

VISION

Heidegger on Temporality ver after Wake Forest

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Abstract: Conceptions of time and practices for managing time play an important role in both popular management literature and process organization studies. In popular literature, managers have too little time. In organization studies, managers have multiple time-reckoning practices and experiences of time. In response, we explicate and defend Heidegger’s account of primordial time to show the inauthenticity of living with either too little time or many alternative temporal structurings. People are true to primordial (*kairotic*) time when they face their existential death—the emerging practices that will make their lives meaningless—accept the past emotions that well up on that account and adjust themselves to accept the past and avoid existential death. They then do what is essential. Alternatively, taking over other temporal structurings amounts to living as another kind of self-interpreting being—an organization or a tribe—and is inauthentic. An episode from Steve Jobs’s career illustrates authentic Heideggerian time management.

Coping with time in organizations: Insights from Heidegger¹

Today, the news on time is grim. Managers find it harder than ever to secure the time needed to do essential things for their businesses. The philosopher Martin Heidegger saw this coming (though not the details), diagnosed our problem as an inauthentic relationship with time, and offered a much-maligned solution, which we endorse. First, we will give you the news on time, second, explain how Heidegger understood time with a defense against charges of implausibility, third, provide practical, Heideggerian guidelines for authentic time management, and fourth, show why there is one basic kind of time.

1. *The news*

Today, we sleep with our smartphones (Perlow 2012). We live in a vicious cycle where we are supposed to be ever more responsive to customers and ultimately to everyone else. Such responsiveness leaves us spending our time handling others’ requests and losing track of what we really care about. We feel that we have no time. We focus on only what is feasible, urgent, or

indispensable (Heidegger 1962: 386, 463). Tor Hernes and Majken Schultz accept this focus as normal, call it event time, and describe such time as moments moving as in a narrative to a fullness where things come clear but before they do, the next moment starts (Hernes and Schultz 2015).²

Most managers, consultants, and such scholars as Leslie Perlow and Clayton Christensen show managers how to master this new normal. They are near consensus on managing time (Raffoni 2006: 6, 36; Perlow 2012; Gleib 2013; Ferner 1995).³ There are five basic steps.

1. Realize that each day has only 24 hours.
2. Determine your most important goals in business and life.
3. Audit your time. Cut your week up into the time blocks that you spend on various tasks.

Make a map of these time blocks.

4. Identify which of the blocks are devoted to fulfilling your most important goals and which are not, and then move the blocks for important goals to high productivity times.
5. Identify and execute the habit changes necessary to reduce the time spent in pursuit of lesser goals: delegate more, cut the number of meetings by dealing with larger groups at once, set tight agendas, say “no” to non-critical requests, and use email more effectively by stating in the subject line why you are writing and the response you want.

Beyond these five basic steps, these managers and advisors disagree over the amount of unstructured time to have each week, whether to involve your whole team in time management, which temporal rhythms are best, how much to shut off background noise (smartphones), and how often to do something whacky (Gleib, 2013). Nevertheless, the basic five principles rule.

Yet managers fail in applying these five principles. Which of us knows our most important goals in life or even at work (Christensen 2010: 46-51)?⁴ Of course, once we do, then

carving out blocks of time to serve important goals makes sense, but aside from tasks like filing expense reports, do we really find many tasks that serve just one goal and not a mix of important and unimportant goals? For instance, closing a sale serves sales, marketing, team building, and the bottom line. This multiplicity makes it hard to weight the relative importance of individual tasks. And, last, delegating more, saying “no” more, and holding larger, tighter meetings depend on the quality of our teams, cultural expectations of our companies, and our meeting-design skills, not simply an interest in better time management.

The second piece of grim news on time comes from organizational studies: Organizations are pluritemporal. In them, people miscoordinate by working in different time structurings.⁵ Most organizations have at least three different structurings: the linear clock time of planners, the cyclical time of financial reporting, and the opportunistic or *kairotic* time of transformative moments (Orlikowski and Yates 2002: 687). There is an upside. Instead of feeling harried by time when nothing is going right, pluritemporalists advise shifting temporal structurings. Take away the pressure of clock time or the anxiety of opportunistic time by switching to cyclical; the moment will come around again. Leading exponents of pluritemporalism, Orlikowski and Yates, do not claim that these temporal structures are natural kinds in the universe, but even though they are constructs like footballs, they are real enough for people to “(re)shape the range of temporal structures that shape their lives” (Orlikowski and Yates 2002: 698).

But is it *really* useful to employ temporal structures that contradict fundamental time? Taking up the topic in their introduction to a special issue of the Scandinavian Journal of Management, the editors, Tor Hernes, Barbara Simpson, and Jonas Söderlund, recognized that while most of their writers were pluritemporalists, most of the different temporal structurings could be reduced to clock time (Hernes, Simpson, and Söderlund 2013: 2). However, the editors

claimed some “undoubtedly important” work focused on temporal structurings not reducible to clock time (Czarniawska 2013: 7-12; Lorino and Mourey 2013: 48-62; Griesbach and Grand 2013: 63-77; Vesa and Franck 2013: 23-34; Bakken, Holt, and Zundel 2013: 13-22; Dodd, Anderson, and Jack 2013: 35-47).⁶ We find six seemingly independent conceptions of time (Orlikowski and Yates 2002: 684-700; Ancona, Okhuysen, and Perlow 2001: 512-529).

Pluritemporalists remark on all of these except for sacred time. However, we find sacred time important because it helps make sense of time as flow. Here are the six.

1. *Kairotic time*: consisting of such moments of great opportunity where everything changes as with falling in love or redefining what your company is about.
2. *Ordinary, clock time*: a succession of contentless nows.
3. *Fateful time*: we experience our end working itself out from our beginnings as though we are a character in a narrative.
4. *Cyclical time*: we experience ourselves always at a moment that repeats according to a pattern; consider the seasons or quarterly financial reporting.
5. *Sacred time*: the ageless time of rituals where the presence of a past golden age or gods is experienced. We can experience this time today when we find ourselves selling just the way the founder did and even feel his presence in the moment. (Of course, contemporary popular art draws on sacred time as well. Consider George Lucas’s Star Wars when the dead Jedi knights are present during moments of high celebration or peril.)
6. *Profane time*: time experienced as pure duration or flow (with no nows) falling away from the golden age or, in its secular form, experienced as constant becoming as in Bergson (1910) and maybe Deleuze.⁷

Although scholars celebrate pluritemporalism as liberating, Heidegger would find always

having more (or an alternative) time just as bad as having no time. Both are inauthentic attempts to flee what he calls our temporal finitude: that in any situation, we can have only one *way of being*.⁸ We are bold truth tellers, loving nurturers, clever charmers, or something else. Such ways of being cross all practical identities or roles such as father and teacher (Heidegger 1962: 477), and we cannot be more than one in any situation. Our consulting experience supports Heidegger. Managers who restructure their time—moving, for instance, from cyclical to clock time—let the moments for essential action slip. Managers who have no time take non-essential, firefighting actions. Thus, we also agree with Peter Vaill (1998: 38), “[L]eadership is a philosophy of temporality.” Heidegger promises that a person who has an authentic way of coping with temporality “always has time,” experiences the present with equanimity, and takes essential actions (Heidegger 1962: 386, 396, 435, 438, 463). That is a huge promise. To help him fulfill it, we begin by setting out and defending Heidegger’s account of temporality.⁹

2. *Heidegger on Temporality*

Understanding Heidegger on time requires a three-step dance. First, we start with ordinary clock time—the succession of one now after another—note its complexity, and examine the assumption that it exists independent of us. Second, there is the world time of practical coping. Heidegger takes his famous practice turn and looks at how—mostly unconsciously—we encounter time in our lives.¹⁰ Practically, we always experience time as time for this or that. Heidegger calls such time world time. Third, because neither clock nor world time explains our rich experience of the future, present, and past, which Heidegger sees as more fundamental to time than the succession of nows, he describes primordial time and identifies the three critical aspects of our sense making that supply us with our primordial encounter of future, past, and present.¹¹

Heidegger is surely right that we do not experience future nows the same way we experience past nows. The future now has an unsettling mystery. The past now is a trap or a rich heritage. The present now calls us to act. Whenever we are making sense of things, we have all three. Therefore, Heidegger says they are non-sequential. Heidegger also argues that succession (at least the intelligibility of succession) derives from primordial time, particularly the primordial present. Heidegger's critics, famously William Blattner (Blattner 1999), believe the derivation fails, and accordingly, they argue it makes better sense to follow tradition and derive the future and the past from world time plus the succession of nows.

2.1 Ordinary Time

We are all familiar with ordinary, clock time. We think of it as a succession or repetition of nows with the present now becoming past as we move toward a future now. Heidegger thinks that Aristotle had the best account of the now of ordinary, clock time: a pure transition from before to after. Notice that as pure transition, the now is always in the midst of change, partly past, partly futural. In short, the basic unit of time already has time's three dimensions: future, past, and present. As a succession of transitions, ordinary time inherits a number of other vexing riddles: Do past nows and future nows exist in their own rights or is there just a present now that includes hopes and memories? Does the succession have a beginning or stretch back infinitely? Is time part of objective reality (as Newton thought) or an activity of the soul (as Leibniz, Augustine, and Kant thought)? Heidegger believes the answers to these riddles lie in understanding world and primordial time.¹²

2.2 World Time

In our practical getting on in the world, we do not encounter empty nows. In practical life, a now always has significance attached to it. Now is the time to write a paper. Then, it will

be time to eat dinner. Second, since nows have significance, they also have spans. Now—the paper writing time—will last until dinner. Third, this world time is datable. We have dinner when the sun sets. Last, this significant time is shared. Although the current now does not have the same significance or duration for everyone, we can translate each other’s nows. Now it is time for me to write a paper translates into now it is time for you to work out and purchase a bottle of wine.

World time adds a reason why it is hard for managers to change their schedules. When now is the right time to write the paper, it is the *right* time for that and the *wrong* time to make an efficient phone call. The now is both ethical and practical. Changing what it is right to do now requires adjusting what counts as right.

Some wish that Heidegger had simply claimed that world time together with succession explains time (Blattner 1999: 184; Schatzki 2005: 201-206). Stepping back from world time and removing the significance, which seems like our contribution, allows us to see contentless purely transitional nows of ordinary time. But combining world time with ordinary time does not account for our different senses of a future, which is mysterious, a past, which enables or constrains, or a present, which calls for action.

2.3 Primordial Time¹³

Heidegger thinks that the future, past, and present dimensions of temporality come from three fundamental ways (he calls them “primordial” ways) in which we practically manage or cope with *our own being* as equipment users who also participate in creating or preserving meaningful contexts where other beings (people, items of equipment, natural objects, institutions) can appear. The ultimate context is the future, past, and present of time which is like Plato’s light, that which makes everything intelligible. There is, however, a problem. We

tend to cover up our primordial way of being and cope with ourselves inauthentically as agent-things using equipment to complete needed tasks. Agent-things act in the domain of world time. But when we cope with ourselves authentically, we acknowledge *in our coping* that we do not just get tasks done but primarily participate in creating or preserving contexts, situations, worlds where things, people, institutions show up as interdependent and in their interdependence make sense. For instance, we never just sit in a chair. By sitting, we create or preserve a particular context (even if it is a makeshift chair such as a stump in the forest) where, to start, we are sitting in somebody's or nobody's chair. There is always a reference to the roles of others. Our sitting refers as well to an institution, within which we are sitting: a dining room, a library, a forest. Likewise, in sitting, other equipment comes sharply into focus, the table, the book, the silverware, the trail traveled. Last, in sitting, we find ourselves either in stylistic accord with the people, equipment, institution referred to in sitting—they suit our way of doing things—or in discord with them in a sense of unfamiliarity. In coping with ourselves, we make adjustments in how we act to intensify the inter-connected suitability of ourselves and everything in the context. Thus, we adjust ourselves (attitudes, skills, and so forth) and things in the world to bring out our situation in its most interconnected (“ownmost”) way. Because we are bringing the situation in its ownmost, we can only have one way of being at a time. Hence, when true to ourselves, we only create or preserve one context to maximize its and our inter-connected suitability to everything with everything and everyone else in it. Consider the virtuoso musician who draws on her violin, rapport with the audience, the acoustics of the theater, and time of year to create the most resonant, intense performance.¹⁴

Creating or preserving such contexts requires three basic coping skills: (1) we cope with ourselves as beings with one way of being at a time and who hence create or preserve one

context at a time, (2) we are receptive to ourselves and to what is around us so that things come clear and are not products of our fancy, and (3) we cope with ourselves and our context by repeatedly making adjustments in both. As we act, we make the context clearer as well as complete tasks. We call these three context-opening skills: finitude, receptivity, and repetitious adjustment. They are basic to being human beings, and each gives us a dimension of primordial temporality.¹⁵

2.3.1 Primordial Future

To understand how the primordial future arises from coping with our finitude, we start by noticing that one of the most distinctive things about us is that our way of being can die while we still go on. That is existential death. Consider submissive women in Northern Atlantic cultures. Being a submissive woman was a valued way of being but under the influence of post-modernity and feminism, that way of being stopped making sense in the late 1960s. That way of being died. For women with that way of being, everything important became confusing; they felt out of touch with themselves and their worlds. Some remain so today. Those who regained a sense of themselves had to act radically differently from the way they had been.¹⁶ Before their way of being died, its death would have seemed impossible. The possibility of such impossibilities Heidegger calls death.¹⁷ He believes we best experience our being as finite when we feel the death of our way of being *coming toward us*.¹⁸ We frequently flee our existential death by refusing to take it seriously.

Consider a scholar whose way of being is to search out and tell the truth humbly. She finds that increasing numbers of her colleagues are becoming bloggers where it is more important to stage attitudes than to speak truth humbly.¹⁹ They are even beginning to publish articles and books in the same style. She sees this new blogging way of being as one that *could*

make her own way of being impossible. In facing that, she experiences it as *coming towards* her. That *coming towards* is the movement of the primordial future (Heidegger 1975: 266-265, 287). It is mysterious.²⁰ She cannot really make sense of what it would be like to live in a world totally without humble truth telling. We experience the primordial future in our coping so far as we cope to preserve our way of being in the face of a coming specific, existential death.²¹ In our agonistic culture, there are always competing ways of being. They arise from our tendency to increase intelligibility by establishing contrasts.

2.3.2 Primordial Past

In coping with ourselves, we find that we are always already in some context, members of certain cultures and communities, practitioners of certain ways of being (truth tellers, craftspeople, organizers), in particular shared moods, and so forth. From the moment we become self-interpreting beings—beings who cope with their surroundings in a particular way that they conserve—we always have a context into which we have previously arrived or into which we have been “thrown,” as Heidegger says. One cannot work free from being thrown. Even the newborn baby picks up certain moods and styles of behaving from her culture and family and already has them by the time she can engage in any coordinated coping. Our understanding of the past derives from how we cope with our thrownness. Most of the time, we forget that we are seeing things as we do because that is how people from, say, Northern Atlantic cultures see them. We simply act as we were brought up to act (Heidegger 1975: 266). Sometimes, though, unexpected or foreign emotions like nostalgia well up in us.²² Most people treat such experiences as bad moments, sicknesses, neuroses, and so forth. But these experiences show us that we are receptive to former ways of behaving. We deal with our receptivity directly when we let these past ways of behaving express themselves in us. For instance, we find ourselves called

to create a family dinner in the old style or to listen to a customer with the affection and zeal that first drew us to our careers. Heidegger describes this movement as *coming back to oneself* (Heidegger 1975: 267, 287). Whether we forgetfully ignore them or not, we always live out of habits that constantly draw us back to our older ways of being. This *drawing back* or *coming back* is the movement of the primordial past.²³

Consider again the truth-telling scholar facing the blogosphere's attitude-staging way of being that could make hers irrelevant. She notes that bloggers are trusted and listened to. That triggers in her an intense wish, one that she used to feel, to be trusted and listened to. That was why she adopted humble truth telling as her way of being. As she feels drawn back to herself with this wish, she feels welling in herself an intense interest in blogging to be trusted. She might inauthentically push it away as craziness or as selling out. Or she might authentically accept the way she is being drawn back.

Such *coming towards us* and *going back to* gives us the sense of time moving directionally from the future and going back to the past. This directionality is like Augustine's account of the direction of time in understanding.²⁴ Hence primordial time has directionality. But has Heidegger already smuggled in a succession of nows? Is the event of blogging taking over the world a not-yet now? Is the wish to be listened to and trusted a formerly now? No! When we are highly skilled at preparing dinner, we act with the sense that dinner is coming closer to happening without the sense of a particular or even indefinite now when it will occur. In our actions, it is simply experienced getting closer, and that is all. Likewise, we can sense that we are preparing a dinner redolent of other cheerful family dinners without identifying a particular formerly now or even an indefinite past now when we had such a dinner.²⁵ These are the senses of future and past primordial time has. They do not require the nows of world time.

2.3.3 Primordial Present

Bill Blattner has convinced most Heidegger scholars that the primordial present is basically the pragmatic present of world time: making present (Blattner 1999: 159-160).²⁶ It is the now in the expression, now is the right time to do X. Carol White (2005: 114-120) resists Blattner's interpretation, pointing out that for Heidegger the moment of vision—where the meaning of life changes—is the authentic way to experience the primordial present.²⁷ We follow White. Heidegger gives the fullest account of the moment of vision in his discussion of history making.²⁸ In history making, human beings understand themselves first in terms of the coming ways of being that would make their own ways of being impossible (Heidegger 1962: 434). In facing the existential threat, they accept an unusual sense of how things matter (an attitude from the past) welling up in them and that feels passed down to them (Heidegger 1962: 435, 437). In short, they experience the primordial future and past as we have described. Then, in a moment of vision—which is reveals the primordial present—human beings go beyond receptively accepting the welling-up sense of mattering to *actively* repeating this sense of mattering by making it their own (Heidegger 1962: 437).²⁹ They make it their own by repeating the past attitude with a difference, a “reciprocal rejoinder” or skillful (inspired) adjustment to the past way of acting and do so to answer the threat of existential death (Heidegger 1962: 438).

Consider our scholar again. She sees that the blogosphere's staging of cool attitudes threatens to make her way of being impossible. In this recognition, she feels drawn back to her longstanding concern for being listened to, and in re-experiencing this concern as something handed down to her, she sees that she should start blogging. However, as she starts writing, she adjusts blogging. She allows her personality to come out in giving personal details about how observations arose, but she refuses to stage attitudes by, for instance, making smart, cutting

remarks. As she writes, she senses a new way of being coming toward her. She is no longer a humble truth teller. She becomes a glamorizing truth teller, but still a truth teller not an attitude stager.³⁰

So far as our blogger answers her existential death, the death of humble truth telling, “every accidental and ‘provisional’ possibility [is] driven out” (Heidegger 1962: 435). As she begins glamorizing truth telling, the future, present, and past all look different. So radical is the change that no particular thing that she does captures it; “nothing happens” as Heidegger says (Heidegger 1962: 388). Hence, the now of world time—time to do a particular thing—cannot constitute the moment of vision where we change what counts as doing any particular thing. In the primordial present, one skillfully adjusts oneself and experiences the adjustment variously as a moment of receiving a gift, crystallization, inspiration, or luck that changes everything.

2.4 Succession

If Heidegger cannot derive the succession of nows from the coming toward, coming back, and repetition with a difference, his project *and our dealings with time* are doomed. We will live in a present constantly calling us to action. Heidegger only supplies the broad terms of his derivation: 1) the movements of the primordial future and past give us time’s direction and 2) falling away from authentic coping with time yields to a time reckoning that uncovers a repetition of nows. We need to fill in the details (Heidegger 1962: 478-480).³¹

We derive the repetitive now of ordinary time in the same way Heidegger takes us from using tools like hammers to seeing them as unready-to-hand and needing simple repairs and then to seeing objects with properties (Heidegger 1962: 412ff): in short, through a breakdown story. Let’s see the breakdown that could happen to the blogger. In developing her first blog, she is absorbed in the hard-fought work of writing something substantive that is short, personal, and

lively without staging an attitude. She senses that a new way of being as a truth glamorizer is coming toward her as she is repeating and adapting the concern for being listened to. Suddenly, her webmaster calls. Things have changed. He needs the blog right away. This request is the equivalent of the wooden shaft of the hammer breaking. Her attitude shifts.

Like the carpenter with the broken hammer looking for a solution, she is an agent-thing failing to submit the blog at the right time and looking for a solution. Her now is not the succession of nows but the world-time now of the call where it is now the right time to beg the webmaster for more time; the webmaster promises to call back. While waiting, she could get recaptivated by the existential death approaching her and go back to work. Or she could find herself lost at sea or vacillating between hope and despair. In this latter case, she would be looking at her situation with a disengagement caused by the vacillation. The world time now has lost its significance either because she has no sense of what is right to do now or of too many contradictory things.

She is in a state comparable to the carpenter looking and the broken shaft and hunk of metal. From the disengaged perspective where she does not feel the future coming toward her or a past calling her back, she sees that before the call, she was repeating her past, namely, wanting to be listened to, with a difference, namely, glamorizing truth, to make a difference to a future now: when attitude staging could take over the planet. In short, she sees the directionality of nows (left over from primordial time) from the agent's perspective of moving toward a goal: preventing the global domination of blogging attitudes. As she looks at the moment before the call she sees it, in short, as repeating the past with a difference to affect the future. She sees her present as a call to do the same, but in her vacillation, the current now has *no compelling content*. She sees a now as the repetition of the past with a minimal, numerical difference, directed

toward the next repetition which makes a future. But this now is precisely the now of ordinary time. Each now is a repetition of the same with a (numerical) difference to bring about the next repetition.

Thus, by disengaging from authentic temporality and re-actualizing one's actions in world time, one gets now after now moving forward. Then by further disengaging from world time, one feels the steady transition of a now repeating itself with a minimal, merely numerical difference directed toward the next repetition: in short feels ordinary time passing.

Heideggerian Time Management

The example of the humble truth-seeking scholar turned into a blogging truth glamorizer shows the basic principles of managing time authentically. In terms close to Heidegger's, Heideggerian managers attend to what will make their way of being impossible. Responding to existential death opens up time for essential action. Everything provisional is put aside. In the face of existential death, a relevant way of mattering wells up in the manager. As the past wells up, the manager feels it as an inheritance bequeathed to her. Because it is *her* inheritance, she receives it with equanimity. She manages the present by repeatedly adjusting past practice and associated feeling to answer the threat of existential death. In contrast, when we flee the primordial future's existential death and the primordial past's old emotions, we are caught up in endless calls to action. Our fleeing is the culprit. The smartphone is a powerful accomplice. However, by embracing existential death and feelings from the past, we experience the present as life-changing adjustment.

We will first translate this account of authentically dealing with time into a set of principles for managing the future, past, and present, and intersperse an example from the life of our era's consummate Heideggerian time manager.

3.1 Managing the Future

1. Identify your primary way of being, including a descriptive adjective, for example: harsh truth teller, triumphant deal maker, paternal organizer, pushy action driver, exuberant motivator, subtle politician, artful charmer, sympathetic friend maker, excited teacher. In identifying your way of being, look for the style that pervades most of your life. The pushy action drive will bring her style not just to work but also to relations with family and friends.
2. Identify the emergent ways of being that would make your way of being impossible. For instance, a world that stands for soft power will make the pushy action-driver impossible.
3. Accept the power of the emerging threat seriously.

Rather than facing existential death, the consensus view would have you identify your most important goals. There will be a number. Some will conflict with others. If we attempt to bring more order to our goals by deciding to pursue only our most important goal, we will feel a loss of wholeness. By focusing on the current threat to one's whole way of being, a manager stays whole and opens up a window of time in which to act: the time left before the threat prevails. That is the manager's time, and confronting her death is essential.

3.1.1 Jobs Confronting Existential Death

Steve Jobs, our consummate Heideggerian time manager, was like other authentic time managers in being accused of distorting reality. In his moments of vision, he repeatedly required huge adjustments to devices, marketing materials, and mindsets based on insights invisible to those who did not share his clear vision of existential death. Many see him as a lucky, charismatic salesman. But Jobs did the impossible too many times for it to be luck. The simplest, illustrative case of his Heideggerian time management occurred when Jobs saved Pixar. Jobs's way of being was a pushy, perfectionist synthesizer of technology and art. Jobs saw

Microsoft as the enemy. Microsoft stood for a practical, “just-get-it-done” way of being. After John Scully and the Apple board pushed Jobs out of Apple and after NeXT began to fail, Jobs felt that he had two strikes against him (Isaacson 2011: 246). The “just-get-it-done” way of being was dominating. By 1995 he would even claim that it had won in the world of personal computers (Isaacson 2011: 295).³² He focused on Pixar as his last chance and pushed the team to create and market the Computer Animated Production System that would enable both animators and mass market customers to create brilliant 3D graphics. He wanted mass market customers because he was fighting to make his way of being relevant, not marginal. Yet since only animators were interested, he focused his attention on selling to Disney and to one round of cost cutting after another.

3.2 Managing the Past

Here are the principles:

1. Identify the main thing you feel compelled to do but would rather suppress. Do you want to spend more time with a client who does not pay as well as other clients? Do you push certain teams harder than others for reasons you cannot understand? Are you mentoring the seemingly wrong people? Do you find captivating a certain meeting that others find boring?
2. Identify the past way of mattering that seeks expression in these otherwise incomprehensible compulsions.
3. Accommodate and nurture the past in the face of the existential threat.

In contrast to accommodating the past, the consensus view has managers engage with the past mostly as an accumulation of bad habits. Managers minimize such old inefficient ways in which things mattered by delegating more, holding larger meetings, setting tighter agendas, tending to email in otherwise unproductive moments, and so forth. A Heideggerian time

manager tries to find out what the past is trying to say to her in her holding on to something and not delegating, holding a small meeting instead of a large, and using a loose agenda. If the inefficient action does not speak in a way that answers her existential death, its reform comes easily.

3.2.1 Jobs Receiving the Past

In the midst of his cost cutting and his focus on selling 3D graphics computers, Jobs found that he could not say “no” to John Lasseter’s requests for money to make animated shorts. These requests came to a head in 1988 when Lasseter asked for \$300,000 for Tin Toy. These shorts appealed to Jobs’s own gentle emotions the way The Beatles did. He loved that gentle art as much as he loved the friendly but minimalist design of his computers. Jobs accommodated and nurtured this past longing by giving Lasseter the money (Isaacson 2011: 248).

3.3 Managing the Present

We manage the present when we maintain intense sensitivity to our existential deaths, allow the past to speak through us in the face of the threat, and repeat the past *with a difference* to answer the existential threat effectively. Typically we re-inflect our old way of being with the passions of the past by adjusting the adjectival aspect of our way of being, for instance, going from being a humble truth teller to a glamorizing one. Sometimes we make bigger adjustments such as with the entrepreneurs, Ray Davis and Jeff Koch. They both started out as highly analytical consultants with a cordially being smart way of being. One transformed himself into a customer-loving banker at Umpqua Bank and the other into a poetic brewer at Boston Beer. Whether large or small, that adjustment is the *essential act of the moment*. *We change ourselves* to change the world. Here are the principles:

1. In accommodating the threatening way of being and the past urge, identify what the urge seeks. Thus the urge to be listened to pushes the truth teller to blog although typical blogging would extinguish her way of being.
2. Weaken the response to retain one's core way of being by altering its adjectival aspect. Ratcheting blogging back a bit to glamorize truth telling—while not staging attitudes—saves the truth-telling way of being.
3. Continue adjusting the adjectival aspect of one's way of being according to the responses of others in order to make the adjusted way of being work in the situation.

In the consensus view, a manager manages her present by auditing her weekly schedule, identifying the activities that fulfill important goals and those that do not, and putting activities that fulfill important goals in favored time slots. She identifies the habits she must change and begins making the changes. Thus, the present is the call to better organized action. The Heideggerian manager lives in a drama where she normally adjusts her way of being to preserve her core way of being in the face of existential death.

3.3.1 Jobs's Present: Repetition with a Difference

With Pixar close to bankruptcy, Jobs visited the Disney animators who used the Pixar Computer Animation Production System. Jobs asked his client Jeffrey Katzenberg the typical supplier's question: "Is Disney happy with Pixar?" When Katzenberg answered "yes," Jobs came back with a pushy question he normally used to introduce ridicule: "Do you think we at Pixar are happy with Disney?" Katzenberg hesitated. "No, we're not," Jobs went on to say. Then, instead of the expected insult, Jobs courageously displayed his new care for Lasseter's art in a tempered way: "We want to do a film with you." When Katzenberg did not light up, Jobs adjusted again: "That would make us happy" (Isaacson 2011: 284). He got the adjustment precisely right.

Katzenberg agreed. It changed Pixar from an animation *systems* business to an animation *studio*. It changed Jobs into a *gentle*, perfectionistic synthesizer. As the relationship developed, Jobs remained in the same moment of vision. Under Katzenberg's tutelage, the Pixar team made the characters in Toy Story too edgy, and Katzenberg stopped production (Isaacson 2011: 287). The old pushy Steve Jobs would have exploded. Instead, he spent his own money to give his team time to revise and resubmit the work to Katzenberg (Isaacson 2011: 287-288). He took care of the film and Katzenberg. Thus, Jobs brought art and technology together with a new gentle way of being a synthesizer that befitted Toy Story (Isaacson 2011: 290-291).

4. *Response to Pluritemporality: A Single Primordial Time*

What would Heidegger say about the pluritemporalists' six seemingly non-reducible forms of temporality: *kairotic* time, ordinary clock time, fateful time, cyclical time, sacred time, and profane time? These temporal structurings do, indeed, resist reduction to a single, genuinely human form of temporality.

Still, Heidegger has the resources to derive these structurings from a form of primordial temporality. To see how requires going against one widely-shared interpretation of Heidegger. For our kind of self-interpreting beings, the future dimension has priority over the other two. The past and the present take on their importance only in the light of our existential deaths. Most interpreters understand Heidegger to claim the same about the future for two other kinds of self-interpreting beings he writes about—language and cultures—and probably for any other self-interpreting beings: tribes, companies, scientific disciplines, and so forth. We note that Heidegger does not call these other self-interpreting beings mortals and their mineness is attenuated.³³ We believe it better fits the nature of modern companies and ancient tribes to understand their self-interpreting privileging respectively the present and past. Most companies

act as though the needs they serve and the competitors they face will go on forever with only incremental change. Companies, after all, do not inevitably perish. The present rules. Human beings tend to take over the being of their companies, and strong leaders struggle to get people in their companies to face an existential death. Likewise, ancient tribes that worshipped ancestors and lived in their presence give the past priority over the present and future. Such tribe members experience the welling up of the past as spirits or ancestors reaching out.

By looking at these three self-interpreting beings, human beings, tribes, and companies, each giving priority to the future, past, or present, we *sketch* out in the table below the primordial origin for the six kinds of time that seem independent from each other. The first column lists the kinds of self-interpreting being. The second column describes the experience of primordial temporality according to whether the future, past, or present has priority. The third column identifies the kind of temporal structuring that appears when the self-interpreting being is true to its privileged primordial temporality. The fourth column shows the kind of time that appears when individuals, members of the company, or tribe are not true to the privileged primordial dimension.

Type of Self-Interpreting Being	Primordial Dimensions; Dimension with Priority First	Time when True to the Privileged, Primordial Dimension	Time when not True to the Privileged, Primordial Dimension
Human Being	<i>Existential death is coming towards. The past wells up as emotion. The present repeats the past with an adjustment to answer the existential death.</i>	<i>Kairotic time: one feels moments of receiving a gift, crystallization, inspiration, or luck that will redefine one's way of being.</i>	<i>Ordinary, clock time: one experiences moments repeating themselves without qualitative difference.</i>
Ancient Tribe	<i>The past wells up as spirits, ancestors, or feelings connected to a golden age. The present repeats the past with as little change as possible. The future coming toward one is the feared loss of connection to the past.</i>	<i>Sacred time: one feels the presence of ancestors or spirits in celebrating daily, mostly unchanging rituals that make the present and past one duration.</i>	<i>Profane time: one loses hold of the presence of the past and experiences pure duration of falling away from the golden age. Secular version: one experiences duration as being in a flow as with Bergson.</i>
Company	<i>In repeating the past with a difference, the present brings out the purpose of the past. The past wells up as a reminder and inspiration. The future comes towards as competitive challenges.</i>	<i>Fateful time: one lives in a moment of ripening toward the coming completion of the founder's inspiring beginning.</i>	<i>Cyclical time: one ignores one's own ripening and experiences instead the ripening as happening in events, and therefore experiences repeating cycles: sales cycles, reporting cycles, life-work cycles, and so forth.</i>

Table 1

If this sketch is right, then the question raised by pluritemporalism is not, which temporal structure is appropriate but rather, when it is appropriate to let a company's or a tribe's way of

being take over one's own.

5. Conclusion

We started with the grim news. Sleeping with our smartphones, we have no time to do the essential thing. Equally bad, when we give up our *kierotic* temporal structuring for others, we let essential actions slip. Heidegger admonishes us to embrace our temporality as beings who face existential death, allow the past to speak through us, and repeatedly adjust our ways of being accordingly. We frequently feel those adjustments as inspirations. When we act on them, everything provisional falls away. We do what is essential in our time. Such time management suits managers, like Steve Jobs, who change reality by remaining true to time.

Notes

¹ Our thanks to Bert Dreyfus, Sean Kelly, Bill Blattner, Mark Wrathall, Irene McMullin, and Steffen Böhm for their comments and support as we wrote this paper.

² Hernes and Schultz (2015) also recognize that organizations have fateful time.

³ Perlow (2012) makes the strongest case for using the team to improve time management.

Jocelyn K. Gleib (ed.) (2013) brings together essays which take up temporal rhythms and shutting down background noise. The classic on time management is Ferner (1995).

⁴ Clayton Christensen (2010) admits it might take two semesters to figure out your most important life goals.

⁵ “Pluritemporalism” was coined by Helga Nowotny (1992: 424) and popularized by Wanda J. Orlikowski and JoAnne Yates (2002: 687). In introducing the special issue on time of the *Academy of Management Review* a year earlier, Paul S. Goodman, Barbara S. Lawrence, Deborah H. Ancona, and Michael L. Tushman (2001: 508) reported that all the authors accepted multiple structurings of time.

⁶ The Bakken (2013) and Dodd (2013) articles draw on Heidegger. Lorino (2013) draws on practice-turn, pragmatists Dewey and Pierce. Heidegger is not a genuine pluritemporalist since he believes in a single primordial time which is the source of other temporal structurings.

⁷ For an overview of Deleuze with a comparison with Bergson, see Hoy (2012, 116-135).

⁸ A way of being is the same as a stand on being.

⁹ Bill Blattner (1999: 165-184), the premier interpreter of Heidegger on temporality, argues that Heidegger failed to account for the iterative succession of nows and that left his whole account implausible. While Blattner gives a highly pragmatic description of primordial temporality based on the way human beings cope with *things neither authentically nor inauthentically*, we provide an account of primordial temporality based on the way human beings *authentically* cope with *themselves*. Ours is an existential account. We claim authentic temporality is authentic because it *sharply* manifests the structures of primordial temporality. Thus, one's existential death will be more sharply defined in authentic temporality than primordial but its role is the same. While drawing on the standard sections of *Being and Time* and *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, we also emphasize the history chapter of *Being and Time* to understand the primordial present. There Heidegger explicitly makes repetition (iteration) an element of the authentic present. We draw as well on moments in Heidegger's later thinking that illuminate his thinking in *Being and Time*. Irene McMullin (2013: 108, 126-127, 132, 159) follows Blattner generally but tries to derive iterative succession from *expressed* primordial temporality, our recognition of others' nows and clocks. Though her goal is like ours, we cannot find in her account the right kind of iteration of nows. For more on those who seek to distinguish profoundly primordial temporality from authentic, see McMullin (2013: 111-115).

¹⁰ Heidegger and Wittgenstein led the practice turn. Heidegger made the turn with his account of human beings as coping beings, not primarily thinking beings. According to Heidegger, we are led in our actions mostly by our skills. (Consider walking down a street, driving a car, or carrying on a conversation. We do not spend time figuring out how to walk around people, how much to accelerate, which words to use in the next sentence. We do those things—Heidegger would say most things—skillfully.) And our skills are not embedded rules. They are much too flexible. Getting philosophers and scholars across many disciplines to see us as practical, coping beings—not primarily thinking beings—is Heidegger and Wittgenstein’s earthshaking achievement. Many organizational studies researchers have made this turn.

¹¹ Ted Schatzki (2010: 26-27, 36-37, 41) was among the first to explain that the three dimensions of temporality were more fundamental for Heidegger than the succession of nows. Schatzki accepts Blattner’s argument that Heidegger’s account of succession deriving from primordial time fails. Dodd, Anderson, and Jack (2013) were the first to draw on Heidegger’s understanding of primordial time to understand managers. However, they relied on Blattner.

¹² Heidegger thinks that before and after come from us and so therefore does the now as we conceive it. Of course, the physical universe has change, which can be divided into points where different things happen. Hence, there may be natural correlatives to our before, after, and now, but they are not obvious since our current laws of physical science work if time moves in either direction.

¹³ Heidegger writes mostly about the time that is the basic structure of human sensemaking: *Zeitlichkeit*. Its essence is that it is outside of itself in each of its three dimensions, and each dimension has a distinctive movement out of itself: the future has coming toward; the present has repetition with a difference; and the past has coming back to. That gives us the movement of

time. Heidegger also claims that the future, present, and past each move toward its own horizon. The horizon gives us the characteristic nature of the beings disclosed primarily in each dimension. He names the horizon of the present *praesens* and says that its primary characteristic is presence or absence; we encounter *things* as present or absent. By inference, “corresponding remarks apply” (Heidegger 1975: 306) we can suppose that he would name the horizon of the past *praeteritans* and of the future *futurans* (the Latin names). We suppose that the primary characteristics of *futurans* would be being true to oneself or not, and we would encounter people on this horizon. We suppose the primary characteristics of *praeteritans* would be necessary (or sacred) or possible (or profane), and institutions would appear there. He calls these three horizons *Temporalität*. We confine ourselves here to considerations of *Zeitlichkeit*. John Haugeland (2013: 233-237) supplies a pragmatic account of *Temporalität* very similar to our existential one. We differ with Haugeland on *praeteritans*, where he says contexts (instead of our institutions) appear in the dimension of acceptance or non-acceptance instead of necessary or possible.

¹⁴ Of course, others contest Heidegger’s description of our finitude. Garud, Gehman, and Kumaraswamy (2011: 738, 741, 757, 760-761) claim that 3M agents involved in innovation can simultaneously have multiple agentic orientations, even ones with such different temporalities as *kairos* and *chronos* (ordinary clock time). We note that, while their analysis included narratives, none of the narratives involved the agents adjusting themselves. We believe that *kairos* involves adjustment to one’s way of being and would undermine multiple agentic orientations.

¹⁵ Dasein has finitude, receptivity, and repeated adjustment existentially, in its coping, not as categories.

¹⁶ Jonathan Lear (2006) describes this kind of confusion by examining the case of Plenty Coups, the chief of the Crow who led his tribe on to the reservation where it had to give up its whole warrior way of being. Plenty Coups felt as though things stopped happening and lost access to any inner life. He did things, but felt no resonant interconnectedness. Carol J. White (2005: 98-99) also argues that the authentic relationship to the future grows out of directedness towards death as the collapse of a world.

¹⁷ As a technical matter, Heidegger does not call the *actuality* of the collapse of a whole way of being death. He calls the *possibility* death. Today's popular philosophical accounts of death and immortality go astray by ignoring existential death (Scheffler 2013; Williams 1973: 82-100). Because they miss existential death, they think we must ultimately become bored with life.

¹⁸ In his later thinking, Heidegger gives an account of finitude that fits more easily with the directedness we normally ascribe to time. In What Is Called Thinking?, he writes about how we are drawn after that which (being) withdraws and see ourselves as drawing toward:

Once we are drawn into the withdrawal, we are drawing toward what draws, attracts us by its withdrawal. And once we, being so attracted, are drawing toward what draws us, our essential nature already bears the stamp of “drawing toward.” (1968: 9)

¹⁹ We describe the scholar's thoughts from her view of truth following the *parrhesiastic* tradition brought most to life by the cynics (Foucault 2011: 193). In contrast, bloggers say: “I'm me and coming from where I'm coming from. . . . That's the point of truth.” Hence their truth is primarily staging themselves and their attitudes. See Schaefer and Smith (2013: 20-24).

²⁰ Journalists (Kosner 2014) share this concern about existential death from blogging.

²¹ Although pragmatic, Haugeland (2013: 186, 239) describes the way individuals deal with finitude as we do: as *holding oneself free for* or *accepting* the risk of the “nonviability” of one’s understanding of being. We are more existential in saying that one *confronts* the way of being that would make one’s own nonviable.

²² Heidegger (1962: 395) uses the term “mounting” (“*aufsteigen*”) instead of “welling up.”

²³ In the late 1930s and 1940s, (1999: 286), Heidegger deepened his account of the past. It is not so much a matter of us drawing back to an older way of being as a former way of being that “reaches out” through us: He says, “The last is that which not only needs the longest fore-runnership but also itself *is*: not the ceasing, but the deepest beginning, which reaches out the furthest and catches up with itself with the greatest difficulty.” Later in the 1950s, Heidegger (1977: 22) writes: “All coming to presence, not only modern technology, keeps itself everywhere concealed to the last. Nevertheless, it remains . . . that which precedes all.” The past lives in us and cries out for expression through us. We notice this when we find ourselves gripped by some way of doing things that we cannot fully make sense of and then suddenly the point comes clear. “I have no idea why I invited my whacky brother to the party, but it felt great. I got it. I really care about family.”

²⁴ Since Augustine, philosophers have noted this peculiarity about succession. The time of understanding seems to flow from future to past. The time of physical processes flows from past to future. See Sherover (2003: 13).

²⁵ Schatzki (2005: 203-204) argues similarly that the movement of the primordial dimensions does not require a succession of nows. Heidegger (1962: 478-479) thinks that his ability to account for the directedness of primordial time explains the directedness of the succession of nows, which otherwise cannot be explained.

²⁶ Disarmingly, Blattner acknowledges that such an identification of the primordial with the pragmatic, world time is counterintuitive but claims he has good textual justification in Heidegger (Heidegger 1975: 266, 293). John Haugeland (2013: 232) also accepts this view.

²⁷ White (2005: 114-120) notes the importance of repetition and making a rejoinder to the repetition as critical elements of primordial temporality. Unfortunately, she assigns repetition to the past dimension and thinks that a moment of vision amounts to the moment when a new epoch in the history of being begins such as when Homer brought the ancient Greek way of being into focus. We believe a moment of vision more commonly centers on the revision of a way of being like humble truth telling.

²⁸ Blattner (1999: 170) believes he can ignore the insights of the history chapter because he believes historicity results when primordial temporality is placed in ordinary time. McMullin (2013: 254, note 15) ignores the history chapter because it gives no modally undifferentiated (neither authentic nor inauthentic) source of history.

²⁹ In a private communication after his public response to this paper at Wake Forest University, Bill Blattner said that much of the argument depends on the death approaching having no precise now and the past welling up recalling a wholly indefinite before. But he wondered if the repetition in the moment of vision smuggles in succession. I want to say that when the Dasein takes ownership of the past by making a reciprocal rejoinder, then there is a repetition of some indeterminate past, and with that the person experiencing time authentically has the resources to make the now of succession intelligible. That is, in fact, what happens in the reckoning that takes place in the breakdown.

³⁰ Kierkegaard inspired Heidegger's view of the primordial present. Kierkegaard (1980: 149) writes of earnestness, which plays a role similar to authenticity, and originality, which plays the

role of adjustment, “When the originality in earnestness is acquired and preserved, then there is succession and repetition, but as soon as originality is lacking in repetition, there is habit. The earnest person is earnest precisely through the originality with which he returns in repetition,” his repeating with a difference.

³¹ White (2005: 135-137) follows Heidegger in the omission.

³² Disney released *Toy Story* in 1995.

³³ John Haugeland (2013: 182) is exemplary, though he acknowledges that Heidegger only says that language and cultures exist as Dasein does.

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