

*A Note on*  
**“From Space *and* Time to the**  
***Spacing of Temporal Articulation:***  
***A phenomenological re-run of Achilles and the tortoise”***

by  
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My research in phenomenology and existentialism has always been drawn, through a deconstructive lens-piece, to the significance and key importance of the issue of temporality – that, indeed, consciousness [*Bewusstsein*], Being-there [*Dasein*], and Being-for-itself [*Être-pour-soi*] are other names for the *articulation of time*. The horizon of Temporality (*Temporalität* – with its transcendental character) could be said to refer to the absolute horizon of all *horizons of Being*.

In the following essay on the spacing of temporal articulation (based on a research paper of the same title that I wrote in 1989 during the period of my M.A. studies in Continental Philosophy at Warwick University), I examine some of the ways in which phenomenology, existentialism and deconstruction have radicalized the treatment and conceptualization of time in contemporary philosophy. The principal focus is on how they have successfully exposed the kinds of aporia that infect the popular model in which time is expressed as a linear succession of 'discrete' moments. The importance of the analyses undertaken by Husserl and Heidegger, in particular, lies in the way in which their 'horizontal' (horizontal *and* vertical) approach to time shows how the 'now,' far from being a discrete moment or extensionless point, is intrinsically 'spanned.' This represents much more than a mere reiteration of the

obvious argument that a single point (parameter) means nothing without reference to at least one other point: that the 'now' must be the space-between two parameters. Such a model is still far too limited.

The 'now,' or rather the Living Present (*lebendige Gegenwart*) is, in the most primordial sense, an extended / extending *field* that carries its 'no-longer' and its 'yet-to-come' within it. Any parameters that limit its space are arbitrary. It is a pure overflowing – a horizon of pure extending / stretching that first provides the space (spacing) of such limits. As the title of this article suggests, the senses of extension or spacing are subjected to rigorous investigation, for these terms are irreducible to pure spatiality alone – hence the transition from the supplement 'and' to the preposition 'of' with respect to the relation between space and time – the time of space and the space of time: time-space / space-time. Here, the question of 'positionality' is encouraged to reveal a far deeper significance than the mere language of spatial location. Spatializing is always already intertwined with temporalizing.

The motivating idea for the following investigation announced itself, somewhat indirectly, through certain implications that arise when Zeno's paradox "Achilles and the tortoise" is treated to a *phenomenological* reading (I urge the reader to take a look at Jorge-Luis Borgès' extraordinary essay – *extraordinary* in terms of the tremendous scope of its observations and ideas, despite its narrative economy, regarding the many different manifestations of this paradox throughout the history of Occidental philosophy – “The Avatars of the Tortoise” [see bibliography], which served as a major inspiration for the present text).

This 'paradox' takes the notion of the 'infinite divisibility' of any magnitude as its principal theme and shows how it problematizes the question of the reality of motion. Through this treatment of motion we find that the infinite divisibility of space is also equally applicable to time and that the 'discrete' moments of measured time can be nothing more than fictional entities.

Zeno's paradox of Achilles and the tortoise still continues to fascinate and seduce those who wish to flex their philosophical muscles in an attempt to understand precisely why it is a paradox. However, despite the fact that it is still compelling in its narrative power to draw one into its surreal horizon, as an argument against the reality of change and motion, it remains little more than a logical curiosity. For reasons of strategy, however, I treat the 'narrative structure' of the tale seriously in order to show...

i...how Zeno adopts the status of 'privileged observer' thus positioning his discourse within the bounds of a traditional (objective) idea of reality and the presence of the present, even though ultimately pushing it to its limits.

ii...how, at the point of rupture, the paradox demands that we make explicit that which is not made thematic by the narrative, but is presupposed by its 'operation': namely, *lived* time.

iii...how the asymptotic relation between Achilles and the tortoise can be expressed in such a way as to open up a space for a sense of extension / extending that speaks of the *pluri*-dimensionality of time as articulated through the stretching-out of the now of lived-experience.

Ultimately, the provisional approach leads away, through various shifts in perspective on the aporetic traces that it leaves in its wake, from engaging the closed limits of an objective linear continuum to addressing time as a horizontal 'interplay' whose spacing resists the language of closure. The shift involves nothing less than a phenomenological-deconstruction of the expressions time, space and motion – and, as such, it *re-situates* the question of what is meant when, like Zeno, we ask whether they are real.

The 'real' is not that which can ever be totalized (like within an ideal Euclidean point or its 'objective' temporal counterpart in the traditional notion of time: the 'now' as a discrete 'piece' of time) – but exceeds objective determination or reification. We shall see that the power of Zeno's narrative can be said to lie in the way in which it puts the primacy generally assigned to presence and the present into question.

Therefore, the following reading of Achilles and the Tortoise does not follow the traditional path of logical analysis. The paradox is subjected to a phenomenological-deconstructive form of interrogation. The principal question that guides the investigation is: what would it be to experience a world in which the slowest of competitors in a race is always ahead of the one who is faster?

In contemporary phenomenological and deconstructive discourse, presence can no longer be privileged. Neither can there be any 'privileged observers' in a universe that is articulated, both spatially and temporally, through 'perspectives.' But, having said this, it is still necessary to ask about the conditions of the possibility of such perspectives, in terms of their formation and unity through change.

*Consciousness of plurality* is possible for an *extended-extending* consciousness only – a 'lived unity' which exceeds its finite moments. Consciousness is *stretched* within itself under the tri-horizonal form of the Living Present. It is fundamentally historical; a project, a projecting whose form is that of the extending of the Living Present. The 'now,' when thought according to this structurality, is pure opening and intertwining (*Ineinander*). In the speaking-out of the 'now' we always find a matrix of interwoven moments – a horizon that extends into both the past and the future. It is the 'field' of the *Urgemeinschaftung* [original communality] of the past, present and future. This intertwining is that which originally constitutes the present *as opening*.

The title of this article incorporates a form of play in which the classic difference that separates discourse on time from that of a spatial order is put into suspension. The following inquiry does not settle for the traditional disjunction that defines time as an 'order of successions' *as distinct* from space as an 'order of coexistences.' The discourse on the intertwining of space *and* time is not a question of adding two discrete horizons – as implied by the use of the supplement 'and.' The intertwining of which I speak names a field that is earlier than such a disjunction. It is the horizon of the *spacing of temporal articulation*.