

Heidegger: German Idealism and Ecstatic Temporality

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The article discusses the significance of Hegel's and especially Schelling's concepts for the formation of Heidegger's conceptions of Being and ecstatic time. It is argued that the authors of German Idealism began to think about the Absolute in temporal and historical terms, and that this set the stage for Heidegger's historical and temporal understanding of Being. Crucially, negativity is included in the structure of Being. The ecstatic structure of Being and time itself is shaped by Schelling's thought on the dialectic of ground and existence.

Keywords: ecstatic temporality, Hegel, Heidegger, negativity, Schelling

INTRODUCTION

According to Heidegger, from Greek times onwards, the development of Being is an interpretation of *ousia* as Presence, that reaches its conclusion in Hegel's subject philosophy. This conclusion is the precondition for the new beginning of the epoch of Being's history in Heidegger's thinking, which arises with a new interpretation of *ousia*. This interpretation incorporates temporality into *ousia*.

Prior to Hegel's philosophy, the culmination of the metaphysics of Presence is Cartesian philosophy (also critiqued by German idealists). Cartesian philosophy rests on the understanding of Being as Presence, or unchanging. On the other hand, Heidegger notes that ontological Presence is, in fact, temporal – Being is gatheredness of ecstatic time (the three ecstasies): it is endurance (*Ausdauer*) of rapture in having-been-ness (*Gewesenheit*) and coming-ness/future (*Zukunft*) (Heidegger 1989: 192). And essence/*ousia* is presence (*Anwesenheit*) as present (*Gegenwart*) of the gatheredness of this endurance (*ibid.*). This present gets distracted from the ecstasies of time and thus gives rise to the semblance that Being is sheer present/presence, or time-less (*zeitlosig*) (*ibid.*). To avoid this semblance, Heidegger does not conceive Being under a single mode of time (present) but speaks of a co-play (*Zuspiel*) of the three dimensions (future, past and present) which is presented by the fourth dimension (the hidden Being). Hence, for Heidegger, authentic time is four-dimensional (Heidegger 2007: 20). This giving-of-oneself-to-one-another of arrival (*Ankunft*), having-been-ness and present simultaneously give space and shine through in openness – this openness is not space (as timeless) or time (as spaceless), but timespace (*Zeitraum*).

The preconditions for temporal understanding of Being derive from German Idealists who began to think of Being historically (temporally). Nevertheless, their conception of time itself was still inadequate for this new conception of time because they still understood time in a 'traditional' way – as a sequence of present moments: in the last subsections of *Being and Time*, it is pointed out that Hegel found it difficult to explain the Spirit's emergence into history precisely because he held to the traditional conception of time as a sequence of present moments (Heidegger 2006: 431–432). One of the main contributions of Heidegger's philosophy is that it makes explicit the notion of the historicity of Being as that of ecstatic four-dimensional time.

This article will discuss how Hegel's and especially Schelling's thought informed Heidegger's temporal understanding of Being. The relation between Heidegger and German Idealism is discussed by Fulvi (2020), Marren (2021), Dejanovic (2015), Christensen (2017), Lesko (2019), Otagiri (2018), Rapic (2018), et al. Some of these recent investigations seek to reconstruct 'real' Schelling as opposed to Heidegger's interpretation whereas this article is concerned with reconstructing Heidegger's interpretation. It situates Heidegger's reception of German Idealism's contribution to philosophy in his broader project of rereading the fundamentals of Western thought. In Lithuania, Heidegger's thinking has received significant attention as attested by the collective volume (Andrijauskas 2019) dedicated to it with contributions from over 30 authors. Although only a few of them juxtapose Heidegger and Hegel (Lingis 2019; Mostauskis 2019; Baranova 2019; Stasiulis 2019) or Schelling (Mažeikis 2019) and if they do, the juxtaposition is fragmentary or instrumental with respect to the main focus of their articles. In 2016, a monograph was published which offered a discussion and account of multiple aspects of Heidegger's thinking (Kačerauskas, Vėželis 2016). A lot of attention is paid to Heidegger's critique of technology (Mickevičius 2018; 2019) or his terms are applied to analyse and describe the current society (Kačerauskas 2022). Our article brings into spotlight the way in which German Idealist insights informed the unfolding of the description of ecstatic time which we hold to be key to his rereading of Western thought.

INCLUSION OF NEGATIVITY

In his lecture 'The Principle of Identity', Heidegger points out that he is in a situation in which thinking has been placed by the philosophies of Fichte, Schelling and Hegel: 'Just one thing we must keep in mind: since the era of speculative Idealism, it is no longer possible for thinking to represent the unity of identity as mere sameness, and to disregard the mediation that prevails in unity' (Heidegger 1969: 25). This means that it is precisely the work of the authors of 'speculative idealism' that allows Heidegger to reflect originally on the Greek concept of Being as unity (as opposed to many particular beings). As Heidegger points out, he no longer understands identity as a characteristic of Being (as the grounding ground): now Being is understood as a characteristic of identity. Thus Heidegger's thinking performs a 'spring into the essential origin of identity' (ibid.: 40). This spring is presented in the lecture as a reflection on Parmenides' thesis, for which, according to Heidegger, the subsequent Aristotle's philosophy was only a more 'scientific' (rigorous) expression. Heidegger understands this spring as *es gibt*, *Anwesen*, that is, unconcealment/presencing. Such understanding implies concealment/forgetfulness of Being, and in order to unfold the understanding of this concealment/forgetfulness, Heidegger seeks to highlight the moments of negativity (non-being, darkness and passivity) in Aristotle, Plato, and in the pre-Socratic thought rooted in the Greek horizon. In this he, of course, was preceded by Hegel and Schelling.

In Greek ontology, the difference within *on* remains unformulated. According to Heidegger, the first important change in the concept of identity occurred only in Kant's philosophy. The principle of identity and the principle of non-contradiction for Kant were the same. It applied, according to Kant, to 'human finite knowledge' – the grasp of the constant Gegen-stand within the epistemic field of the transcendental subject. This Kantian attitude allowed Hegel and Schelling to say that contradiction was possible for absolute knowledge. In this way, the moment of negativity, found in Heidegger's texts under the names of absence (Abwesenheit), non-being (Abwesen), evil, passivity and darkness, is received within presencing.

According to Heidegger, the modern revelation of Being, with the importance it places on geometry, relates to the notion of Being as eternity (or *nunc stans*) that goes back to the Greek definition of Being as *changeless* (atemporal). Drawing on Leibniz's move beyond Spinozan 'geometrical determinism', it was Schelling who formulated a notion of *temporal eternity* and ecstatic freedom. Heidegger sees the original Greek thought as rooted in such temporal revelation of Presence of Being, that was, however, lost in their definition of Being and the way it was conceived by posterity. Heidegger seeks to retrieve this primordial relation to Being, prior to the (constant) Platonic *idea*.

For Heidegger, as for Hegel, one of Plato's most important dialogues is the *Sophist*, because it deals precisely with the problem of negation. According to Heidegger, the idea in this dialogue seems to stem from the mutual influence of Plato and Aristotle, and it is common to both Plato and Aristotle. In Heidegger's interpretation, therefore, Aristotle's authentic thought appears to derive from the insight of the inclusion of negativity into presencing. The Aristotelian concept of *dunamis* is meant to express precisely this insight (cf. Brogan 2005: 26–27). For Heidegger, it is important that the concept of *dunamis* allowed Aristotle to think presencing in its contradiction, while preserving the so-called law of non-contradiction.

Aristotle's philosophy itself is rooted in the Greek Dasein, in the Greek opening of Being and the Greek perception of Being. Implicit in *Being and Time* is Aristotle's concept of *ousia* with its rootedness in Greek Dasein. Greek thought is characterised by the 'unity of essence and non-essence' (Heidegger 1993: 64). Already in the introduction to *Being and Time*, Heidegger, when discussing the notion of the phenomenon – *fainomenon*, refers to its inseparability not only from *fōs* (light, presence), but also from the 'not' (darkness, absence) (Heidegger 2006: 28–29). Importantly, as in Schelling's ecstatic conception, light and darkness are not only opposed, but also in unity. Thus elsewhere, in discussing the Greek perceptions found in Sophocles' *Antigone*, Heidegger points out that in the Greek horizon of thought there is not simply an opposition of darkness and light, but it is the case that Being of whatever is permeated by an opposing essentiality (Heidegger 1993: 64).

MOVING PRESENCE

Heideggerian attention to time which reinterprets *ousia*/essence, object (of modern Cartesian=mathematical science) and mind, or intellectual intuition, which were traditionally characterised as *eternal*, does not amount to substituting *species temporis* for *species aeternitatis*. It rather points to a change in the way *eternity/Presence* itself is conceived. It is no longer a *nunc stans* but has to do with moving. Such understanding of eternity is first to be found in Schelling's thought which, as noted by Stambaugh (1985), played a major role in shaping Heidegger's understanding. Heidegger himself speaks that the cloud of his 'another thinking' begins to form in Schelling's philosophy. Heidegger describes moving (*Bewegtheit*) as of fundamental importance in *Being and Time*, Schelling's philosophy as well as Aristotle's philosophy (where,

according to the German thinker, the latent structure of all Greek thought resides). They are all about the mutual interdependence of *eternity* and *moving* (temporality, time).

Thus Sadler can assert that Heidegger sees Hegel's work as the best source for understanding Aristotle because Hegel places Aristotle's philosophy into a novel system (Sadler 1996: 23). It was the ontological logician Hegel who initiated a philosophical rereading of Aristotle, and he also preserved the question of Being qua Being (ibid.: 24). Heidegger reads the *ever-present* (eternal) entelechy of Aristotle as *temporal*, and this structure is preceded by Hegel's description of the *eternal idea*, which, however, *eternally* sets itself to *work* (Hegel 1986).

But Heidegger prefers Schelling's philosophy to Hegel's. This is because Schelling's philosophy provides a means of better explaining the passage of the Absolute into time. Hegel's more 'traditional' orientation is indicated by the fact that he considers the principle of reality to be the Concept, which has always been understood in terms of the present (the old treatment of *ousia*). Schelling, on the other hand, considered this principle to be Love. This difference marks an important structural element: Love implies the difference and relation between a two. This allows Schelling to contemplate the moving of eternity as an ecstatic relation between two – dark and light – principles. This conception is the prototype of Heidegger's ecstatic temporality as a thrown project, where being-thrown signifies the 'dark' principle and the project signifies the 'light' principle (Heidegger 1995: 134–138). Thus, in Schelling's view, which is in essence taken up by Heidegger, the Absolute is brought from the groundless/the indifferent to the pluralistic reality by its ecstatic (moving) nature.

To give a quick reminder, the development of Heidegger's early thought was nourished by the insight of the inseparability of identity and difference in Being. Neo-Kantian Lask's reflexive category, which is in a way an anticipation of Heidegger's Being, arises at the boundary between the indifferent/identical and different. Undifferentiated Presence (the undifferentiated pre-conceptual source of thought) gives rise to identity and difference which belong to each other in the relation of heterothesis: a something is a something and by being this something it is not something else. Thus, being the same/identical and being different are equiprimordial (see Kisiel 1993: 36). An alleged tautology *ens est* is always already a heterology. Heidegger's mature work on the principle of identity asserts the same: the word 'same' (*der Selbe, to auto*), like Parmenides' *esti* (*es gibt*), traditionally understood as referring to present-at-hand presence already implies difference in sameness.

The equivalent of this neo-Kantian primary indifference discussed above is to be found in Schelling's conception of the *Abgrund* (the night, in Hegel's words, in which all cows are black). This description refers to the absence of differentiation necessary for cognition.

OPPOSITES AND THEIR UNITY IN TEMPORALITY

It should be emphasised that to describe the situation of the end of metaphysics and his own new beginning, Heidegger, who is sensitive to the pre-conceptual origin of concepts, uses metaphorical designations that adequately and succinctly capture the essence of their being two distinct treatments of *ousia*. The first, 'traditional', treatment of *ousia* is increasingly characterised by the metaphor of 'light' and the increasing forgetfulness of the 'darkness' by the forgetfulness of Being. The 'light' principle also corresponds to the principle of activity, which in modern times is also used to describe the *ousia* or subject. Leibniz also described *ousia* as the activity of the monad as effort, or striving (*conatus*), desire, or need (*nisus*), the primal force and light. It is from the understanding of the activity of *ousia* that the temporal reflection on it arises. The specificity of Heidegger's conception of moving is that it explains

moving à la Schelling as the unity of light and dark principles, in the transition from the situation of the forgetfulness of Being. Heidegger's conception of Being is akin to Schelling's conception of Abgrund, which Schelling himself associated with Aristotelian *dunamis* (and with the origin of freedom). Schelling's Abgrund is thus to be seen as a conceptual link between Heidegger's conception of Being and Aristotle's conception of *dunamis*. Being is analogous to *dunamis*, while time is analogous to *energeia*.

In Schelling's thought, God's love draws creation towards him – from darkness to light – and in this way 'the night where all cows are black' is transformed into the colourful light of day (Laughland 2008: 95). This conception is close to Aristotle's notion according to which all essences are in motion because they are attracted – like the lover to the beloved – by the unmoved mover, but Schelling's more radical emphasis in this conception of the movement of Presence is on the *creatio ex nihilo*. Heidegger does not use expressions such as 'God's love' or 'the unmoved mover', but his structure of the relation between Being and time, and of time itself, is analogous to the structure of the relation between Aristotle's *dunamis* and *entelecheia*, as redefined against the background of the concept of creation *ex nihilo*.

As Browne explains, Schelling makes use of the traditional distinction in Platonic philosophy between *mē on* and *ouk on*. Non-being as *ouk on* is 'absolutely nothing', complete absence of something. Non-being as *mē on* is potentiality, that which could be (something) but is not (Brown 1997: 61). This *mē on* is what Plotinus calls 'matter'. It is in this sense of potentiality, not of complete nothingness, that Heidegger also uses the word *Abwesenheit* (absence). In discussing the relation between matter (potency) and form (entelechy) in Aristotle's thought, Heidegger equates it with the relation between *Abwesenheit* (*mē on*) and *Anwesenheit* (*on*). Just as in Schelling's conception the light element is not possible without the dark, so presence (form, *morfē*) is not possible without absence (matter, *hulē*).

Schelling, drawing on Plotinus, treats 'matter' as raw power without structure, the ground of Being, which, left to itself, is an uncontrollable destructiveness, but which, when subjected to the right constraints, becomes actual essences (Brown 1997: 61). According to Brown, in this way Schelling, although he himself does not admit it, modifies the traditional theological doctrine of creation out of nothing by claiming that in it nothing refers to *mē on* rather than *ouk on*. It is precisely because of this that he is able to claim that God has within himself a pole of non-being (*mē on*) which is the ground of his own Being and also the ground of the Being of creation (Brown 1997: 61). In our understanding, this description needs qualification: if the groundless is treated as the equivalent of *ouk on*, then the traditional doctrine of creation would be altered, not in the sense of the disappearance of *ouk on*, but only in the sense of pointing to the intrinsic relationality of the created *on* with *mē on*. Presence appears as the interaction of *on* and *mē on*, *ouk on* itself, as the groundless, never appears, is concealed and only implicit. In Heidegger's thought, it is precisely this groundlessness (Being) that makes possible the unity of the opposites of *on* and *mē on*, and its oblivion is equal to mere opposition of *on* and *mē on*. Thus, on the one hand, nothing means the opposite of something, on the other hand, the unity of nothing and something. Being itself cannot be completely identical with either what is or what is not.

According to Schelling, God in the undifferentiated groundlessness desires to become a person (Schelling 1995: 95) and, because of this desire, goes beyond the simple serenity of groundlessness. As Laughland points out, Schelling argued that the whole process of creation was nothing less than personification of God (Laughland: 95). 'Person' – which, with Hegel, we can also call 'individual' and 'spirit' – derives from the Greek concept of *ousia* and

corresponds to what we ‘metaphorically’ call ‘light’. The meaning of this designation can perhaps be better understood by recalling Shopenhauer’s philosophy, according to which time and space, as the realm of representation, only come into existence with the human being, with his or her mind, by which the world, as it were, ‘opens its eyes’. ‘Person’, ‘mind’ and ‘spirit’ refer both to the Heideggerian *Dasein* and to the Aristotelian *nous*, or the individual characterised by it, and the Schellingian desire is considered to be the equivalent of Aristotle’s *oreksis*, which characterises the relation between *dunamis* and *energeia*. According to Schelling, spirit cannot exist without matter, or, in other words, the light element cannot be without the dark element, and so God, ontologically coming out of his own groundlessness, splits into a light and a dark principle. This dark source is matter, which is the unconscious part of God (Laughland 1995: 95). By adopting this conception, Heidegger’s philosophy seeks to demonstrate the presence of both active and passive (light and dark) principles in Aristotle’s conception of *nous*, and to distinguish the Aristotelian *nous* from the overly rationalistic post-Aristotelian (especially, Cartesian) treatment of reason.

Heidegger points out that the metaphysics derived from the Greeks is a metaphysics of perfect Platonic forms (see Heidegger 1979: 234–236), which in modern science become perfect Cartesian laws: everything is regular (*regelmässig*) and recurrent (*regelhaft*), and therefore in principle everything must be explicable (Heidegger 1995: 166). This regularity is calmness beneath which lies the primordial lawlessness of the ground (*ibid.*: 167).

However, Heidegger cautions against regarding the critique of rationalism found in Schelling’s philosophy as a statement of irrationalism. Just as in Heidegger’s thought inseparable from nothingness, it is not a question of the liberation of the dark principle, but of the unity of the light and the dark principle. According to Heidegger, in Schelling’s thought, ‘the ground (*Grund*) and existence (*Existenz*) belong to each other; this belonging to each other (*Zusammengehörigkeit*) first makes possible their difference and the struggle (*Zwietracht*), which gives itself the form (*hinaufbildet*) of a higher unity/harmony (*Eintracht*)’ (Heidegger 1995: 137). Heidegger points out that the pair of ground and existence corresponds to, incorporates into itself, the pairs of nature and spirit, non-self and self, reality and ideality, object and subject, being (*Seyn*) and essence, object and mind, respectively (*ibid.*: 134). The idea that modern time is plagued by a divide between matter (nature) and spirit, requiring the reconciliation that philosophy seeks, is common to both Schelling and Hegel.

The struggle of ground and existence implies a situation in which Being, as the guaranty of their unity, withdraws into forgetfulness: with the separation of Being and entity (the forgetfulness of Being), there are also the separations of nature and spirit, of the object and the subject, and the other modern separations mentioned above. And in Schelling’s philosophy, the very maintenance of Being of entities risen from the undifferentiated groundlessness requires a correct ordering of the light and the dark principles (Laughland 2008: 95). This unity of dark and light principles directly refers to the idea that ontologically time is of equal value with eternity and the two are in unity. For it implies that – and this is an important difference between Plotinus’ and Schelling’s thought – creation was neither a curse nor a fall but a gift and not something to be escaped from (Laughland 2008: 95). It should be emphasised that the unity of the light and dark principles is equiprimordial with the unity of Being and time, eternity and time.

The idea of the unity of time and eternity thus passes into Heidegger’s thought. It distinguishes Heidegger’s thought from that of Plotinus, even though Plotinian philosophy is significant for the philosophy of both Heidegger and his predecessors Hegel and Schelling.

Heidegger himself points out that Plotinus' ideas were already important for the project of *Being and Time*: in formulating his own conception of time, he drew not only on Aristotle's treatise on time in the *Physics* but also on Plotinus' Treatise 7 of the Third Ennead (Heidegger 1991: 48). In Plotinus' claim that all entities are driven into the future (Plotinus 1955: 121), we recognise Heidegger's preference for the temporal ecstasy of the future. Moreover, both Plotinus and Heidegger take up Aristotle's idea that the soul is in some sense all beings.

But there is an important difference. In Plotinus' philosophy, we find a turning away from time to eternity, understood as an undifferentiated unity. This is how Plotinus understands the Platonic Good: it is the One, because in Plotinus' metaphysics, unity precedes multiplicity, the whole precedes the parts, identity precedes distinction. The divine One is therefore pure unity without multiplicity, simple wholeness without parts or any structure, an identity in which there is no inner distinction (Cary 2011: 127). The turning away from differentiation, or multiplicity, coincides with a turning away from matter. It is thus in the opposition of the one and the many, or eternity and time, that we see the origin of the opposition between spirit and matter.

In Heidegger's philosophy, by contrast, the undifferentiated one, as we have seen, tends to emerge into the many, remaining in unity with it. This one is also called Being by Heidegger and is identified with the Platonic Good. Unlike in Plotinus' philosophy, in Heidegger's conception the Good is not separated from the entities that participate in it, since differentiation (absence, the bad) is not removed from the presence/essence of the one (Being, the Good). Because of the principle of the unity of the one and the many, Heidegger prefers Aristotle's philosophy to Plato's, for in it not only the forms but also the particular entities are clearly also essentially significant. Coope points out that in the *Physics* Aristotle provides a solid foundation for the study of changing things (Coope 2005: 2). In Aristotle's philosophy, *fusis* and *kinēsis*, interpreted by Heidegger as Being and time, go hand in hand. Aristotle's philosophy, properly understood, therefore, according to Heidegger, expresses the German philosopher's concern with the unity of the eternal and the moving, the substantial and the changing.

The unity of eternity and time coincides with the non-Plotinian unity of spirit ('light') and matter ('darkness'). Therefore, as Heidegger also explains Schelling's thought, ground and existence must be understood in the unity of this primordial moving (Heidegger 1995: 136). Ek-sistence for Schelling, in Heidegger's words, is that which goes beyond itself and opens up in this going beyond: thus Schelling's ek-sistence and the ek-sistence of *Being and time* and ek-stasis are understood analogously. Existence, in going beyond, in opening up, has its own dark ground, which makes it able to be light as clearing. The future, freedom, is ontologically found together with necessity, the past.

CONCLUSIONS

The inclusion of negativity and temporality into Being accomplished by German Idealists paved the way for Heidegger's thinking on the interrelation of Being and time. Of particular importance was Schelling's conception of the struggle and reconciliation of ground and existence in God which shaped a pattern for the structure of ecstatic temporality and Being in Heidegger's thought. These insights also helped to criticise Cartesian rationality and dualism as well as metaphysical predecessors of that notion. The temporal and ecstatic structure of Being also helped Heidegger to reread ancient Greek thought, especially that of Aristotle, which was his way of destructing and repeating/retrieving the ontological beginning of Western thought.

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M. Heideggeris: vokiškasis idealizmas ir ekstatiškasis laikiškumas

Santrauka

Straipsnyje aptariama Georgo Hegelio, ir ypač Friedricho Schellingo, sampratų reikšmė formuojantis Martino Heideggerio būties ir ekstatinio laiko sampratoms. Teigiama, kad vokiečių idealizmo autoriai ėmė mąstyti apie Absoliutą laikiškai bei istoriškai ir tai sudarė prielaidą M. Heideggerio istoriškam ir laikiškam būties supratimui. Esminga, kad į būties struktūrą įtraukiamas negatyvumas. Pati būties ir laiko ekstatinė struktūra formuojasi perimant F. Schellingo mąstymą apie pagrindo ir egzistencijos dialektiką.

Raktažodžiai: ekstatinis laikiškumas, Hegelis, Heideggeris, negatyvumas, Schellingas