sup>215</sup>

The originary swerve on the path, the “essential sway of truth,” is described in words that conjure images of enrapture (*Entrücken*) and enchantment (*Berückung*), the fate/deed of “there” to which *Dasein* must submit. In the inceptual opening-closure, ever about to transpire, time-space is experienced as the “site for the moment” (*Augenblicksstätte*), a locution that is not meant to convey the dependence of time on space, but rather the conjunction of temporality and spatiality in their separateness. To be/hold the site of the moment marks the “uniqueness of *Da-sein*” in belonging to truth as the “essential enswaying of being as enowning” (*der Erwesung des Seins als Ereignis*), the “enowned encleavage of the turning between belongingness and the call, between abandonment by being and enbeckoning.” In the “hidden essential sway of time-space,” *Dasein* discerns the “enquivering of the resonance of be-ing itself” (*das Erzittern der Schwingung des Seyns selbst*).<sup>216</sup> Time-space is the ab-ground, the foundation that is the “inbetween of the turning” (*das Inzwischen der Kehre*), the “inabiding” (*inständ-*

liches), which is “determined as the now and the here,” the “originary onefold (ursprüngliche Einheit) of space and time, that unifying onefold that above all lets them go apart into their separatedness.”<sup>217</sup> Time-space is the “originary essential swaying of ground” (*die ursprüngliche Wesung des Grundes*), whence temporal and spatial are dispatched in the difference of their sameness. The *ab-ground*, for Heidegger, is the *ab-ground*,<sup>218</sup> that is, that which is “of the ground” comes forth as going away “from the *ground*,” a grounding that does not ground except as the “hesitating refusal of ground” (*die zögernde Versagung des Grundes*), an encompassing that brings into the open the enopening that holds sway, the keeping-together of what is to be broken-apart, the abiding of the ephemeral, the “self-sheltering-concealing in the manner of not-granting the ground” by “letting be unfulfilled,” “letting be empty,” the “initial openness” (*erst Öffene*) of the “originary emptiness” (*ursprüngliche Leere*) whereby “what is ownmost to truth” is enopened in the “belongingness of time-space,” “en-ownment, be-ing itself.”

### Time’s Becoming/Identity of Indifference

To do justice to Heidegger’s *Abgrund*, particularly its implications for the conception of temporality, one would do well to take into account the notion of the *Ungrund* in Schelling’s philosophical treatises, a term he apparently appropriated from Jacob Böhme’s mystical theosophy, which is related, in turn, to the *Abgrund*, or abyss, of Meister Eckhart.<sup>219</sup> In Schelling’s post-Identity-Philosophy, the “un-ground” designates the dark abyss whence God gives birth to himself as light,<sup>220</sup> the “original ground” that is “before all ground and before all existence, thus before any duality at all. . . . Since it precedes all opposites, these cannot be differentiated within it or be in any way present in it. Thus it cannot be designated as the identity of opposites, but only as their absolute *indifference*.” The critical notion of indifference (*Indifferenz*) implies that “all opposites are broken, which is nothing other than their very non-being, and which therefore has no predicate except predicatelessness, without therefore being a nothing or an absurdity.”<sup>221</sup> Schelling’s objective was to maintain a sense of difference by affirming the unity of identity and indifference,<sup>222</sup> that is, a unity that embraces the disjunction of opposites coexisting as non-opposites. In Schelling’s own words, “Real and ideal, darkness and light, or however else we wish to designate the two principles, can never be predicated of the unground *as opposites*. But nothing hinders their being predicated of it as non-opposites, i.e., in disjunction and each *for itself*; whereby, however, this very duality (the actual twofoldness of the principles) is posited.”<sup>223</sup> God is the “nonground” (*Ungrund*) as the “absence of ground” (*Abgrund*), a state that is prior to all opposition and even beyond the overcoming of opposition; it is this quality that merits the term “absolute indifference.”<sup>224</sup>

The characterization of the *Ungrund* most relevant to the present analysis is elaborated in the third version of *Die Weltalter* (1815) in the portrayal of the “eternal life of the Godhead,” the “absolute” and “primordial being,” as a conflict between two equally primal forces, the negative and positive. This “eternal antithesis,” Schelling notes, is difficult to verbalize and to conceive scientifically, but it may be cast in a number of images, to wit, necessity and freedom, withholding and outpouring, love and wrath, leniency and strictness, retreat into selfhood (*die Selbstheit*) and self-giving egoity (*die Egoität*).<sup>225</sup> The absolute is not configured as a dissolution of opposites (or, in the celebrated language of Nicholas of Cusa, *coincidentia oppositorum*)<sup>226</sup> but rather as their perpetuation, for divine individuality (*göttlichen Individualität*) is not possible without dividuality (*Dividualität*).<sup>227</sup> Hence, the primal being, the unground that precedes all ground, is characterized as a composite of dual forces that remain distinct, “a doubling (*Doppelheit*) that . . . appears to us as light and darkness, masculine and feminine, spiritual and corporeal. Therefore, the oldest teachings straightforwardly represented the first nature as a being with two conflicting modes of activity.”<sup>228</sup> To say of the divine essence that it is simultaneously negative and positive is not to conflate the two to the point that difference is effaced, but rather to embrace the nonduality of oppositional forces, the indifference—a state of “nondivorce” (*Ungeschiedenheit*) that is not free from all difference but rather negates it (*nicht eine von aller Differenz freie, sondern eine sie verneinende*)<sup>229</sup>—through which difference is preserved.<sup>230</sup> “For since God is not the cause of the Other through a special volition but through God’s mere essence, the Other is certainly not the essence of God, but it belongs to God’s essence, indeed, in a natural and inseparable way. It therefore follows that if the pure Godhead = A, and that the Other = B, then the full concept of the living Godhead which has being is not merely A, but is A + B.”<sup>231</sup>

It may very well be that the rubric “oldest teachings” (*ältesten Lehren*) mentioned by Schelling refers to the secret gnosis of kabbalah, even though the primary conduit of this doctrine would have likely been Böhme’s account of the *Ungrund*, the self-enfolding God, as both *Nichts* (nothing) and *Alles* (everything), the single will in which all creation lies, the eternal one beyond the polarities of love and anger, light and darkness.<sup>232</sup> A comprehensive examination of the influence of kabbalistic doctrine on Schelling is beyond the scope of this chapter,<sup>233</sup> but suffice it to say that he drew from the wellsprings of Jewish esoteric lore—either directly from a compilation of material translated by Christian Knorr von Rosenroth in *Kabbala Denudata* (Sulzbach 1677–1684)<sup>234</sup> or through secondary channels like Friedrich Christoph Oetinger<sup>235</sup>—to formulate his logic of identity and indifference, the absolute unity that arises from the belonging together (*Zusammengehörigkeit*) of two oppositional forces in a third that sustains

rather than obliterates dichotomy.<sup>236</sup> The interrelationship of two discrete qualities yields the indifference that facilitates difference of identity ( $A + B$ ) as opposed to identity of difference ( $A = B$ ). In the theosophic symbolism adopted by kabbalists, God is characterized as balancing two major attributes, the outpouring hand of mercy on the right and the constricting hand of judgment on the left, the masculine impulsion to overflow and the feminine capacity to receive. God's becoming, and the nature of being that may be adduced therefrom, is measured by this balance, a harmony that preserves opposites in their opposition.

In the thirteenth century kabbalists were already employing the term *hashwa'ah*, which, as Gershom Scholem noted, corresponds to the Latin *indistinctio* or *aequalitas*, and the related *hashwa'at ha-ahdut*, "equanimous one," to describe the lack of differentiation—or what we might call the indifference of opposites—in Ein Sof, or in the will, identified as the primary gradation *Keter* or *Ayin*, that is coeternal with it.<sup>237</sup> Analogously, Schelling describes the unity of the first being as "one and the same, that is the affirmation and the negation, that which pours out and that which holds on. . . . Precisely that which is set in opposition can only be essentially and, so to speak, personally, 'one,' insofar as it is only the individual nature of the person that is able to unite that which is in conflict."<sup>238</sup> The absolute can be encrypted as "one and the same = x" insofar as it is the case that " $A = x$ " and " $B = x$ ," whence follows "A and B are one and the same," that is, "both are x." To say that "both are x," however, does not entail that there is no difference between the "x" that A is and the "x" that B is; it signifies, rather, that A and B are both "x" to the extent that the "something = x that B is" is not identical to the "something = x that A is." We may conclude, therefore, that God's being "is of two different kinds; first the negating force (B) that represses the affirmative being (A), positing it as the inwardly passive or as what is hidden; second, the outstretching, self-communicating being that in clear contrast holds down the negating power in itself and does not let it come outwardly into effect."<sup>239</sup>

Significantly, Schelling contends that the "doctrine of the unity of the divine essence in duality shows itself as profoundly interwoven with what is innermost, even with the language itself, of the Old Testament." More specifically, the proof is elicited from the repeated use of the plural name *Elohim* with verbs in the singular, and from the conjunction of the two names, *YHWH* and *Elohim*. Schelling relates this archaic pairing to a distinction between the hidden and manifest dimensions of God, an approach that resonates with kabbalists' distinction between Ein Sof and the *sefirot*.<sup>240</sup> "YHWH," whose true pronunciation is unknown, consisting as it does of the "pure, so-called silent letters" (*lauter sogenannten ruhenden Buchstaben; literis quiescentibus*), is the "name of the essence" that

is “pure breath,” “pure spirit, or “pure will without actual conation,” whereas “Elohim” is the “name of the divine effects,” the multifaceted manifestation of that essence, spirit, and will.<sup>241</sup>

The kabbalistic influence on Schelling is even more conspicuous in his observation regarding the interchangeability of the angelic figure—the “angel of the countenance,” *mal’akh ha-panim* (*der Engel des Angesichts*) or the “angel of the Lord,” *mal’akh yhw* (*der Engel Jehovahs*)<sup>242</sup>—and the divine essence.<sup>243</sup> Focusing exegetically on the theophany of God to Moses at/in the burning bush (Exod 3:2 ff.), Schelling notes “according to the understanding of the narrator, the angel of the countenance is also Jehovah, yet both are still distinct. The meaning of the narration is perhaps just that Moses was deemed worthy of a vision of that highest vitality, of that inner consuming yet always again reviving (and in this respect not consuming) fire that is the nature of the Godhead.”<sup>244</sup> The obfuscation of the ontic boundary between angel and God, centered about the image of the glorious angel and/or angelic glory, is a fundamental tenet of kabbalah—in its varied formulations—with roots in much older forms of Jewish esotericism that may have served as the model for the binitarian pattern of devotion apparent in early Christian communities that ascribed to Jesus the role of the chief mediating agent.<sup>245</sup> For Schelling, the intentional confusion in Scripture is proof of the logic of A + B applied to the Godhead, that is, to speak of—to imagine—the divine essence requires envisioning the essence and the other that comes through that essence but is not identical to it, an ontotheological truth that lies beyond and is the foundation of the Christological myth of three persons in the one substance of God. In line with those who viewed kabbalah as a repository of Jewish doctrine that confirms Christian belief, a strategy that gained particular currency in Renaissance Humanist and Neoplatonist circles advocating a *prisca theologia*, Schelling adduces the trinitarian dogma on the basis of a dyad derived from the mythologic of kabbalistic symbolism.

In consonance with the theosophy of Böhme, Schelling maintains that the Godhead is a “whole and undivided” unity comprising the “eternal Yes” and “eternal No,” and thus it is improper to privilege one member of the antinomial pair over the other.<sup>246</sup> Nevertheless, it is evident that Schelling ascribes priority to the negating force as the primal phase of divine autogenesis, the “initiating power” that is the “unconditioned and absolutely first beginning.”<sup>247</sup> It is with regard to this issue that Schelling’s probable indebtedness to kabbalah, and especially to the teachings of Luria, is perhaps most conspicuous. In language that resonates with kabbalistic symbolism, based in turn on an earlier aggadic motif regarding the primacy of judgment vis-à-vis mercy in the creation of the world,<sup>248</sup> Schelling states explicitly that in the Godhead might precedes leniency, stringency precedes gentleness, and wrath precedes love.<sup>249</sup> Moreover,

in an even more precise analogue to the kabbalistic myth of *šimšum*—the primordial withdrawal of the infinite from itself into itself to create the space devoid of itself wherein the emanation of all things in the concatenation of being will unfold<sup>250</sup>—Schelling contends that “what is altogether first in God, in the living God, the eternal beginning of itself in itself, is that God restricts itself, denies itself, withdraws its essence from the outside and retreats into itself.”<sup>251</sup>

The primary gesture of God is an “originary negation” (*ursprüngliche Verneinung*),<sup>252</sup> an act of severity, exclusivity, and intolerance that Schelling associates with the “jealous Jewish God,”<sup>253</sup> a withdrawing that exposes what remains withdrawn, a concealment that facilitates disclosure.<sup>254</sup> “The now active negating potency is the force (i.e., the possibility) of positing the affirming potency. . . . For God is precisely in that God does not *have being*. God is only as not having being, in the state of involution (*implicite, in statu involutionis*), which is a transport (intermediary) of real revelation.”<sup>255</sup> Just as Böhme (in an uncanny similarity to kabbalistic theosophy) had argued that the “great expansiveness without limit desires a narrowness and a comprehension (*Einfasslichkeit*) by which it might reveal itself” and thus “there must be a contraction and a closing in from which the revelation may shine,”<sup>256</sup> Schelling maintains that the “ground of revelation” is “that which negates all revelation.”<sup>257</sup> Responding to the view that God is a “self-revelatory being” (*ens manifestativum sui*), a stance that is the mythic basis for his own theogonic speculations, Schelling argues that revelation is not the “highest self of the Godhead,” for “something that is free is free precisely in that it does not have to reveal itself.”<sup>258</sup> The initial expression of divine freedom, the “original” and “root” force whence life begins, is not in expansion but in contraction, not in evolution but in involution, not in being seen but in being hidden.<sup>259</sup> “That God negates itself, restricts its being, and withdraws into itself, is the eternal force and might of God. In this manner, the negating force is that which is singularly revealing of God. But the actual being of God is that which is concealed.”<sup>260</sup> The mystery of occlusion, according to Schelling, is alluded to in the biblical image of God concealing his countenance.<sup>261</sup> Yet, from another perspective, the receding must be seen as an expression of advancing, the judgment a manifestation of love. “The decision to reveal itself and to posit itself superably as the eternal No was one and the same decision. Hence, just as this decision is a work of the highest freedom, it is also a work of the highest Love. . . . Priority is in inverse to superiority.”<sup>262</sup> We find exactly the same logic at work in the relevant kabbalistic sources: the first act is one of judgmental contraction (an idea rendered by a number of mythical images, including the kings of Edom who reigned ahead of the kings of Israel, the worlds destroyed that preceded the created world, the shell that emerged

before the fruit), but when understood dialectically, it is a manifestation of merciful expansion; thus what is temporally prior is ontically subordinate.

Utilizing a distinction attributed to Plutarch, Schelling describes the Godhead—or what he calls in one passage the Super-Godhead (*Übergottheit*)<sup>263</sup>—as the “being that has no being” (*nicht seyend seyn*), to be differentiated from the being that is “non-being” (*nicht Seyn*).<sup>264</sup> Commenting on a statement from *De cherubinische Wandersmann* by Johann Scheffler, known as Angelus Silesius (1624–1677), “The gentle Godhead is nothing and beyond nothing” (*Die zarte Gottheit ist das Nichts und Übernichts*), Schelling writes that the “Godhead is nothing because nothing can come toward it in a way distinct from its being and, again, it is above all nothingness because it itself is everything.”<sup>265</sup> To speak of the Godhead as nothing is to equate it with “pure freedom” (*laute Freiheit*), which Schelling further characterizes as the “will that wills nothing, that desires no object, for which all things are equal and is therefore moved by none of them.” Of this will we can say both that it is nothing, for “it neither desires to become actual itself nor wants any kind of actuality,” and that it is everything, for it is the “eternal freedom” that “rules everything, and is ruled by nothing.”<sup>266</sup> In an apparently contradictory claim, Schelling delineates the primal being as “self-wanting” [*sich-Wollen*], but, as he is quick to point out, “wanting oneself (*Sich wollen*) and negating oneself as having being [*Sich verneinen als Seyend*] is [*sic*] one and the same.”<sup>267</sup> If “wanting oneself” and “negating oneself as having being” are identical, it follows that the two portrayals of the Godhead are not conflicting, that is, the highest of desires is the desire that has no object (*der seine Sache begehrt*) and the strongest of wills, the will that wills nothing (*der Wille, der nichts will*).

Similar representations of the infinite will are widely attested in the theosophic ruminations of thirteenth-century kabbalists—for instance, Azriel of Gerona, Jacob ben Sheshet, Isaac Ibn Latif, Moses de León, and other Castilian figures whose views are preserved in zoharic homilies, and the many subsequent authors influenced thereby, including Luria and his disciples.<sup>268</sup> *Keter*, the “supernal will,” the aura that is coextensive with and hence ontically inseparable—even if distinguishable—from *Ein Sof*,<sup>269</sup> is also characterized as “nothing” (*ayin*),<sup>270</sup> a designation that denotes not lack but surplus of being that is beyond comprehension, the “pure ether that cannot be apprehended.”<sup>271</sup> The nature of that primordial will is to will naught but itself, which is to say, to will nothing; but to will nothing is to have nothing to will, a double negation that results in the emanation of the *sefirot* hidden in the will.<sup>272</sup> The plentitude of the infinite finds its fullest expression in the emptying of the will rather than its overflowing, retreating into the nothing it is (not), inhalation preceding exhalation, enfolding beginning every unfolding,<sup>273</sup> the mystical One that is so full that it is empty, so empty that it is full, the paradoxical identity of the plenum

and vacuum.<sup>274</sup> Thus, Schelling concludes, “actual power lies more in delimitation than expansion and that to withdraw oneself has more to do with might than to give oneself.”<sup>275</sup>

This conclusion resonates with another aspect of Lurianic teaching that is captured by the technical term *sha’ashu’a*, which suggests that the primal act of contraction on the part of the unlimited is a form of self-arousal or bemusement (both sexual and noetic in intent), a process I have explored elsewhere under the rubric “suffering and the *jouissance* of becoming-other.”<sup>276</sup> In rhetoric remarkably similar to kabbalistic sources, Schelling comprehends the initial stirring in the Godhead in terms of the desire to become oneself, which is concomitantly suffering for the sake of the other. “Suffering is universal, not only with respect to humanity, but also with respect to the creator. . . . Because all living things must first involve themselves in Being and break out of the darkness to transfiguration, so, too, in its revelation, the divine being must first assume nature and, as such, suffer it, before it can celebrate the triumph of its liberation.”<sup>277</sup> For kabbalists, the primal suffering is connected to the archaic sapiential image of God taking delight in his wisdom prior to creation, an idea affirmed by Schelling in response to the question of what God was doing before the world was created: “Scriptures tell in what cozy proximity wisdom already was in and around God in those primordial times. As such, wisdom was God’s favorite and found herself in the sweetest feeling of bliss, but was also the cause of God’s joy, since at that time He beheld, in advance and through Her, the entire future history, the great image of the world and all of the events in nature and in the realm of spirits.”<sup>278</sup> Admittedly, there is no mention of suffering in this passage, but it is obvious that what Schelling is describing is the activity of the divine in the “primordial times” (*Urzeiten*) of eternity, the stirring of the will in its purest freedom to manifest itself in nature and thus become actual. This self-manifestation is precisely what Schelling intends in the text just cited, in which he explicitly applies suffering to God’s revelation.<sup>279</sup>

The path of Schelling’s thought culminates in the paradox of self-negation that marks the “first beginning” (*erste Anfang*), the beginning that has no beginning and hence no end, the ground that never begins and thus never ceases being the beginning.<sup>280</sup> Placing the negating force that “is its own precisely in negation”<sup>281</sup> at the beginning leads to a deconstruction—or, in Schelling’s own terms, a sublimation—of the very concept of beginning and end, which, by implication, challenges the linear conception of time from past to future as well as the hierarchical alignment of space from top to bottom.

Hence we first attain the consummate concept of that first nature . . . a life that eternally circulates within itself, a kind of circle because the lowest always runs into the

highest, and the highest again into the lowest. . . . There is neither a veritable higher nor a veritable lower, since in turn one is the higher and the other is the lower. There is only an unremitting wheel, a rotatory movement that never comes to a standstill and in which there is no differentiation. Even the concept of the beginning, as well as the concept of the end, again sublimates itself in this circulation. . . . Since it did not begin sometime but began since all eternity in order never (veritably) to end, and ended since all eternity, in order always to begin again, it is clear that that first nature was since all eternity and hence, equiprimordially, a movement circulating within itself, and that this is its true, living concept.<sup>282</sup>

Avoiding the extremes of either collapsing the difference between time and eternity or setting them in diametric opposition, Schelling conjures a temporal eternity that is at the same time an eternal temporality.<sup>283</sup> The boundless freedom of the absolute being expresses itself in the perpetual alteration of the abyssal will within the circle of becoming, the “inner life that incessantly gives birth to itself and again consumes itself. . . . Through that constant retreat to the beginning and the eternal recommencement, it makes itself into substance in the real sense of the word (*id quod substat*), into the always abiding. It is the constant inner mechanism and clockwork, time, eternally commencing, eternally becoming, always devouring itself and always giving birth to itself.”<sup>284</sup> The freedom of will, insofar as it wills nothing actual, is the “affirmative concept of absolute eternity,” and just as “eternal immovability” is the goal of all movement, so “all time, even that eternal time, is nothing but the constant obsession with eternity.”<sup>285</sup> There are metaphysicians who advocate a “concept of eternity completely pure of any admixtures of temporal concepts,” but this is an eternity that is “as nothing.” To speak of an “actual, living eternity” (*wirklichen lebendigen Ewigkeit*) requires one to posit a “constant Now [*beständiges Nun*]), an eternal present [*ewige Gegenwart*].”<sup>286</sup> In this moment, eternally present yet not fully disclosed—the “nonpresent” (*Nichtgegenwart*) in Schelling’s language—for if fully disclosed it would not be the eternally present moment on its way to becoming, time and eternity are held together in the identity of their indifference, “time coexisting with eternity.”<sup>287</sup> “Just as there is no other concept for time other than the counterplay of eternity, there is also no other concept (for eternal time) than that it is the eternally nonpresent.” Schelling draws the logical conclusion: “The true eternity does not exclude all time but rather contains time (eternal time) subjugated within itself. Actual eternity is the overcoming of time, as the richly meaningful Hebrew language expresses ‘victory’ (which it posits among the first attributes of God) and ‘eternity’ with a single word (*naezach*).”<sup>288</sup> The “overcoming of time” (*Überwindung der Zeit*) by the “actual eternity” (*wirkliche Ewigkeit*) entails not the dissolution of time but its eternalization.

As Schelling puts it in another passage, time is the “succession of eternities,” that is, different times that recurrently coexist at the same time.<sup>289</sup>

It is noteworthy that Schelling connects the temporalization of eternity to the Hebrew word *nešah*, which, as he says, denotes both victory and eternity. That he had in mind kabbalistic symbolism is evident from his parenthetical remark that this word is “among the first attributes of God,” a reference to the eighth of the traditional ten *sefirot*. Schelling also relates the notion of eternity that contains time subjugated within itself to the Egyptian theogonic circularity captured in the inscription over the Temple of Sais: “I am the one who was, who is, who will be.” Moreover, following Kant, Schelling associates this inscription with the divine epiphany to Moses (Exod 3:14), which he paraphrases as “I am the one who was, I was who I will be, I will be who I am” (*Ich bin, der ich war, Ich war, der ich sehn werde, Ich werde sehn, der ich bin*).<sup>290</sup> For Schelling, we cannot speak of time in God, but we must speak of God in time:

This time outside of eternity is that movement of eternal nature where eternal nature, ascending from the lowest, always attains the highest, and, from the highest, always retreats anew in order to ascend again. Only in this movement does eternal nature discern itself as eternity. The Godhead counts and gauges in this clockwork—not its own eternity (for this is always whole, consummate, indivisible, beyond all time and no more eternal in the succession of all times than in the moment), but rather just the moments of the constant repetition of its eternity, that is, of time itself, which, as Pindar already says, is only the simulacrum of eternity. For eternity must not be thought as those moments of time *taken together*, but rather as coexisting with each single moment so that eternity again sees only its (whole, immeasurable) self in each single one.<sup>291</sup>

In sum, we may conclude that primordial time according to Schelling is the eternal movement of God’s self-becoming; eternity, therefore, is the temporal unfolding of the commutable form.<sup>292</sup> As we shall see, the kabbalists’ portrayal of the infinite’s encircled expansion suggests a similar view.

## Timespace and Swaying of Ground

In modes of discourse still beholden to Schelling,<sup>293</sup> and by implication to the theosophic gnosis espoused in the secrets of kabbalah, yet distinctive of own poetizing, Heidegger writes of the “ur-ground” that “opens only in ab-ground,” that is, the ground that grounds its being in the holding sway of its truth.<sup>294</sup> Insofar as the ab-ground is a “staying away of ground” (*Weg-bleiben des Grundes*), the “primary clearing for what is open as ‘emptiness’” (*die erste Lichtung*)

des Offenen als der "Leere"), it follows that enowning the ground, an originary attunement that Heidegger refers to as the "engrounding of ground" (*die Ergründung des Grundes*), must "venture a leap into ab-ground and must enfathom and withstand the ab-ground."<sup>295</sup> To leap into and withstand the ground, to enfathom the engrounded by engrounding the enfathomed, one must take hold of the ground that is grounded in the staying-away of the ground, the nameless abyss empty of content, the "subsumptive power" that resists the resolution of conflictuality, by appealing to an origin that synthesizes disparate forces.<sup>296</sup>

It is the way of the foundation (*Abgrund*) to be unfathomable (*abgründig*), and thus Heidegger's only recourse for formulating the texture of time-space was to adopt a manner of discourse that, in his own words, lacks "any claim to immediate intelligibility"<sup>297</sup>—a form of expression that mimics what is to be expressed, that is, the ab-ground, the "originary clearing" (*ursprüngliche Lichtung*) in which the hesitating manifests itself, the "steadfastness of the sheltering that lights up" (*das Beständnis der lichtenden Verbergung*), in the gifting of withholding, the concealment of disclosure in the disclosure of concealment.<sup>298</sup> Time-space is the source, the ur-ground, whence time and space break apart into differentiated representations that mark the determination of humankind's historical destination.<sup>299</sup> The "unfolding of time-space out of the site for the moment" results in the "stretching" of time and space respectively into quantifiable and calculable forms. "Belonging to what is ownmost to truth, both are originally one in time-space, both render the grounding of the t/here [*Da*]"—a grounding that holds to the abground—a t/here [*Da*] through which selfhood and all that is true about a being is first grounded."<sup>300</sup> The shift in orientation (I do not say "phenomenological" for, technically speaking, the abground is not phenomenizable) required by Heidegger's ontological turn is a move from the secondary representations of time and space as corresponding but essentially distinct modes of perception to the originary attunement of time-space as a coupling of what belongs together by virtue of not belonging together.

Rejecting his own earlier attempt to treat spatial demarcation as a form of temporalizing, Heidegger insists that space and time "are not only different in the number of usually meant 'dimensions,' but from the ground up each has what is ownmost to it—and only by virtue of this utmost difference do they refer to their origin, time-space. The more purely what is own-ownmost to each is preserved and the deeper the origin lies, the more successful is the grasping of their essential sway as time-space, which belongs to what is ownmost to truth as clearing ground for sheltering-concealing."<sup>301</sup> In speaking of time-space as the source, Heidegger does not have in mind an essential and original truth subject to metaphysical speculation<sup>302</sup> but the ground of what is "ownmost" to both temporal and spatial delimitation, "the displacing into the

encompassing open—an open which builds presencing and stability, but without becoming experienceable and groundable.” The pathway to the “transitional mindfulness” of the ground that is not groundable is not by way of “representing a general essence” but through the “originary-historical entry into the site for the moment,” a projecting-open into the encompassing-open by means of which one appropriates the “uniqueness and onset of the brightest removal—unto the domain of the hint, out of the gentle charming-moving-onto the self-refusing-hesitating, nearness and remoteness in decision, the ‘where’ and the ‘when’ of being-history, lights up and shelters itself from within enownment of the grounding-attunement of *reservedness*—this and the basic experience of the t/here and thus of time-place.”<sup>303</sup> To be attuned to time-space, one must enown the site of the moment, an enowning that comes by letting go, a drawing near by moving away, an opening up by closing down, an advancing forward by retrieving behind.

In time-space as the essential swaying of truth, the ground that holds its ground, the ab-ground, time and space are named together in inexplicable association. In this regard, as I have already intimated, Heidegger’s later thought has moved away from the phenomenological claim of his early work that space is derived from time. Emphasizing the point, Heidegger contrasts timespace (*Zeitraum*) and time-space (*Zeit-Raum*): “What is meant by timespace is a determination of time itself and only of time—and not that grounding essential sway that is originally a one for time and space, as in the word *time-space*.”<sup>304</sup> In speaking of timespace, the span of time, time is represented as spacious and space as temporal; by contrast, time-space presumes the onefold origin (or originary onefold) of space and time that allows for separation in the manner of temporalizing and spatializing determinations.

Notwithstanding the critical turn in his thinking, vestiges of his older view that privileged time are evident in Heidegger’s later compositions. Consider, for instance, the key term “site for the moment,” *Augenblicksstätte*, which, as noted above, is associated with the experience of the ab-ground. The conjunctive grammatical state implies that we are seeking the site for the moment, not the moment for the site, and hence temporality is primary and spatiality secondary. Furthermore, Heidegger’s description of the “hint” or the “hesitating self-refusal,” which is upheld as the “enopening of what shelters and conceals itself as such,” the “self-enopening for and as enownment, which is also grounding of the human being’s “call to belongingness to enowning itself,”<sup>305</sup> assumes a decidedly temporal as opposed to spatial character: “Self-refusal creates not only the emptiness of deprivation and awaiting but also, along with these, the emptiness as an emptiness that is in itself removing-onto, removing unto futurity and thus at the same time breaking open what has been, which bounces back from

what is to come and makes up the present as moving into abandonment, but as remembering-awaiting. But because this abandonment is originally remembering-expecting (belongingness to being and to the call of be-ing), it is in itself no mere sinking and dying away in a not-having, but conversely, it is the present that aims at and is solely carried out into decision: *moment*.”<sup>306</sup> In these words, one can detect a hint of a critical component of Heidegger’s notion of temporality that persisted, albeit in constantly changing forms, in the various stages of his thought: the realization that to become present, time must be absent. As Frank Schallow has pointed out, Heidegger realized that this ability of time to defer itself was not “merely an accidental feature of temporality, but rather marked its deeper origin within the polarity of revealing-concealing as the essence of truth. Temporality thereby appears less as a transcendental structure and more as a kinetic event or movement between opposites, the re-enactment of a creative process interchanging end and beginning, consummation and origin.”<sup>307</sup> This conception of temporality is indebted to Schelling’s emphasis on time as “an elliptical rather than a linear process,” a “primeval occurrence” that is not juxtaposed to eternity. Temporality, for Schelling, “provides the intermediary link through which the possibilities housed in the divine essence can unfold, and these possibilities in turn become concrete when specified within the delimited confines of nature and history.”<sup>308</sup> Time, in short, is the space within which the reconciliation of opposites within the infinite is enacted.

The influence of Schelling can be discerned both in Heidegger’s reference to the originary abandonment that takes the form of remembering-awaiting, terms that have a distinctive temporal quality, and in *Dasein*’s response to the call to belonging, which is occasioned by the retention-expectation of the abandonment that is in and of the moment. “The *remembering awaiting* (remembering a concealed belongingness to be-ing, awaiting a call of be-ing) puts to decision the whether or not of the onset of be-ing. More clearly: Temporalizing as this joining of (the hesitating) self-refusal grounds the domain of decision, in accord with the ab-ground.”<sup>309</sup> Although Heidegger goes on to speak of the “spatializing of enowning,” which complements the temporalizing, there is no question that he privileges the latter. From this vantage point, one must consider Heidegger’s supposition regarding the conjunction of time and being: “Being as presence, as the present in a still undetermined sense, is characterized by a time-character and thus by time. This gives rise to the supposition that the It which gives Being, which determines Being as presencing and allowing-to-presence, might be found in what is called ‘time’ in the title *Time and Being*.”<sup>310</sup> The critical unit of time in the presencing of time-space remains the moment-at-hand; however, this “no longer means merely the distance between two now-points of calculated time” but is rather the “name for the openness which opens up in the

mutual self-extending of futural approach, past and present. This openness exclusively and primarily provides the space in which space as we usually know it can unfold.”<sup>311</sup> Time continues to receive preferential treatment, for the convergence of the three temporal modes is what constitutes the prespatial self-extending that provides the space wherein beings are to be disclosed.

## Temporocentrism/Overcoming Spatial Logic

Not surprisingly, there has been recent criticism of the subordination of space to time, or what Edward Casey has called the phenomenon of “temporocentrism,” that has dominated the “modernist myth” underlying philosophical and scientific conceptions of the cosmos.<sup>312</sup> As a corrective, some thinkers have focused on the primacy of space, rather than time, in the shaping of human perception and memory.<sup>313</sup> Gaston Bachelard, for instance, has written: “To localize a memory in time is merely a matter for the biographer and only corresponds to a sort of external history, for external use, to be communicated to others. But hermeneutics, which is more profound than biography, must determine the centers of fate by ridding history of its conjunctive temporal tissue. . . . For a knowledge of intimacy, localization in the spaces of our intimacy is more urgent than determination of dates.”<sup>314</sup>

Casey has more recently affirmed Blanchot’s privileging of space in his phenomenological study on remembering, although he is careful to distinguish between place and space. The “modern obsession with time” can only be overcome by breaking down the “resistance to place,” which “by virtue of its unencompassability by anything other than itself” is conceived as the “limit and condition of all that exists.”<sup>315</sup> When examined from this standpoint, it appears that implacement is what makes the passage of time possible.<sup>316</sup>

What is remembered is well grounded if it is remembered as being in a particular place—a place that may well take precedence over the time of its occurrence. . . . But precisely where memory is at stake, to be fixed in space is to be fixed in place. . . . Memory of place implaces us and thus empowers us: gives us space to be precisely because we *have been* in so many memorable places, enjoyed such intimacy in them, known such pain there as well. If body memory moves us—is the prime mover of our memorial lives—it moves us directly into place, whose very immobility contributes to its distinct potency in matters of memory.<sup>317</sup>

In response to the critique of the subordination of the spatial to the temporal, I would counter that the more distinctive character of the postmodern experience may be the reverse, that is, the greatest challenge is to liberate

time—and ultimately the construction of self that is dependent on temporal demarcations—from its subjugation to an overwhelmingly spatial orientation.<sup>318</sup> Frederic Jameson's insightful comment is relevant here:

The crisis in historicity now dictates a return, in a new way, to the question of temporal organization in general in the postmodern force field, and indeed, to the problem of the form that time, temporality, and the syntagmatic will be able to take in a culture increasingly dominated by space and spatial logic. If, indeed, the subject has lost its capacity actively to extend its pro-tensions and re-tensions across the temporal manifold and to organize its past and future into coherent experience, it becomes difficult enough to see how the cultural productions of such a subject could result in anything but "heaps of fragments" and in a practice of the randomly heterogeneous and fragmentary and the aleatory.<sup>319</sup>

In the final analysis, we must admit (as physicists would surely insist) that distinctions of time are inconceivable without boundaries of space and boundaries of space are unimaginable without distinctions of time.<sup>320</sup> Here we would do well to recall Nietzsche's sagacious and relatively straightforward remark: "It seems to me that the most important faculty is that of perceiving *shape*, i.e., a faculty based upon mirroring. Space and time are only things which have been measured according to some rhythm."<sup>321</sup> Spatial and temporal characteristics do not exist in themselves; they arise in consciousness as a result of measuring the interval against some standard—a point that accords with Nietzsche's view that "knowing is a process of measuring according to a criterion. Without a criterion, i.e., without any limitation, there is no knowing."<sup>322</sup>

Our knowledge of the world would not be possible without the limitations imposed by the notions of space and time. Casey himself remarks on the ultimate inseparability of these two modalities: "What most merits noticing is that in every instance internal and external horizons are at once spatial and temporal (ultimately, they are spatio-temporal) and that both kinds of horizon are shared by memory and place alike."<sup>323</sup> Thus, we speak tellingly of an event "taking place," a common expression that conveys very well the phenomenological insight that a datum of human experience is perceived concomitantly in the venues of time and space.

The concurrence of the spatial and temporal is a distinctive feature of Proust's "experience of time embodied" (*l'expérience du temps incorporé*), as Kristeva has ardently insisted:

If Time is psychic time, and if it thus affects our bodies, it remains the only imaginary value that the novel can offer its community of readers. . . . Yet if associations

are metaphors and if sensations affect the body, then Proustian time, which unites sensations imprinted in signs, is a metamorphosis. By believing that Proust's novel merely deals with time, we may be overemphasizing a single word of its title. It is perhaps more accurate to say that through the intermediary of time, Proust is in search of an "embodied" imaginary, a space where words, along with their unconscious and obscure emergences, knit the unbroken flesh of the world I belong to. That is, I the writer, I the reader, and the living, loving, and dying I.<sup>324</sup>

The inherently temporal nature of the fabric of memory provides the space where language weaves the intermingled flesh of world and self. From this perspective, those who would contrast the duration of inner time-consciousness and the exteriorization of quantitative or measurable time are mistaken. Embodied time is "invariably spatialized."<sup>325</sup>

In this way, by presenting the space of memory as a sort of safety net added to the spectacle of society and its myriad dramas, Proust does more than simply endorse the philosophical tenets of Bergson and Heidegger that seek to capture Being by examining the opacity of Time, for he also verbalizes a sort of *sensory time* beyond metaphysical categories. In this way, Proust undoes oppositions (idea, duration, and space, on the one hand, and force, perception, emotion, and desire, on the other), and he maps out a psychic and transpsychic universe that is extremely complex, a seductive place, a source of communion and sacredness for those who love to read. . . . At this point, the line of reasoning has been developed enough so that the formula of *In Search of Lost Time*, the alchemical key to unlock its meaning, may be announced. This "augmented place," which we feel and which may be inaccessible, but which is constantly promised to us, is presented by the preposition we find in the title of the work, a preposition that indicates continual movement: "*A la recherche*"—we are always in search. In this way, the place remains an open one, and it is not closed off within the revolution of selves—it is "time embodied."<sup>326</sup>

Given that embodied time is configured in the space of memory—an insight that Proust connects to the "indissociable symbiosis between the sensible and the sensed" implied in the Christian doctrine of incarnation, the word made flesh<sup>327</sup>—Kristeva contends that

Proust does not subscribe to the opposition Bergson sets up between pure subjective duration and an objective time that can be measured in spatio-temporal terms. In Proust's novel, lost time is immediately "searched for" within a spatial imaginary and within the discontinuity of language, so that spatio-temporal continuity and its fragmentation are not an antithesis to pure time but its servant, the preferred means for attaining time regained. . . . Every page and every sentence of *In Search of Lost Time*

includes a panoply of sensations forming a singular space in which there is a gap between perception and memory, between memory and perception. What rushes into this breach is not *emptiness* . . . but the *time of language*. Time regained would thus be the time of language as an imaginary experience.<sup>328</sup>

Projecting-back and gathering-forward provide the temporal frame within which the parameters of space are demarcated. One's sense of spatial boundary, laying claim to where one is experientially, is intricately connected to the emplacement of things in memory, the mnemonic attachment to objects held in the folds of memory by having experienced them previously in particular places. We encounter this association in different spheres of human life experience, from subjective psychology on one end of the spectrum to political ideology on the other. Without memory, which is inconceivable in the absence of an internal time-consciousness, however this eidetic process is to be explained, we would be spatially disoriented. On the other hand, without the imaginal places enfolded in creases of memory in the brain tissue, future retention and past protention would not be possible in the present. We would do well, therefore, to move beyond the temporal/spatial split and embrace as phenomenologically sound the conjunction time-space articulated by Heidegger.

### Emplotment in Time of the Other

We have seen already that time-space is the ab-ground, the engrounding in the staying-away of the ground, extending forward in holding back. This sense of grounding seems uniquely related to the distinctive human capacity to narrate coherently events that have been experienced episodically.<sup>329</sup> Our sense of time proceeds from this capacity for "emplotment,"<sup>330</sup> in the felicitous idiom of Ricoeur, which he aptly characterized as a "configuring" and "judicative" act that involves "grasping together"<sup>331</sup> divergent events and thematizing them into the unified story of a myth. The fictive recounting of factuality is predicated on a presumed reciprocity between narrativity and temporality, a reciprocity that necessarily implies circularity of reasoning. As Ricoeur succinctly expressed it, "Time becomes human to the extent that it is organized after the manner of a narrative; a narrative, in turn, is meaningful to the extent that it portrays the features of temporal experience."<sup>332</sup> The narrative structuring of time by the temporal structure of narrative would seem to lead hermeneutically to an inversion of the circle, whereby the end is read from the beginning and the beginning from the end. Upon closer inspection, however, we observe that recapitulation is not dependent on sequential coherence. On the contrary, narrated time, in its cyclicity, revolves about the poles of memory and expectation.

Future is retained in the protentionally envisaged past; retrospection ensues from retrieving traces of what is yet to be left behind.

Time of consciousness can awaken only as consciousness of time, and consciousness of time only as time of consciousness. Precisely because of this circularity in thinking about time, and the reflexivity of consciousness that it implies, we cannot say what time is without being caught in a web of self-referentiality. In the absence of a face, can the face appear other than as effaced, or is effacement itself too revealing? With this discernment we take the turn of Levinas, a turn that, by the author's own admission, was greatly indebted to Franz Rosenzweig's "new thinking" (*neue denken*).<sup>333</sup> Rosenzweig's preoccupation with temporality in his literary masterpiece *Der Stern der Erlösung* (which first appeared in 1921) is apparent in his axiomatic acceptance of the three theological categories, creation (*Schöpfung*), revelation (*Offenbarung*), and redemption (*Erlösung*). Each of these corresponds to a dimension of time: creation to the ever-renewed past, revelation to the ever-enduring present, redemption to the ever-coming future. For Rosenzweig, the temporal mode has ontological status only by virtue of its theological correlates. His theology, therefore, may be labeled a metaphysics of temporality whereby the traditional distinction between time and eternity is transcended in the eternalization of time through the temporalization of eternity: in the fullness of the moment, one encounters the perpetual coming-to-be of what has always been. In a manner similar to Schelling, whose later thought betrays an affinity with traditional kabbalah, for Rosenzweig God is the being of eternity, the eternal being, which temporally becomes in the eternity of temporal becoming.<sup>334</sup>

In the essay *Das neue Denken*, published in 1925 with the aim of offering readers pointers on how to read *Der Stern*, Rosenzweig writes that time is "entirely real" for the one who embraces the new thinking (*neue denken*), which he also calls speech-thinking (*sprachdenken*), in contrast to the philosopher interested in immutable essences who wants "to know nothing of time." The critical element of speech, therefore, is the verb, which in German is *Zeitwort*, literally, time-word, the part of language that conveys knowledge of the tenses (*Zeiten*) of reality.<sup>335</sup> Rosenzweig thus expresses the "secret" of the "wisdom of the new philosophy" encapsulated in Goethe's phrase "understanding at the right time" (*Verstehen zur rechten Zeit*):<sup>336</sup> understanding always occurs in the present, "time in the most temporal sense" (*Zeit im zeitlichsten Sinn*).<sup>337</sup> In another passage in the same essay, Rosenzweig elaborates on the interconnectedness between time (especially in the form of the present) and *sprachdenken*:

Thus the new thinking's temporality gives rise to its new method. In all three books [of *Der Stern*] to be sure, but most visibly in the book that is the heart of this volume

and this of the whole, in the second, the book of the present revelation. The method of speech takes the place of the method of thinking, as developed in all earlier philosophies. Thinking is timeless and wants to be timeless. . . . Speech is bound to time, nourished by time, [and] it neither can nor wants to abandon this ground of nourishment; it does not know beforehand what will emerge; it lets itself be given its cues from others; it actually lives by another's life. . . . To need time means: not to be able to presuppose anything, to have to wait for everything, to be dependent on the other for what is ours. All this is entirely unthinkable to the thinking thinker, while it alone suits [entspricht] the speech-thinker. Speech-thinker—for of course the new, speaking-thinking is also thinking, just as the old, the thinking did not come about without inner speaking; the difference between the old and new, logical and grammatical thinking, does not lie in sound and silence, but in the need of an other and, what is the same thing, in the taking of time seriously.<sup>338</sup>

Rosenzweig's insight that taking time seriously entails being in need of the other is elaborated in Levinas, who repeatedly stresses the correlation of the structure of the experience of alterity and temporality, the internal form of subjectivity.<sup>339</sup> Awareness of self comes to be through facing the other without othering the face, an exposure to exteriority, an openness to "the deportation or the transcendence beyond any end and any finality: the thinking of the absolute without this absolute being reached as an end, which again would have signified finality and finitude. The idea of the Infinite is a thought released from consciousness . . . according to the thought, perhaps the most profoundly considered thought, of the release with regard to being, of dis-inter-est: a relation without a hold on being and without subservience to the *conatus essendi*, contrary to knowledge and to perception."<sup>340</sup> The infinite of which Levinas speaks is not the negative abstraction of meontological speculation, the not-being of Neoplatonic metaphysics, but rather an enigma of transcendence, "the proximity of the Other as Other," the "intervention of a meaning" that "disturbs phenomena"<sup>341</sup> as a consequence of one's ethical relationship to another human being. Such a relationship defies the subject's attempt to re/present transcendence as a presence, to reduce the other in the identity of the same, an alterity undyingly beyond the clasp of intentionality, as we realize most poignantly in the invariable (un)eventuality of death. Similarly, apprehension of time issues from contemplating thought-thinking-what-cannot-be-thought, the infinite surplus, incomprehensible and unassimilable, the "always of noncoincidence, but also the always of the relationship, an aspiration and an awaiting."<sup>342</sup> For Levinas, the conjunction of time and being implied by the dialogical temporalization of being indicates that at all times "the *event of being*, the *esse*, the *essence*, passes over to what is other than being . . . being's other, otherwise-than-being"<sup>343</sup>—a subjectivity

to be conceived not as immanence and essence but as the correlative interplay of the Said and the Saying, which resists ontologization and “overflows the very being it thematizes in stating it to the other.”<sup>344</sup> From this vantage point, the nature of time, by which we calibrate the inessentiality of being, that is, the otherwise-than-being displayed in the concealment of being-otherwise, is the enigmatic absolution that betrays the “trace of illeity” in a present that remains open as “difference” with respect to an “ab-solute past”<sup>345</sup> continuously refigured as the future.<sup>346</sup>

The manifestation of being, the appearing, is indeed the primary event, but *the very primacy of the primary is in the presence of the present*. A past more ancient than any present, a past which was never present and whose other signification remains to be described, signifies over and beyond the manifestation of being, which thus would convey but a moment of this signifying signification. In the diachrony . . . with regard to the progressiveness of manifestation, one can suspect there is the interval that separates the same from the other, an interval that is reflected in manifestation. For manifestation, which one might have thought to be by right a fulgurating instant of openness and intuition, is discontinuous, and lasts from a question to the response. But this leads us to surprise the Who that is looking, the identical subject, allegedly placed in the openness of Being, as the crux of a diachronic plot (which remains to be determined) between the same and the other.<sup>347</sup>

Time is indicative of a narrative telling, a diachronic plot whose synchronic crux is open-ended, yielding a rhetoric of temporality characterized by a confluence of repetition and change too complex for simplistic binary opposition,<sup>348</sup> a past determined by a future that anticipates the past as a word spoken in the dialogue between the same and other, the question and response. “The relationship with the other is time: it is an untotalizable diachrony in which one moment pursues another without ever being able to retrieve it, to catch up with it, or coincide with it. . . . Time means that the other is forever beyond me, irreducible to the synchrony of the same. The temporality of the interhuman opens up the meaning of otherness and the otherness of meaning.”<sup>349</sup>

The intrinsic linking of alterity and temporality underscores as well the texture of the erotic fabric that envelops time. The fecundity of eros signifies the desire for the other in the mystery of the other’s essential inessentiality. Significantly, Levinas identifies this transcendence, which cannot be spatial in nature and precludes possession of the other, as the feminine.<sup>350</sup>

The pathos of love, however, consists in an insurmountable duality of beings. It is a relationship with what always slips away. The relationship does not *ipso facto* neutral-

ize alterity but preserves it. . . . The other as other is not here an object that becomes ours or becomes us; to the contrary, it withdraws into its mystery. Neither does this mystery of the feminine—the feminine: essentially other—refer to any romantic notions of the mysterious, unknown, or misunderstood woman. . . . What matters to me in this notion of the feminine is not merely the unknowable, but a mode of being that consists in slipping away from the light. . . . It is a flight before light. Hiding is the way of existing of the feminine, and this fact of hiding is precisely modesty.<sup>351</sup>

Just as the face of the other can be confronted only in its inaccessibility, so the flow of time is renewed in its anarchical, nonoriginal chiasmus, the immemorial lapse in the nonsimultaneity of the Said and the Saying<sup>352</sup>—momentarily abiding, abidingly momentary—the supplementing (*suppléance*) that originates without origin, the creaturality (*la créaturalité*) that begins without beginning,<sup>353</sup> the meaning that Levinas elicits from the word “anarchy,” literally, without an *arché*.<sup>354</sup>

The nexus of time and the face affirmed by Levinas provides the temporal basis for a phenomenology of non-phenomenality, a phenomenology that eschews the metaphysics of presence, a phenomenological canvassing of the unapparent.<sup>355</sup> The implication of this insight is captured poetically by Jean-Luc Marion when he notes that “phenomenologically, time does not pass; if it were passing, it would not leave any trace and thus would destroy nothing.” To calculate time, therefore, we must assume that the past is “accumulated in the flesh” of a person, most particularly in the face, which is where the “flesh is most openly visible”; yet the “unique characteristic” of the face is that it is the “sole place where precisely nothing can be seen,” and thus it delineates the “point at which all visible spectacle happens to be impossible, where there is nothing to see, where intuition can give nothing [of the] visible.”<sup>356</sup> The impossibility implied in envisaging the invisible visage provides a template by which we can measure the temporal efflux as the incessant becoming of what has everlastingly been, steadfast in its transience, transient in its steadfastness.

One never sees the same face twice, because time, in being accumulated, deforms it as much as it shapes it. Only time can draw the portrait of a face, since it alone sketches it. Time distinguishes the face, because it marks it—in the taking of flesh, in archive. But there is more: time, as the past accomplished, should never be able to appear if it were limited to passing. Like death, as soon as the moment has come, time is no longer it for me. . . . Completed time manifests itself in what it removes, destroys, and undoes—the phenomenality of ruins of stone, but especially of ruins of flesh.<sup>357</sup>

The inherent link between time as that which abides in passing and the face as that which forever eludes the gaze of the other underscores death as an essential aspect in understanding the texture and tonality of temporality. “To envisage a face,” writes Marion, “requires less to see it than to wait for it, to wait for its accomplishment, the terminal act, the passage to effectivity. That is why the truth of a life is only unveiled at its last instant. . . . And to see the other finally, in truth, would mean, in the end, closing his or her eyes.”<sup>358</sup> A profound paradox is here recovered: the face can be seen only at death, in the closing of the eyes, the instruments of perceptual vision. In the course of life, the face beholds and is not beheld; at death it can no longer behold and is thus beheld.

My reflections on time, truth, and death elicited from and affixed within the kabbalistic orientation, as constructed from representative texts, begin from this hermeneutical standpoint: the temporality of time imparts the meaning of otherness as the otherness of meaning encoded in the secret of the other, the mystery that constitutes the alterity engendered as feminine, the visibly invisible rendered invisibly visible from within the site of hiding, a blindness—bestowed on the modest—that visualizes time in its genealogical heterogeneity.<sup>359</sup> Nicolas Abraham expresses the matter in terms of the category of the “transphenomenal,” which he considers the “special dimension” that “defines the field of psychoanalysis.” “Time,” he writes, “is understood in its internal genesis; it is someone’s time, of course, but it can only be perceived by someone else.”<sup>360</sup> In contemplating the texture of time that may be mined from the works of kabbalistic theosophy, we may read backward from the psychological to the ontological—a turnaround justified by the fact that the onto-theological standpoint of traditional kabbalah (to borrow Heidegger’s locution) precludes the possibility of these two being severed, since the soul not only participates ontically in the substance of God’s being but is the mirror through which the invisible is seen as the true appearance of apparent truth. The discernment at the psychical level that time is always the measure of the inscrutability of the other leads to the realization of time as the mystery of the transcendent other becoming other in relation to itself, the externalization of inner time occasioned by the internalization of exterior space.<sup>361</sup>