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Time, Tense, and Ontology: Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Tense, the Phenomenology of Temporality, and the Ontology of Time

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Time, Tense, and Ontology:
Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Tense, the Phenomenology of Temporality, and the Ontology
of Time

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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DEDICATION
For Quinn & Cora

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ABSTRACT

What does it mean to say that something is “temporal” or that something “exists” in time? What is time? And how should we interpret the “ontology” of time? One important strand in twentieth century thought and the philosophy of time has given these fundamental questions a neat and tidy set of influential answers—according to this view, time itself is understood to be a kind of series, and the basic ontology of time is taken to consist of events, together with either the tenses, which get interpreted as special sorts of second order properties known as “A properties” (i.e. the properties of being either Past, Present, or Future), or with special sorts of second order relations, known as “B relations” (i.e. the relations of “earlier than”, “later than”, or “simultaneous with”) which are typically referred to as tenseless .

According to this particular view, taken together, A properties and B relations are understood to exhaust the ontology of time. This is an interpretation that has been typically found throughout much of the philosophical literature on the metaphysics of time throughout the twentieth century despite the fact that both of these prospective temporal ontologies had already been shown early on to face a major problem—McTaggart's paradox (1908). According to the paradox, regardless of whichever ready-made ontology we ultimately opt for, we still are led to the same ineluctable conclusion—that time is unreal. For the better half of the twentieth century, philosophers of time, science, and language have struggled with this paradox in different ways, in various attempts to wrest their own preferred categories of temporal being from its grasp, in order to redeploy them in the course of developing a number of competing metaphysical

accounts of time, which get characterized technically, as either “A” or “B” theories of time, depending primarily on whether their respective ontology remains either tensed or tenseless. What has thus emerged over the course of the past century, has been a growing preference among philosophers for interpreting temporal ontology along strictly A theoretical or B Theoretical lines, which has rendered this particular strand of thought a highly influential one with respect to a large portion of our contemporary understanding of temporal ontology, which remains one that ultimately boils down to a choice between A properties or B relations, as evidenced by Broad (1923), Smart (1963), Prior (1970), Mellor (1985), Oaklander and Smith (1994), Inwagen and Zimmerman (1998), Smith and Jokic (2003), Sider (2011), Tallant (2013), etc. Further evidence of this view can also be located not just within both A and B theories of time—which include both tensed and tenseless theories—but also within theories of presentism and eternalism, as well as within recent relationalist and substantivalist accounts of time.

In the dissertation, it is argued that a common background assumption within these various accounts of time, perhaps one of the most basic and most wide-spread, turns out to be fallacious. More precisely, an extended argument is developed against the common and basic assumption found within these views that it is appropriate to depict time as consisting of either an A series or a B series in the first place. This metaphysical assumption is referred to as the “SER thesis”. The dissertation aims to show that any such serialized interpretation of time fails to be sufficiently distinguishable from what are merely formalized spatial representations or spatializations of time, and that when viewed from the standpoint of developing a viable metaphysics of time, any such formalized spatializations ultimately appear to result in something like a contradiction. Some objections are then raised to this main line of argument, where it is

further shown, that the most intuitive strategies for replying to it are unsuccessful in the end, and serve only to supply us with various ways of masking the real problem, since each of these strategies seem themselves to commit some form of the *ignoratio elenchi* or red herring fallacies.

In the remaining portions of the book, a revisionary approach to the question of temporal ontology that seems capable of avoiding some of these problems is briefly sketched out. This approach employs the resources of a hermeneutic phenomenology of temporality to try and help us get outside of the standard view that is supplied by the A-B tradition and provide us with an alternative starting point. This approach draws heavily from the work of McTaggart's early twentieth century contemporaries Henri Bergson (1889) and Martin Heidegger (1927).

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

“Basic concepts determine the way in which we get an understanding beforehand of the area of subject-matter underlying all the objects a science takes as its theme, and all positive investigation is guided by this understanding.” – Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (1927) H10.

This work has grown largely out of an attempt to advance three major research projects which have captivated my attention for some time, all of which happen to share the metaphysics of time as their common theme. The first of these, has been the search for a strong critique of the hundred year old, yet still widely influential, A-B tradition¹ that can be found within the twentieth century philosophy of time, which treats time as little more than a series of discretely ordered events, and which, from my first encounter with it has always struck me, however indefinitely, as in some way inadequate as a viable metaphysics and a wrong-headed approach to the question of time. The second undertaking, has involved a concern with trying to more demonstrate what I perceive to be the continued relevance of Henri Bergson's insightful admonitions against the common tendency among philosophers, scientists, and common folks alike to unwittingly “spatialize” time—that is, to either identify it with or reduce it to a species of space—whenever they undertake attempts to explicitly conceptualize, theorize, and talk about it intelligibly.²

¹ This is how it will be referred to here throughout what is to follow, a tradition which arose out of a particular problematic that was first identified by J.M.E. McTaggart, whose members are taken here to include A Theorists (e.g. presentists, maximalists, and growing blockers; like C.D. Broad, Arthur Prior, William Lane Craig, Quentin Smith, and Dean Zimmerman, etc.) and B Theorists (e.g. eternalists and their ilk; such as J. J.C. Smart, Hugh Mellor, Robin LePoidevin, and Nathan Oaklander, etc.).

² Among A theorist and B theorist philosophers of time who can be seen maintain the reasonable assumption that “time is not to be thought of as identical with or reducible to space”, most fail to be fully explicit on this point,

Finally, the last of these projects, which has held my interest for around the past decade or so and is perhaps the most ambitious of the three, has been to further develop Martin Heidegger's unfinished project in Part Two of his groundbreaking work *Being and Time*, namely, towards developing the proposed phenomenological destruction [Destruction] of the history of ontology. A history of ontology, which according to Heidegger, has molded and shaped our current understanding of being, and which arises out of (and is made possible by) a primordial understanding of Temporality [Temporalität]. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger comes to characterize the philosopher's task as one of the "Destruction" of traditional ontological concepts, writing:

“When tradition becomes master, it does so in such a way that what it 'transmits' is made so inaccessible, proximally and for the most part, that it rather becomes concealed. Tradition takes what has come down to us and delivers it over to self-evidence; it blocks our access to those primordial 'sources' from which the categories and concepts handed down to us have been in part quite genuinely drawn...If the question of Being is to have its own history made transparent, then this hardened tradition must be loosened up, and the concealments which it has brought about must be dissolved. We understand this task as one in which by *taking the question of being as our clue* [sic], we are to *destroy* [sic] the traditional content of ancient ontology until we arrive at those primordial experiences in which we achieved our first ways of determining the nature of Being—the ways which have guided us ever since.” *Being and Time*, (1927) H21.

In what follows, it will be argued, among other things, that a major reason³ why this second portion of Heidegger's magnum opus went unfinished, and eventually came to be almost entirely abandoned by him in the end, was due in large part to his failure to sufficiently integrate the previous insights of the early twentieth century French philosopher Henri Bergson regarding spatialized formalizations time (penetrating insights with which Heidegger himself happened to be very well acquainted), into his own original account of the nature of temporality. This is something which Heidegger himself seems, over the course of his philosophical career, to have

and simply assume it as a given right from the get to. There are however, others who have remained thorough enough to provide some remark to the effect that time and space are to be thought of as somehow separate, for example, Nathan Oaklander, Hugh Mellor, and Quentin Smith, to name a few.

³ And perhaps the major reason.

eventually begun to realize, and seems to have become increasingly aware of. Later in life, in the Winter of 1941, and a full decade after having written the extant portions of *Being and Time*, Heidegger's thought appears to undergo something of a rediscovery of its Bergsonian roots, when he states:

“The modern habit of thinking time together with 'space' (already prefigured in the beginning of metaphysics with Aristotle) leads us astray. For according to this way of thinking time is considered solely in terms of its extension, and this as a counting up of fleeting now-points. Thought in modern terms, time is a parameter, like space, a standard scale according to which something is measured and estimated. Space and time are essentially related to 'calculation'.” (Martin Heidegger, *Basic Concepts*, 103).

It is worth noting that this line of criticism has received surprisingly little attention in the philosophical literature by Heideggerian scholars. This may have had a lot to do with the fact that in his own writing, Heidegger had made repeated and explicit attempts to try and distance himself from Bergson in *Being and Time*, as well as elsewhere. Epigonism, however, makes a poor substitute for critical reflection, and this traditional tendency to neglect the possibility of turning the tables on Heidegger by placing his own account of time under the critical gaze of his predecessor Bergson, is something that would have only been further exacerbated by the rise of Sartrean existentialism on the continent following World War II, during which time the work of Bergson (justifiably or not) came to be grouped along with that of the old guard, and quickly began to fall out of favor amongst the latest generation of postwar French intellectuals (an historical occurrence, which by itself is immersed in irony, since Sartre, like Heidegger before him, was also intimately familiar with (and an early admirer of) Bergson's philosophical writings on the nature of time; and the numerous parallels that can be drawn between the major ideas of these thinkers, and those of their French predecessor abound. This can be seen by comparing the many common themes appearing throughout Bergson's *Time and Freewill*, with Heidegger's

Being and Time and Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*. More recently, this established practice of disregarding Bergson's original contributions to the development of a viable and working understanding of the nature of time, has continued to remain fashionable among even the latest generation of philosophers, and appears to have only be further strengthened by a growing trend in philosophy to focus more and more attention on corpuscentric topics, like those concerned with issues of “embodiment”, etc.

One of the central aims of this work is to suggest that among the “basic concepts” which form and underlie this important strand of twentieth century metaphysics referred to here as the “A-B tradition”, and which have guided a substantial amount of philosophical research on the subject since at least the early part of the twentieth century⁴, not only are some of these basic concepts incoherent and other ones groundless, but they are all of them intimately bound up with the tacit (yet problematic) assumption that time is either identifiable with or reducible to a species of geometrical⁵ space⁶.

⁴ Though incidentally, the roots of this tradition go back much further, and can be traced at least as far back as Aristotle, in his *Categories* and his *Physics IV*.

⁵ For simplicity's sake, “geometrical” can just be taken here to mean “one-dimensional”, which is the most commonly encountered way that spatialized time shows up in most contexts; e.g. as in the basic case of a “time-line”, etc. However, we have still chosen to include the term “geometrical” here because it is much broader, and the critique that follows is intended to extend to (and include) the possibility of much more complex “non-linear” hypostatizations of time as well. And that is simply because any such possible accounts would merely be the more exotic cousins of the more humdrum and more commonly encountered one-dimensional variety we are already so familiar with, and so would remain essentially, and at base, bona fide “spatializations” of time. At the risk of beginning to run too far afield here, it is also worth noting that in contemporary metaphysical theories such as “four-dimensionalism”, and in the physical scientific theories of Alfred Einstein's general and special theories of relativity, what shows up there in essence is, just your typical one-dimensional account of time that has simply been conceptually wedded to the other three classical dimensions of space. We add this here only as a minor bit of clarification at this point, since there are some philosophers, such as Dostal (2006) etc., who are wont to speak at times as if time itself were in some way “three-dimensional”; but just what those who speak this way can be taken to mean by this—since even in our non-classical physical and metaphysical theories, time is still treated as consisting of only one dimension—remains rather mysterious and obfuscated.

⁶ Something which—curiously (and expediently) enough—rarely, if ever, comes to be viewed in such contexts as in any way problematic in its own right. An observation which showcases the continued relevance of Bergson's insightful criticism of philosophers, scientists, as well as common folks, that frequently, all that they are really talking about or “have in mind” when they take themselves to be speaking or thinking about “time”, is actually “nothing but space” (Bergson, *Time and Free Will* (1889) xix, 91). An crucial insight which, unfortunately for the current state of our metaphysics, has somehow fallen away, and has gone almost entirely unheeded for more than

In keeping with some of the previous insights originally brought forth by Henri Bergson, who was writing around the same time that the A-B tradition began establishing itself as a prevalent influence in the philosophy of time, the arguments here endeavor to show that this particular view of temporal ontology is deeply problematic from both an epistemological and metaphysical standpoint.⁷ This typical way of understanding the ontology of time continues, however, to influence and inform much of our metaphysical research and investigation into the nature of time from the very outset. So that as a result, the range of possibilities left open to those trying to answer a fundamental metaphysical question, like “What is time?”, ends up being severely restricted from the very start, and finding itself confined to the same old sanctioned approaches that have been endorsed by the A and B theories of time, each of which carries with them their own perennial problems and paradoxes that arise from within the narrow frameworks in which they continually operate. What is contended here, is that whether designedly or not, contemporary approaches to the question of time that continue to operate within this typical and widely influential view⁸, repeatedly answer the question “What is time?” by means of an unwarranted (and for the most part unnoticed) identification or reduction of time with (or to), space.⁹

This persistent habit on the part of A-B tradition within contemporary metaphysics of conflating time with space, and the hypostatization of time which subsequently results (e.g. “Time consists of a linear sequence of events”, or “Time is just a series of nows”, etc.), far from affording us any genuine, comprehensive, or accurate understanding as to the metaphysical

a century now.

⁷ That is, it can be shown in some way to be both epistemologically unjustified and ontologically inadequate.

⁸ A view which, as will be shown here, includes traditional tensed accounts of time, in addition to tenseless ones.

⁹ Specifically, with (or to) some version of what McTaggart referred to as the spatial “C Series”, and which he himself identified as the basis for both of the more “temporal” (tenseless) B Series and (tensed) A Series. McTaggart, *The Nature of Existence*. Volume II. (1927) 213.

nature of time, reveal themselves simply to be the artifacts of an historically situated attempt to ontologize temporal phenomena in such a way that time itself becomes rendered more amenable to our “enlightened” theoretical attitudes of empirical observation and “rational” judgment—they are the inherited result of an historical attempt to construe time in a way that is the most conducive to the narrowly defined and technically oriented ends of operationalist thinking, and of the natural sciences in general. The outcome of all this, is that the basic metaphysical and ontological understanding of the nature of time that such A-B theories afford us with, is one which has been left grotesquely one-sided, dreadfully inadequate, and horribly distorted.

By calling into question this particular conception of time that has remained for the most part the standard view among metaphysical depictions of temporality for the better half of the twentieth century (and which continues to exert an strong influence especially over mainstream “analytic” interpretations of the subject matter¹⁰) by radically undermining its basic concepts and demonstrating its primary background assumptions to be fundamentally incoherent, the hope is to reorient contemporary philosophical attention away from what a close examination of the history of twentieth century metaphysics suggests has been an over-extended preoccupation with a degenerating research program. With the publication in 1908 of J.M.E. McTaggart's “The Unreality of Time”, this particular research program in metaphysics seems to have degenerated to full scale crisis levels, but for reasons which are to be brought to light, standard philosophical inquiry on the subject matter since then, has largely failed to properly countenance and fully appreciate the crisis;¹¹ but has instead remained contented with, and firmly indebted to, the

¹⁰ It is suggested here however, that this initial qualification might also be lifted, so as to also include many other academic interpretations of time that extend far beyond the confines of “analytic philosophy”, to include some of our most common sense notions of time involved in both our “chronometric” and “chronological” understanding of clocks, calendars, and similar instances of “time-reckoning”, etc.

¹¹ The continual failure of the A-B tradition to properly acknowledge itself as having reached a full-scale crisis, seems to have historically occurred because of it has consistently mistaken the mere validity of one of its most

standard A-B interpretation, and has continued to operate exclusively within it. Given a proper appreciation of the crisis facing the A-B tradition, it is averred here that in place of normal inquiry conducted along lines that have already been laid out in advance by the typical and received way of doing things¹², a more productive focus of philosophical attention at this juncture would instead, be one that proceeds “hermeneutically”, and which attempts to introduce and develop an alternative interpretation of the phenomenology and ontology of time that does not carry with it this growing demand that the same old (problematic) assumptions be in place before any “serious” work on metaphysical issues surrounding time can even begin. To clarify as to what is meant by the term “hermeneutically” here, is to say in a manner that is consistent with and characteristic of what Richard Rorty, in his *Philosophy and The Mirror of Nature* (1979), has dubbed “abnormal” discourse. There, Rorty points out:

[What] is necessary is the edifying invocation of the fact or possibility of abnormal discourses, undermining our reliance upon the knowledge we have gained through normal discourses. The objectionable self-confidence in question is simply the tendency of normal discourse to block the flow of conversation by presenting itself as offering the canonical vocabulary for discussion of a given topic—and, more particularly, the tendency of normal epistemologically centered philosophy to block the road by putting itself forward as the final commemorating vocabulary for all possible rational discourse. (PMN 386).

Given our concerns here and speaking in a similar “Rortyan” vein, it might then be said that to conflate and confound time with space, as has typically been done within a substantial portion of contemporary analytic metaphysics of time, results in an extremely narrow and impoverished understanding of how we actually relate to time, giving rise to a one-sided understanding that serves to cover up and disguise any of the other significant ways that time not only can, but most often does, show up for (and end up mattering to) us. One need take only cursory glance at the extant philosophical literature on the “phenomenology” of A-B time, for some clear evidence of

central arguments (viz., the tensed-tenseless dilemma) for its soundness.

¹² Cf. n1.

this at work.¹³

By proceeding hermeneutically in this way, it will then be possible to supply ourselves with not only a strong critique of the established A-B framework, but also with perhaps initiating a long overdue revision of the much older Aristotelian tradition, and its long favored answer to the fundamental metaphysical question “What is time?”. In the final portions of the dissertation, a positive account of one such revisionary approach to the question of time is sketched out, and one that can be seen to have already taken some significant steps beyond the standard A-B metaphysical tradition and its preoccupation with the usual sorts of puzzles involving “time”, which draws on the pioneering work of two of McTaggart's early twentieth century continental contemporaries, Bergson and Heidegger.

¹³ See, for example, *The New Theory of Time*. Nathan Oaklander and Quentin Smith. Yale UP (1994).

CHAPTER 2
A-B THEORIES OF TIME

§2.1

MCTAGGART'S PARADOX AND THE TENSED-TENSELESS DISTINCTION

The early twentieth century metaphysical philosopher J.M.E. McTaggart is perhaps best known for his work in the philosophy of time, and for introducing a paradox¹⁴ which he took to demonstrate the unreality of time. McTaggart's argument for the unreality of time has had an enormous influence on the fields of metaphysics and the philosophy of language, but its effects can also be seen to extend beyond these fields to several other areas of contemporary philosophical research.¹⁵ Less well known, however, is that McTaggart's most widely cited version of the argument, is only one of three versions that he had developed over the course of his philosophical career. It is McTaggart's second version of this argument, which appeared in 1908 in the journal *Mind*, that has become the most widely read of the three, and this is the version that we will primarily be concerned with here. McTaggart's first attempt at providing an argument that establishes the unreality of time can be found in his 1896 book *Studies in Hegelian Dialectic*. His third and final attempt, which very closely resembles his second one, appeared in volume II of his *The Nature of Existence*, and was posthumously published by C.D. Broad in 1927. This often overlooked fact that McTaggart continued work on and rework his

¹⁴ Which will be shown to be a prominent *anomaly* (interpreted in the Kuhnian sense of 'a puzzle which has resisted solution') that happens to reside at the *very heart* of the traditional philosophical understanding of time in the West, and to have precipitated a heretofore unrecognized *crisis* within traditional metaphysical treatments of time. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Thomas Kuhn (1962) 64.

¹⁵ L. Nathan Oaklander and Professor Quentin Smith, *The New Theory of Time* (Yale University Press, 1994), 1–13.

argument for the unreality of time over the course of his life is suggestive of the importance that its conclusion held for the rest of the body of his philosophical work; a point which would not have been lost to him, being the systematic philosopher that he was.

McTaggart's overall argument for the unreality of time can be seen to consist of two major parts. The first of these is the claim that the reality of time requires the existence of something he called the "A Series". McTaggart argues that only the A Series can support anything like genuine "change".¹⁶ McTaggart defines the A Series as "...the series of positions [in time] running from the far past through the near past to the present, and then from the present to the near future and the far future ...".¹⁷ This is a conception of time that he contrasts with what he refers to as the "B Series": "the series of positions which runs from earlier to later."¹⁸ McTaggart then argues that the only way for an event to undergo a genuine change is by means of possessing the A properties of the "Past", "Present", or "Future", which are taken to be mutually exclusive determinations.¹⁹ Commenting on this point he writes,

Now what characteristics of an event are there which can change and yet leave the event the same event? (I use the characteristic [sic] as a general term to include both the qualities which the event possesses, and the relations of which it is a term—or rather the fact that the event is a term of these relations.) It seems to me that there is only one class of such characteristics—namely, the determination of the event in question by the terms of the A series.²⁰

And in coming to this conclusion he further adds,

We seem to be forced to the conclusion that all change is only a change of the characteristics imparted to events by their presence in the A series, whether those characteristics are qualities or relations.²¹

¹⁶ McTaggart, "The Unreality of Time", 459.

¹⁷ Ibid., 458.

¹⁸ Ibid., 458.

¹⁹ It is precisely this characteristic, the mutual exclusivity of A properties, that McTaggart seizes upon to demonstrate the contradictory nature of the A Series in the second part of his overall argument for the unreality of time. Ibid., 468.

²⁰ Ibid., 460.

²¹ Ibid., 460.

The second part of McTaggart's overall argument for the unreality of time was to claim that the A Series leads to a contradiction²², which together with major claim of part one, seems to imply that time must therefore be unreal.²³ It is also perhaps fairly clear why McTaggart came to view the B Series, a Series which lacks such A properties as Past, Present, and Future, as falling short with regard to its suitability as a properly temporal Series. This is because within a B Series there would be no “change”, or as McTaggart himself puts it “Without the A series then, there would be no change, and consequently the B series by itself is not sufficient for time, since time involves change.”²⁴

The bifurcated nature of McTaggart's overall argument for the unreality of time into these two main parts, which first demonstrates the B Series to be problematic (on account of the fact that it cannot account for genuine change), and then the A Series to be equally problematic (since the very things which allows for it to be a real contender as an accurate description of the metaphysics of time, i.e. its A properties, also lead it to a contradiction), has set the stage for myriad subsequent A theoretical and B theoretical responses to this general way of framing the metaphysics and ontology of time. Over the course of the twentieth century, and well into the early portions of the twenty-first century, among the perennial issues that continue to crop up

²² Or is, at best, to a claim that turns out to be viciously circular. McTaggart, “The Unreality of Time” (1908) *The Monist*. 468. A problem which stems from the fact that the A properties of Past, Present and Future are incompatible, yet every event must still have them all.

²³ McTaggart, “The Unreality of Time,” 458. McTaggart's basic depiction of time as just a “series of moments” is suggestive of other interesting issues found within the epistemology and metaphysics of time, such as whether there can ever be such a thing as time without change, see for example, Shoemaker, Sydney. “Time Without Change”. *The Journal of Philosophy*. Vol. 66, no.12 (Jun. 19, 1969), pp. 363-381; and of whether time should be thought of as something that can exist independently of its contents (events), as in the case of temporal absolutism or substantivalism (e.g. in Duns Scotus, Isaac Newton, etc.), or whether it is something that is dependent upon those contents for its own existence, as in the case of temporal relationalism (e.g. in Aristotle, Gottfried Leibniz, etc.). McTaggart himself can be seen to weigh in on some of these issues. For example, with respect to the first of these issues, he writes “A universe in which nothing changed (including the thoughts of the conscious beings in it) would be a timeless universe.” *Ibid.*, 459.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 461.

among the countless contemporary metaphysical debates involving time, is the basic issue of whether time itself is either tensed or tenseless, a seemingly crucial metaphysical issue which McTaggart had clearly elucidated with the identification and distinction between the A Series and the B Series. The fundamental question of whether time is either tensed or tenseless has served as the basic entry point for attempts to resolve, not just the metaphysical puzzles that are characteristic of avowedly A or B theoretical treatments of time, but also, for others that happen to arise within the popular metaphysical doctrines of presentism and eternalism, endurantism and perdurantism (i.e. persistence and identity), and determinism and freewill, etc.²⁵ As a result, much of what has taken place within contemporary metaphysical debates over the course of the twentieth century can be seen to have been framed and guided from the outset by what might be referred to as the “tensed-tenseless dilemma”, which typically goes something like this: “If the metaphysics of time is A theoretical in nature, then the ontology of time is tensed, but if the metaphysics of time turns out to be B theoretical, then the ontology of time is tenseless. Time is either A theoretical or B theoretical (i.e. it consists of either something like the A or something like the B Series).²⁶ Therefore, the ontology of time is either tensed or tenseless.”

This fundamental dilemma has served as a sort of de facto paradigm²⁷ for much of what constitutes our typical way of conducting metaphysical research into the nature of time. And its

²⁵ Incidentally, it is also worth noting, that many, if not most, of the well-respected contemporary introductions to the field of metaphysics, tend to begin with an initial discussion of “time”, before anything else. See, for example, Peter Van Inwagen and Dean Zimmerman's *Metaphysics: The Big Questions* (2004).

²⁶ This is what will be referred to here as “the SER thesis”, a metaphysical thesis that has been assumed by McTaggart and the rest of the A-B tradition, whereby “time” gets understood to be a kind of serialized linear order.

²⁷ The use of the term “paradigm” here, happens to function in both the broad and narrow senses of the term. Broad in the sense of understanding a ‘metaphysical paradigm’ to be a package of ideas and methods, which when combined, make up both a view of the world and a way of doing metaphysics (as in the case of the T v L dilemma taken as a whole); and narrow, in the sense of understanding the tensed-tenseless distinction to constitute a specific achievement, exemplar, or model in the eyes of the tradition, and one which has served as a source of inspiration to others, and continues to suggest a way to investigate time, ontology, and the world. *Theory and Reality*. Godfrey-Smith (2003). 77.

conclusion, the tensed-tenseless distinction, has served for over the past hundred years as a basic ontological thesis that has been held to provide some deep insight into the essential nature of time and reality, and has provided the basis (and entry way) for a significant portion of twentieth century metaphysical investigations into the nature (and puzzles) of time. To this day, the distinction still remains a basic concept and perhaps one of the most commonly employed starting points among our contemporary metaphysical accounts of time,²⁸ and is largely unrivaled as the paradigmatic way of interpreting and fleshing out the ontology of time.²⁹

§2.2

TWENTIETH CENTURY A-B FORMALIZATIONS OF TIME AS MODELED ON A LINEAR CONCEPTION OF SPACE

The basic idea that time is not identifiable with (or reducible to) space, and that time is not to be thought of as a kind of space, but rather, as something altogether different in kind, is a fairly uncontentious claim historically speaking (despite still being perhaps a little vague), and is something that has been more or less assumed throughout much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries within the philosophy of time.³⁰ The contradictory of this common idea would then be attributable to any view which could be shown to have interpreted time as if it were ultimately (deep down and at base) just some variant of space. That is, to put the matter more generally, the

²⁸ As evidenced by numerous articles appearing in *Time, Tense, and Reference* (2003) Smith and Jokic eds.; *Metaphysics: The Big Questions* (2004) Van Inwagen and Zimmerman. Eds.; *The New Theory of Time* (1994) Oaklander and Smith eds.; *The Philosophy of Time* (1993) LePoidevin and MacBeath, eds., as well as elsewhere.

²⁹ For overwhelming evidence of this, see Nathan Oaklander's massive multi-volume anthology, which includes many of the best and most influential writings (both historically and contemporarily, speaking) to have had a lasting influence on the field of metaphysics with particular respect to our understanding of time. *The Philosophy of Time*. Volumes I-IV. Nathan Oaklander ed. Routledge, (2008).

³⁰ For evidence of this assumption at work within the tradition (on both sides of the A-B debate), see: Henri Bergson. *Time and Free Will* (1889); J.M.E. McTaggart. *The Nature of Existence*, Vol. II. (1927); Hugh Mellor. *Real Time* (1981); Robin LePoidevin and Murray MacBeath. *The Philosophy of Time* (1993); Graham Priest. *Logic: A Very Short Introduction* (2000); Quentin Smith & Aleksandar Jokic, *Time, Tense, and Reference* (2003); Nathan Oaklander. *The Ontology of Time* (2004); Jonathan Tallant. *Metaphysics: An Introduction* (2013).

basic claim underpinning the call for metaphysical treatments of time to remain “non-spatialized” is the view that it is in some way fallacious to answer the question “What is time?” with any sort of answer that would entail, either explicitly or implicitly, that “time is like space”; a view which entails the specific claim that it is somehow erroneous to depict time as a species of space. One prominent reason for asserting the need for non-spatialized conceptions of time would be the claim, made by Henri Bergson³¹ and others, that no account of “time” which utilizes what is essentially just a spatial vocabulary or ontology is properly equipped to provide us with an exhaustive (let alone accurate) account of the metaphysics of time.

It should also be pointed out here, that in the hands of many of those who have worked throughout the twentieth century within the A-B metaphysical tradition, space itself is taken, for the most part, to be relatively unproblematic and fairly well understood; so that the real “mystery” is taken to reside with time and temporality—though this is merely something that gets assumed from the outset without much of anything in the way of actual argumentation to further back it up. But given that one of the main objectives here in the dissertation is to undermine confidence in the A-B tradition, and in order to keep our target clearly in focus, not much will be discussed here about “space” beyond what the practitioners of this particular tradition have already assumed. However, this should not be taken as an endorsement of the typical view that time is the only (or even the primary) thing amongst the two, that is “problematic” or “mysterious”, or worthy of sustained metaphysical investigation.

Given this historical tendency within the metaphysical tradition of seeking to preserve the basic idea that time is to be kept in some sense separate from—and not to be thought of as either

³¹ Henri Bergson. *Essai sur les Données Immédiates de la Conscience* (1889). *Time and Free Will*. Trans. F.L. Pogson. (1913)

identifiable with (or reducible to)—space; an important question then arises, as to whether our traditional A theoretical and B theoretical formalizations of time do precisely what they claim they are not doing, by tacitly committing themselves to the spatialization of time. This would be a problem, since this would then appear to render all of these A theoretical and B theoretical accounts of “time” contradictory, and to culminate in a *reductio ad absurdum*, by attempting to maintain simultaneously “Both that time is, and is not, identifiable with (or reducible to) space; that is, that time both is, and is not, a kind of space.” In what follows, reasons and evidence are put forth that suggest that this is indeed the case.

In order to more clearly see this, we must introduce one last Series that has been frequently overlooked by commentators and those working in the A-B tradition, which McTaggart refers to it as the “C Series”.³² The C Series had first appeared in McTaggart’s seminal article from 1908, and he ended up discussing it at greater length and in much more detail in the second volume of *The Nature of Existence*. What is needed, according to McTaggart, in order for a Series to be considered properly “temporal”, are two things taken in conjunction; “change” and “directionality” within the Series. Firstly, and as we have already seen, the Series in question must be able to support “genuine change”, as McTaggart writes:

...this other series—let us call it the C series—is not temporal, for it involves not change, but only an order. Events have an order. They are, let us say, in the order M, N, O, P. And they are therefore *not* in the order M, O, N, P, or O, N, M, P, or in any other possible order. But that they have this order no more implies that there is any change than the order of the letters of the alphabet, or the Peers on the Parliament Roll, implies any change. And thus those realities which appear to us as events might form such a series without being entitled to the name of events, since that name is only given to realities which are in a time series.³³

The second thing that is needed in order for a Series to be considered properly “temporal”

³² McTaggart, “The Unreality of Time”, 461–2; J.M.E. McTaggart. *The Nature of Existence*, Vol. II. (1927)

³³ McTaggart, “The Unreality of Time”, 461–2.

according to McTaggart, is “directionality” within the Series.³⁴ To emphasize this point he provides the following example:

A non-temporal series, then, has no direction in itself, though a person considering it may take the terms in one direction or another, according to this own convenience and in the same way a person who contemplates a time-order may contemplate it in either direction.³⁵

Having argued for the necessity of genuine change and directionality for any temporal Series, McTaggart then sums up his account of the temporality of time by asserting that:

Therefore, besides the C series and the fact of change there must be given—in order to get time—the fact that the change is in one direction and not in the other.³⁶

The point of dredging up the third, relatively obscure, and often neglected McTaggartian Series, is simply to point out the noticeable way in which the other two much more renowned and familiar Series' that have been taken as candidates for time, can be seen to arise out of, and crucially depend on, McTaggart's third Series. Yet it is this third Series, the C Series, which is arguably the most primordial amongst the three as it is simply a straightforward idea of characterizing time as essentially a linear “order”.³⁷

³⁴ It should be pointed out that McTaggart also came to fault the B Series as not being sufficiently temporal because of its having to derive its own directionality from the A Series and its A determinations. He states: “The B Series, however, cannot exist except as temporal (read: as requiring some reference to A determinations), since earlier and later, which are the distinctions of which it consists, are clearly time-determinations. So it follows that there can be no B series where there is no A series, since where there is no A series there is no time.” Ibid., 461.

³⁵ McTaggart, “The Unreality of Time,” 462–3.

³⁶ Ibid., 463. McTaggart then later considers, and rejects, multiple efforts to demonstrate that the B Series taken by itself is somehow an appropriate and sufficient candidate for time. He considers the following question, “Could we say that, in a time which formed a B series but not an A series, the change consisted in the fact that an event ceased to be an event, while another event began to be an event? If this were the case, we should certainly have got a change.” He concludes however, after offering multiple demonstrations of how such an account might plausibly go, that any such account would in fact be impossible, stemming from the basic reason that “An event can never cease to be an event.” McTaggart writes, “But this is impossible. An event can never cease to be an event. It can never get out of any time series in which it once is. [...] That is, it will always be, and has always been, an event, and cannot cease to be an event.” Ibid., 459.

³⁷ Near the end of the second volume of *The Nature of Existence*, McTaggart struggles to explain the nature of the relations of the C Series, writing: “What are the relations in the C series which appear in the B series as “earlier” and “later”? They must be transitive and asymmetrical relations, since “earlier” and “later” are so, and they must be such as to make the terms of the C series into a series of one dimension.” In an effort to come up with an acceptable answer to this fundamental question, McTaggart ends up embarking on a lengthy discussion in *The Nature of Existence* which spans numerous pages and chapters, and at one point even comes to involve a direct

In the case of the B Series presupposing (and being based on) the C Series, this claim is not as controversial as the similar claim that is also being made in the course of explicating the reductio that pertains to the A theoretical accounts. This is mostly due to the fact that, ever since McTaggart made his own assertions in support of the view, practitioners within the A-B tradition have likewise followed suit by assuming that the A Series can purportedly do a better job than its B theoretical counterpart at being able to successfully account for the kinds of properly “temporal” phenomena that any ideal theory of time that is worth its salt should reasonably be expected to explain, for instance, the phenomena of genuine “change”.³⁸ But even if this were to be put to the side, what is important to recall is McTaggart's own admission, the A Series and B Series are essentially just different versions the primordial C Series (i.e. an ordered series) with just a few additional properties added on, viz., change in the case of the A Series, and directionality in the case of the B Series³⁹. The truth behind this assertion, that the B Series presupposes (and is based on) the C Series, can be made even more salient, by taking a closer look at B theoretical ontology (which is tenseless), and how it functions and comes to be interpreted at the hands of the tradition; a project which is taken up in subsequent chapters of this dissertation.

With respect to the seemingly more controversial thesis that the A Series presupposes (i.e. is based on), the C Series, a separate and brief argument can be supplied to aid in the recognition of its truth. Since the A Series possesses the properties of both change and directionality, it is

appeal to the Hegelian dialectic to help sort out the problem. What's being suggested and argued for here however, is that the C Series relations that appear in the B Series as “earlier than” and “later than” etc., are simply the corresponding “spatial” relations of “to the left of” and “to the right of” etc. used to describe point-like objects (moments, events, etc.) that have been juxtaposed along the collinear path of an idealized one-dimensional line.

³⁸ Once more, as McTaggart writes, “A universe in which nothing changed (including the thoughts of the conscious beings in it) would be a timeless universe.” “The Unreality of Time,” (1908) 459.

³⁹ McTaggart, *Ibid.*, 462; 463.

therefore sufficient for the B Series (directionality). Or conversely, as B theorists such as Hugh Mellor and others have long put it, this is to say that the A Series itself already presupposes, or requires, the B Series.⁴⁰ Along with this, we then add the previously acknowledged fact that the B Series presupposes (i.e. is based on), the C Series; which means that therefore, that the A Series implies the C Series, due to the former's dependence on the B Series.⁴¹ In other words, the A Series and the B Series are to be understood and recognized as species of the C Series.⁴²

Using the following figures, we can begin to depict some of the relationships holding between the Series'. To avoid any possible confusion, it should be kept in mind that these are not a Venn diagrams⁴³, but pictorial representations of the logical relationships of “genus” and “species” that characterize each of the Series', most notably, the fact that the A Series and B Series are species⁴⁴ of the C Series.

⁴⁰ Mellor, *Real Time* (1981).

⁴¹ Once this has been made fully explicit, and when it subsequently taken in conjunction with the final claim being made, that the C Series involves a spatialization of time (i.e. it interprets time as space-like, or to be essentially a kind of space), it becomes clear to see that the A theory remains tacitly committed to the very same a priori metaphysical assumption and “nontemporal” starting point as the B theory.

⁴² As McTaggart himself puts it “But in the order of existence the C Series does not depend on the A and B Series, which, on the contrary, depend on it.” McTaggart, *The Nature of Existence*. Volume II. (1927) 213.

⁴³ Although one could readily be provided which demonstrates the validity of the claims that have been made so far up to this point, this is not what we are primarily concerned with accomplishing here, but rather, merely with providing a graphic depiction of the logical relation of specieshood. Here “genus” is simply taken in the straightforward logical sense to mean “a relativity larger class”, and “species” means “a relativity smaller subclass of the genus”. *A Concise Introduction to Logic*. Hurley, Patrick J. (2008) 101.

⁴⁴ That is, understood simply in the logical sense of “species”.

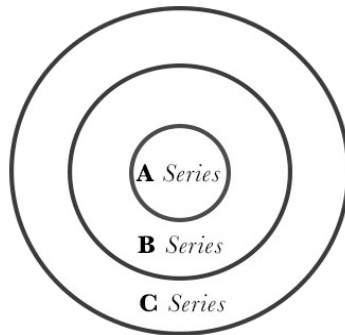


Figure 1

Before moving on, it is worthwhile to contrast this first way of depicting the relationships of A, B, and C Series to each other, with another one, which, although it hasn't explicitly been laid out in this particular way before, can nevertheless be seen to serve as an accurate illustration of the way in which the Series' have been traditionally conceived as relating to one another. On this interpretation, the circular rings would represent our metaphysical understanding of “time”, and the background plane upon which the rings are projected would be something similar to time itself, in the noumenal sense, as it were, or time as it is “in reality”, etc. See (Figure 2).

(Figure 2): The B Series is the C Series, plus directionality. The A Series is the B Series, plus change.

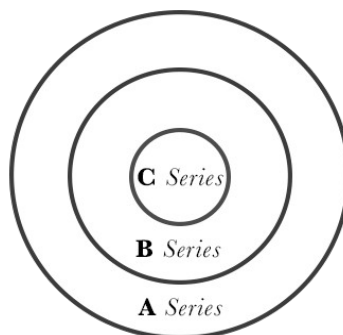


Figure 2

According to this way of visually representing the relations of the Series' and progressing from the center outward; moving through each ring from C to A and adding on more and more purportedly "temporal" attributes as we progress, we seem to be afforded with an increasingly more adequate description of "temporal" phenomena, and hence an increasingly closer approximation (thus, the progressively larger circle) as to what time is "really like". Such a representation is consistent with, and aids in the recognition of, the McTaggartian claims that (i) "the B Series just is the C Series, plus directionality", and (ii) "the A Series just is the B Series, plus change". Yet, despite these apparent benefits, a noticeable feature of this particular depiction of the relationships between the Series' is that it tends to be somewhat question begging from the point of view of the A theory, since it ends up being framed at the outset by the additional tacit metaphysical assumption "that tense and the A Series are both merely something extra that get added onto the B Series, but which are ultimately unnecessary".⁴⁵ This is a view explicitly held by well-known contemporary B theorists such as Hugh Mellor and Nathan Oaklander, but which also can be seen to characterize the views of Bertrand Russell, W.V.O. Quine, J.J.C. Smart, Richard Gale, Clifford Williams, and Robin Le Poidevin as well, to name but a few.⁴⁶ Hence, from the simple adoption of a conceptual standpoint that characterizes the Series' and their

⁴⁵ Although he eventually comes to ultimately reject such a view, McTaggart himself tends to speak in this manner throughout his seminal 1908 article (459). And ironically, what may have seemed as a perfectly benign suggestion at the time, has, in the hands of the tradition, become transmogrified by subsequent generations of philosophers working within that tradition into a full blown research program, which tasks itself the sole and expressed purpose of establishing the superfluity of tense, a research program which currently serves as the dominant school of thought throughout contemporary metaphysics and the philosophy of time. See for example, Jonathan Tallant's *Metaphysics: An Introduction* (2013) 150.

⁴⁶ Mellor, *Real Time* (1981) 50; Oaklander, *The Ontology of Time* (2004) 61. For a succinct recapitulation of some these tenseless views, see Quentin Smith's *Language and Time* (1993) 8-24. Smith adeptly, and painstakingly, categorizes the many different versions of the tenseless theory which have been expounded since the early part of the twentieth century, and classifies these different versions of tenseless theory into "The Old Tenseless Theory", "The New Tenseless Theory", "The A Priori Version of the Nonsemantic Tenseless Theory" (to which McTaggart's Paradox belongs), and "The A Posteriori Version of the Nonsemantic Tenseless Theory of Time". What's being argued for here, is that all of these different versions of tenseless theory have operated on the same shared (and from the point of view of the A theory, question-begging) assumption that the relationships between the A, B, and C Series are most accurately depicted as looking something like what appears in (Figure 2).

relations to each other in a manner that is consistent with (Figure 2), we end up inadvertently and prematurely representing the relationships that hold between the A, B, and C Series in such a way that already begins to pave the way, and suggest to us from the start, that the A Theory may be understood to be in some way extravagant, or more than what is needed in order to be in possession of an adequate metaphysical theory of time.⁴⁷

Turning our attention then back to (Figure 1) and attempting to bring its preferred way of representing the Series' in line with the rest of what is needed to see how the reductio follows from this particular metaphysical understanding of time,⁴⁸ a dashed line has been added which now represents the thesis (soon to be established) that the C Series is itself, simply an abstract linear conception of space. This pictorial representation of the relationships between the A, B, and C Series has the virtue of elucidating, visually, how the A and B Series can be understood to be, not different in kind, but rather similar, as both are ultimately species of the C Series, and hence of space. In this way, tensed accounts of “time” can be seen (for perhaps the very first time) to be just as susceptible to the spatialization of time as tenseless accounts have traditionally been claimed to be.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Although, for present purposes, such an interpretation could be rendered more acceptable were it able to make more explicit how the C Series actively serves as the essential core for each of the two surrounding outer rings.

⁴⁸ That is, specifically from the SER thesis, the fundamental a priori metaphysical assumption that time is either A theoretical or B theoretical (i.e. that it consists of either something like the A Series or the B Series).

⁴⁹ Mellor, *Real Time* (1981); Robin LePoidevin and Murray MacBeath, *The Philosophy of Time* (1993); Nathan Oaklander and Quentin Smith, *The New Theory of Time* (1994); etc.

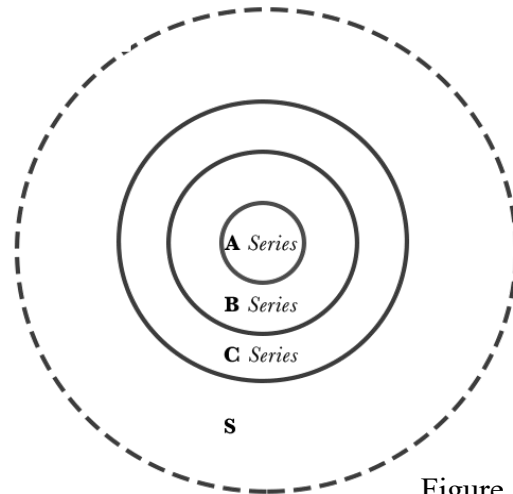


Figure 3

The final claim, is that the C Series involves a spatialization of time (i.e. it interprets time as space-like, or as if it were essentially a kind of space).⁵⁰ The C Series is a spatialization of time in which time gets interpreted as a species of geometrical space. More specifically, it is an abstract conceptualization⁵¹ which interprets time as a one dimensional object, viz., a line.⁵² This means that the C Series, and any serialized conception of time which it subsequently gives rise to (e.g., A Series and the B Series), are ultimately just different thematizations of time having been construed as species' of one dimensional geometrical space, in particular, as a line.⁵³ As a result,

⁵⁰ That is, an abstract geometrical space that consists of merely an array of mathematical points.

⁵¹ Which appears to have arisen within the history of thought for expressed purpose of trying to account for, and provide some explanation of, the “temporal” phenomenon of succession.

⁵² This conceptualization turns out to be entirely compatible with Euclid's classical definition in the *Elements* of “line”, as “breadthless length”. It may also be worth pointing out here, that while the C Series represents time in a way that is both abstract and atomistic, the provocative question of whether the analysis of such a linear conception of “time” must always proceed atomistically, with much of the attention falling on the discrete event-points themselves, or whether a more holistic analysis can be provided, which interprets event-points as merely abstractions which arise out of a more basic continual “flow” of time, turns out in the end, to be a nonstarter, when viewed from the standpoint of trying to carry out a successful investigation and thorough development of the metaphysics of time. This is because, in either case, time still ends up getting interpreted linearly, and hence, through the lens (or against the backdrop of) space. Which means that the great medieval debates, and the absorbing question which was extensively investigated during the Middle Ages of whether time is best understood as being “dense” or “discrete” (cf. *Time, Creation and the Continuum: Theories in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*. Sorabji, Richard. (1983)), can be seen to have been just one more manifestation of a similar confusion of mistaking space for time. A misdirection of mind, that has continued, and that likewise extends to much more recent, topological treatments of “time”. For more on the issues surrounding “temporal topology” see, *The Philosophy of Time*. LePoidevin, MacBeath. (1993). Oxford.

⁵³ Where once again, all that is being understood by “line” here, is just the straightforward classical sense of “an

at the hands of both tensed and tenseless theories, “time” comes to be construed as merely a linear ordered arrangement of point-like objects⁵⁴ in just the same manner as abstract mathematical points are arrangeable alongside each other along the breadthless length of a classically conceived geometrical line.⁵⁵

McTaggart himself, was able to identify the C Series as a “nontemporal” Series, however he failed to fully grasp the implications and further significance of this fact. It is contended here, that this fact of the C Series entailing a spatialization of time⁵⁶ provides a crucial “missing step” for successfully securing McTaggart's own original conclusion that the C Series is a nontemporal Series and has nothing to do with time. This is on account of its ability to reveal this portion of McTaggart's original argument to tacitly consist of an enthymeme with the following form: “The C Series involves a spatialization of time which identifies or reduces time with (or to) a species of space. Spatializations of time are nontemporal, and as such, have nothing to do with time. Therefore, the C Series is a nontemporal Series, which has nothing to do with time.” The thesis that the C Series involves a spatialization of time can be understood more or less as simply reiterating the major point that Bergson was discussing more than a century ago. Namely, the tendency of common sense, science, and philosophy alike, to mistakenly conceive of time as merely an abstract juxtaposition of point-like objects (be they “moments”, “events”, or “nows”) along a collinear path, a peculiar conceptualization which effectively constricts and distorts our

ordered array of abstract mathematical points in one-dimensional space”.

⁵⁴ Regardless of whether these objects be referred to as “moments”, “events”, or “nows”, etc.

⁵⁵ This spatialization of time may have at one point been originally understood only metaphorically, but the origins and recognition of this non-literal interpretation of time have been either lost, or historically forgotten, and so the received view that time is like a “line” or “series”, now freely functions as a dead metaphor for time. Which helps explain why spatial-visual representations of “time”, like “time-series”, “timelines”, “light-cones”, etc. have remained so prevalent throughout a substantial portion of Western history, and are still taken for granted as acceptable depictions of time to this day. Their name is legion. The original spatial metaphor is long dead. Today, for the overwhelming majority of us, time just is one of these idealized variants of space.

⁵⁶ That is, “The C Series involves a spatialization of time (i.e. it interprets time as space-like, or to be essentially a species of space).”

basic understanding, and inhibits a more sensitive and thorough appreciation of it.⁵⁷

A further clue that the C Series involves the identification or reduction of time to space—and that with it, the implication that A-B serialized accounts of time (viz., those accounts with their origins in the C Series, and which unanimously treat time as merely a serialized order of point-like objects) are not properly accounts of time at all, but rather ones of space—has been staring English speaking members of the tradition in the face for quite a while, as the very idea of something like an “order”—a word which originates from the Latin *ordo*, *ordinis*—turns out etymologically, to have unmistakable “spatial” roots, and among its primary translations happens to mean, quite simply, “a line”. Viewing matters in this particular light, it therefore perhaps becomes not all that surprising that “time” would later become increasingly, and more explicitly, treated as something more and more indistinguishable from space. An historical trajectory and development of ideas that has been only further (starkly) underscored during the early part of twentieth century, with the rise and development of the theoretical concept of “space-time”⁵⁸ within physical sciences.

⁵⁷ Henri Bergson. *Essai sur les Données Immédiates de la Conscience* (1889). *Time and Free Will*. Trans. F.L. Pogson. (1913) 90, 98, 101-2, 106.

⁵⁸ While there may not be sufficient room here to fully and successfully defend the claim, what nevertheless is still being suggested, is that throughout the course of human history, under the pretense of aiding our understanding of time, efforts get made every now and then, towards making its meaning more clear, its definition more “definite”. And what typically results from such efforts however, is not so much a clearer or more thorough account of time per se, but of “time” understood simply as a species of space. An outcome which subsequently has led to the rise of the widespread habit of providing visualizations and quantifications of “temporal” phenomena. As preliminary evidence of this, in the early part of the twentieth century, in the hands of the natural sciences, “time” came to be operationally defined to mean, simply, “what a clock measures” (“Zur Elektrodynamik bewegter Körper”, Einstein, Albert, (1905) *Annalen der Physik* 322 (10): 891–921), a definition, which, if carefully compared with the one found to lie at the heart of Ancient and Scholastic physics (a physics, which the “new” science is so frequently touted to have radically overturned and replaced, by historians of the subject), can be seen in many ways as essentially just another (albeit more exotic) version of the same basic twenty-five hundred year old Aristotelian definition, of “time” as “the number of motion with respect to before and after” (Aristotle, *Physics IV*).

(Figure 4) : The A and B Series as species of the C Series, and the C Series as a species of space.

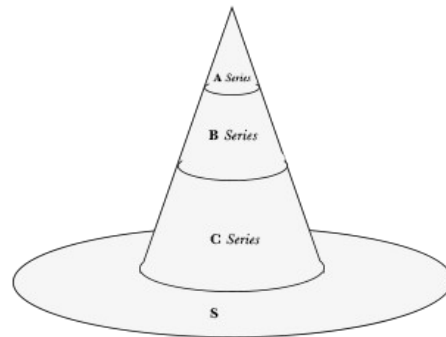


Figure 4

By taking a close and careful look at the basis of serialized “time” than is typically done by adherents to the tradition, and then taking a step back in an attempt to better appreciate what the broader metaphysical implications of this basis are for our basic understanding of time, we effectively add a new dimension to this traditional understanding, and to our old one-sided way of viewing things. As a result, a new perspective on an old way of seeing how all these things hang together begins to open itself up to us, and what we end up with is a more comprehensive understanding of serialized “time”, which resembles something more like the relations depicted in (Figure 4).

Of all the pictorial representations of the logical relationships of the Series' that have been presented up to this point, (Figure 4) would be the most comprehensive and the most accurate. It possesses all of the diagrammatic virtues of (Figure 3), with the added benefit that it also successfully captures the intuitive claim made by some members of the tradition of the purported increase in approximating “time” as one moves from the C Series through the B Series to the A Series, which if we recall, was taken to be one of the major strengths for providing a depiction of

the nature of serialized “time” in terms of (Figure 2), only it now accomplishes this in terms of height, rather than using breadth to convey this information.⁵⁹ It also clearly displays the sense in which the traditional conception of “time” (i.e. A and B time, tensed and tenseless time, and serialized “time” in general) first arises out of, and remains fundamentally dependent on, an unacknowledged a priori identification of time with space.⁶⁰

It might be averred by some, that even if it were the case that the C series involves an identification (or a reduction) of time with (or to) space, that fact by itself, is still not enough to show either that the B Series results in a spatialization of time, or that the A Series does. That is, it might reasonably be asked, “What assurance is there that these claims do not end up committing some instance of the fallacy of division? Just because something is true of the whole, does not mean that it must be true of its parts.”

The appropriate response to this objection (which will be further elaborated upon in the subsequent chapters of the dissertation), is to point out the fact that in the hands of this particular twentieth century metaphysical tradition, the metaphysics of “time” gets interpreted using the framework of one-dimensional space, in practice.⁶¹ When explicitly attempting to theorize and wax metaphysical about the nature of time, there is a longstanding tendency by those operating

⁵⁹ In this case, it might be that what's really involved here in the case of spatialized and serialized “time”, is not, as we have been exclusively focusing on, just a distortion of our understanding of time, but also perhaps a deformation and warping of our understanding of “space” in order to try to make it account for (or, come in contact with) time and “temporal” phenomena. Though this line of thought will not be pursued at any great length here, it remains an undeniably interesting possibility, and one that is well worth pursuing. Such an interpretation of how all these things hang together could be visually depicted by using (Figure 4), and adding to it, another plane “t”, that lies parallel to, and directly above, plane “S”, which the various serialized conceptions of 'time' (i.e., C Series, B Series, A Series) would all be attempting to approximate.

⁶⁰ Admittedly, much of what has appeared so far may seem, at least prima facie, to have been a bit ironic, if not, in some vague way, even circular. But one of the reasons for choosing to utilize these diagrams (which are, admittedly, highly unorthodox) in the course of explicating these various positions, has been to try and remain close to a vocabulary and technique that an audience operating with a traditional spatial-visual conception of “time” would nevertheless find themselves to be strangely familiar with, and more than capable of easily comprehending.

⁶¹ Cf. Chapter 3.

within this particular portion of the Western tradition to spatialize it.⁶² More specifically, what tends to take place is a theoretical or conceptual reversion back to something resembling the C Series, and conceptualizations of “time” conceived of as a line (or mere order), to guide (and serve as the standard model for) metaphysical research and inform what is taken to be the most basic and most fundamental description of time, which then leads to the inevitable result of rendering such metaphysical accounts of “time”, more appropriately, ones of space. Typically, what then subsequently follows (though by no means always, and usually in a manner which suggests it only gets done as an afterthought), is that plenty of lip service gets paid at length, to the accepted sorts of purportedly “temporal” characteristics that have to get added into the mix in order to save⁶³ what had been a hitherto thoroughly spatialized account of “time” from sounding too much like an outright discussion of space, simpliciter.⁶⁴

Finally, although we have sought to eschew all formalisms up to this point, for the sake of clarification, another way of putting the major claims that have appeared so far all together in a more traditional and formal fashion would be to include all that has been said in a simple argument. Since the relation of “specieshood”—which we have made such heavy use of, though which has been understood here throughout in merely the straightforward logical sense, to mean

⁶² And with respect to this, Bergson should be rightly credited for having been the first to successfully raise attention to this curious and perverse tendency.

⁶³ This is a move which, although rarely ever questioned, if it were to be, appears to be defensible only by means of appealing to something like a strong insistence (that is then immediately followed by an even firmer assurance), that this is something that these characteristics are indeed more than capable of doing—i.e., of basically completing the transmogrification of time out of space.

⁶⁴ Though even this minor effort, at pursuing the question of time in what seems perhaps to be a genuine and legitimate fashion, appears to occur only for the sake of reconciling these accounts with the ordinary conception of “time”, or time as it is typically understood, and hence (as will be shown), ultimately for the sake of ameliorating the particular account given, with traditional substance ontologies (and thus keeping that particular account, squarely within the predelineated confines of such ontologies). More will be said in what follows (see Chapter 3) about why such efforts remain otiose when viewed within the context of trying to develop a viable metaphysics of time. Consider for example, the traditional role and ontological function, of McTaggartean “A properties and B relations”, and of more recent “tensed and tenseless” ontologies, etc.

simply “being a member of the subclass of some larger class (the genus)”—is logically transitive, from the fundamental claim that “the C Series is a species of space”, so too, does it follow that “both the A and B Series' are as well”. Since the A Series is a species of the C Series, and the C Series is a species of spatialized “time”, it follows that the A Series is itself just a variant of spatialized “time”. And a similar argument can of course be made for the B Series.

This way of putting things does however begin to raise the interesting question as to whether the properties of a member of a subclass can contradict the defining characteristics of its genus class. That is, is it possible for an A theory of “time” (such as presentism, etc.), premised as it is on the A Series, to somehow transcend its C theoretical, and hence “spatial”, origins? Can an accurate understanding of “temporality” emerge somehow out of a primordially “spatialized” starting point? In regards to the first question, we could reply by saying, “Perhaps”, but it remains unclear whether this matter can be completely settled one way or the other a priori. What is more, it is worth noting that given our current purposes, and the nature of the arguments that have been advocated here, we need not interest ourselves with trying to establish the truth of such a generalized universalizable claim (as Bergson appears to have been), but may content ourselves with the much more limited, a posteriori one, that, in this particular case, and given these particular developments of the history of Western metaphysical thought during the twentieth century to today, so far, the answer to these questions seems simply to be a firm “No”. In other words, while the closely related, and similar looking, modal thesis the “Necessarily, the SER thesis entails a spatialization of time” would suffice for our purposes, and while it may indeed turn out to be true (as Bergson seems to have held), it should nevertheless be distinguished from the thesis “The SER thesis entails a spatialization of time”, which is the

particular claim that is explicitly being made here.

Put simply, the long and the short of all that has been said up to this point, is that the “time” we typically have in mind when we think about it, talk about it, and when we reckon with it, is not actually anything “temporal” at all, but really just an idealized conceptual variant of space.⁶⁵ The spatialization of time, defined here, as “the identification or reduction of time to space”, is both a microscopic and macroscopic phenomenon, and is characteristic of the practices of both chronometry and chronology. It is found just as commonly amongst the myriad attempts to quantify time through the positing of some assortment of idiosyncratic spatial-quantitative metric in order to make possible the calculation and measurement of “temporal” phenomenon, as it is among the repeated attempts to conceptualize time more generally (on the basis of certain deeply sedimented a priori metaphysical assumptions about the basic “topology”⁶⁶ of “time”) in an effort to try and provide (and record) a grand cosmological “order” of things.

At this point, detractors might still find themselves inclined to respond to all of this by saying something along the lines of: “Even if it may actually turn out to be the case that our prevalent A-B depictions of the metaphysics of time happen to come saddled with a spatialized conceptions of time as you say, so what? Just look at all of the success such “spatialized” conceptions of time have nevertheless afforded us?” In other words, “What is so wrong with the spatialization of time?”

⁶⁵ More specifically, it is the simple idea of a “line” taken in abstraction (i.e. the C Series), for the purposes of providing a principle of “order”.

⁶⁶ Metaphysical assumptions which themselves betray the additional (and from what should now be beginning to become somewhat clear: unwarranted) assumption made by the A-B tradition. For it may behoove us to question whether—beyond some dry academic exercise that is largely, if not entirely, cut off from the phenomena of the everyday world and our lives—something like a “topology” of time makes any real sense at all, an area of research, which arguably, is itself just another historical development that further showcases the extent to which, just how oblivious this particular Western philosophical tradition has remained to the thoroughgoing spatialization of time running through the heart of its preferred way of conceptualizing the subject matter.

The fitting response to this particular line of criticism, begins simply with a request for more clarification, and more elaboration, on the particular notion of “success” being employed in it. Such a line of thought clearly stems from the common assumption that spatialized chronometries and chronologies have been for the most part “successful”. But we might reasonably press them on this point, and ask them further, “Successful' at doing what, exactly?” “At merely ordering and enframing the phenomena of the everyday world and our experience of it in an expedient fashion for the expressed purposes of manipulation and control?” If so, then what else, in the process of chasing and pinning down “success” in this narrowly specific and highly limited pursuit, might such spatializations of time perhaps be covering up along the way?

It is maintained here, that there are at least two things that get covered up in this way. Namely, the phenomena of worldhood and selfhood; or what roughly amounts to the same thing, an adequate and accurate comprehension of the ontologies of “significance” and “authenticity”.⁶⁷ Traditional spatialized conceptions of “time”, irrespective of their varying levels of exoticism or sophistication, remain implicitly “thin”, which is a problem, insofar as the metaphysical nature of time remains capable of revealing itself to us as something that is inherently “thick”.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ It will be argued further, that what such traditional spatialized understandings of “time” ultimately give rise to, is what Heidegger referred to as the “technological conception of being”, which he took as currently characterizes our own epoch in the history of ontology, and the understanding of being in general.

⁶⁸ That is, “thick”, in Bernard Williams' technical sense of the term, which is used to characterize the expression of “a union of fact and value”, and which helps to account for one of the primary reasons why traditional accounts tend to stifle, if not outright suppress, an adequate understanding of the metaphysics of time. Bernard Williams. *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (1985) 129.

§2.3

THE ENTHYMEMATIC CHARACTER OF MCTAGGART AND BERGSON'S METAPHYSICAL THESES ON THE NATURE OF TIME

Upon close and careful inspection, the major theses of McTaggart and Bergson can be seen to serve as complements for one another and to partially supply what turns out to be a crucial missing step for fully explicating the other's basic line of argument. Up to this point, the basic understanding of how the conclusions of these fundamental metaphysical arguments have been arrived at (both of which have had a lasting influence on subsequent metaphysical treatments of time right up to today), has remained surprisingly incomplete. And they have for the most part simply been handed down through the A-B tradition, and uncritically reiterated by each subsequent generation of its practitioners. This prevailing and calcified way of thinking has allowed for the enthymematic character of each thesis to remain covered up and hidden.

In the case of the Bergsonian insight, in which serialized conceptions of time⁶⁹ involve a prior (and for the most part uncountenanced) “spatialization” of time,⁷⁰ despite its having provided a deep and penetrating perception into (and having provided a strong critique of) the way many of us usually think about time, what it leaves under-appreciated, and therefore only implicit, is the fact that serialized “time” presupposes (i.e. is dependently still based on) an initial positing, and prior identification of, time with something like the C Series. Combining this together along with the missing thesis that the C Series involves an identification (or a reduction) of time with (or to) space, we are able to construct a complete and valid argument along the

⁶⁹ Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will* (1889) 98. The SER thesis, recall, is just the metaphysical thesis that has been assumed by the A-B tradition, that “time consists of either the A Series or the B Series”.

⁷⁰ That is, they involve either a reduction, or in the most extreme cases, an identification, of time to/with space. For evidence of this at work, see Tallant, J. *Metaphysics An Introduction* (2013) 142-149; Priest, G. *Logic A Very Short Introduction* (2000) 48-62.

following lines: “Serialized conceptions of time begin with an identification of time with the C Series (i.e. with the idea of time as a mere linear order). The C Series involves a spatialization of time (i.e. it interprets time as space-like, or to be a species of space). Therefore, serialized conceptions of time involve prior spatializations of time.”

In the case of McTaggart's own contribution to the metaphysics of time, that the C Series is nontemporal (i.e. that it has nothing to do with time), what remains tacit and unacknowledged there, is precisely the equally important fact that the C Series itself already presupposes⁷¹ a spatialized conception of time. This then serves to clearly explain why the C Series and its various modes, are capable of yielding only nontemporal descriptions of time: “The C Series is a species of spatialized time (i.e. it interprets time as space-like, or to be a species of space). Spatialized time is nontemporal. Therefore, the C Series is nontemporal (i.e. it has nothing to do with time).”

Once all of these hidden assumptions have been fully brought to light, and sufficiently explicated using the key thesis that the C Series involves⁷² a spatialization of time (i.e. it interprets time as space-like, or to be essentially a kind of space),⁷³ what we end up supplied with are three fundamental metaphysical theses with respect to the nature of time: that (i) “Serialized conceptions of time (A and B theoretical conceptions) originate from an identification (conflation) of time with the C Series (i.e. with the idea of time as a mere linear order)”; that (ii) “The C Series involves a spatialization of time (i.e. it interprets time as space-like, or to be

⁷¹ On account of its having arisen out of one.

⁷² Or, “is an instance of”.

⁷³ Cf. (Figure 4). The C Series is nothing other than the abstract conception of a line that cannot be drawn. It cannot be drawn, because of the traditional a priori metaphysical assumption that time is not identifiable with (or reducible to) space. Serialized “time” in general, is merely how spatialized time traditionally manifests itself and gets understood (hypostatized) on the primitive assumption that time is not to be spatialized. Hence, a defining characteristic of such traditional serialized conceptions of “time”, is that they yield an understanding of time which is rife with cognitive dissonance.

essentially a species of space)”; and lastly, that (iii) “Spatialized time is nontemporal (i.e. it has nothing to do with time).” Finally, pulling all of these threads together by drawing upon the resources that have been made available by Bergson and his initial insight that serialized conceptions of time—such as the C Series and its ilk, require for the basis of their intelligibility a prior spatialization of time—then since, as we already have seen, the C Series underwrites and is presupposed by both the A and B Series, it can now further be seen that neither the A nor the B theoretical accounts of “time” are capable of providing a non-spatialized understanding of time.⁷⁴ Note also, that this “spatialization” happens to be one which includes the A Series—a point well worth emphasizing, especially to the members of a tradition that has typically only applied this sort of “spatial” characterization to metaphysical accounts of “time” that have been based exclusively upon the B Series. As has been demonstrated through a simple case of transitivity, since the A Series entails or implies the B Series, and the B Series entails or implies the C Series, it therefore follows that the A Series entails or implies the C Series.⁷⁵ This means, that insofar as our contemporary interpretations of “time” resemble either an A or B theoretical account (which the vast majority of all extant philosophical and scientific accounts of time currently do, or if they fail to do so explicitly, can, with minimal effort, be shown to do so implicitly), then whether we be fully aware of it or not, we have already become tacitly committed to, and our thought has already begun operating upon, the antecedently given background assumptions of a prior (and unspoken) spatialization of time.

The implications of the spatialization of time for traditional A-B metaphysics and contemporary tensed-tenseless debates, are arguably nothing short of crisis.⁷⁶ The tensed-

⁷⁴ Cf. the reductio, and the contradiction found to lie at the heart of the of all traditional metaphysical accounts of “time”.

⁷⁵ Cf. (Figure 4).

⁷⁶ On the assumption, that is, that time is not identifiable with, or reducible to, space.

tenseless dilemma and the rudimentary thinking upon which this particular metaphysical paradigm relies, and upon which it continues to proceed, turns out to in fact be unsound.⁷⁷ As such, the preferred “categories” of temporal ontology and temporal being, as exemplified by the tensed-tenseless distinction, have been cut off from their traditional source of justification⁷⁸ for why they should be understood as informative about anything having to do with the metaphysics of time, let alone as capable of doing so in an exhaustive fashion. As a result of the traditional A-B metaphysics of time having arrived at a full-scale crisis with respect to the fundamental lack of justification for its most basic concepts, we have effectively entered in upon a moment in which “the most fundamental issues are (once more) back on the table for debate”,⁷⁹ including our most basic ontology.

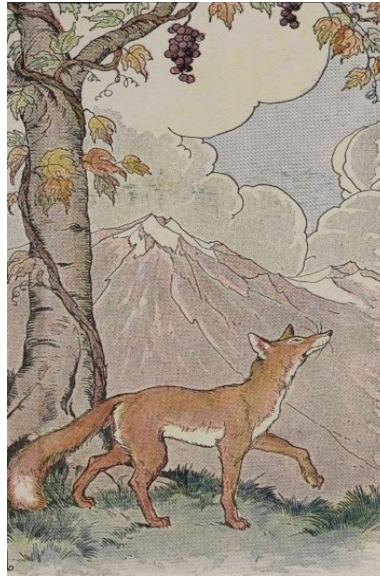
⁷⁷ Despite the fact that it nevertheless remains a valid argument, a incidental feature of this particular tensed-tenseless tradition which helps to explain why it has continued to be uncritically accepted by so many over the course of the twentieth century, and has been reaffirmed from generation to generation for so long, with little to no intimation of the pressing crisis of which we now speak.

⁷⁸ So that, with this veil having been lifted, the truth of conventional temporal ontology becomes discernible as something that's merely being assumed, the fact that it continues to serve as a guide for our metaphysical understanding of time.

⁷⁹ *Theory and Reality*. Godfrey-Smith (2003) 82., with reference to Thomas Kuhn's, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962).

§2.4

ON THE PROSPECT OF ACCEPTING THE SPATIALIZATION OF TIME AND THE HABIT OF TWENTIETH CENTURY A-B FORMALIZATIONS OF TIME OF REDUCING TIME TO SPACE



Ἀλώπηξ καὶ βότρυς.

Ἀλώπηξ λιμώττουσα, ὡς ἐθεάσατο ἀπὸ τινος ἀναδενδράδος βότρυας κρεμαμένους, ἠβουλήθη αὐτῶν περιγενέσθαι καὶ οὐκ ἠδύνατο. Απαλλαττομένη δὲ πρὸς ἑαυτὴν εἶπεν· Ὅμφακές εἰσιν.

The Fox and The Grapes

A hungry fox saw some fine bunches of grapes hanging from a vine that was trained along a high trellis, and did his best to reach them by jumping as high as he could into the air. But it was all in vain, for they were just out of reach: so he gave up trying, and walked away with an air of dignity and unconcern, remarking “I thought those grapes were ripe, but I see now they are quite sour”.⁸⁰

In looking for an effective way out of the reductio, one obvious move would seem to be to just accept the spatialization of time and try to continue to live with the consequences of a reduction of time to space.⁸¹ That is, in looking for a way out, why not attempt to just bite the

⁸⁰ The image was made available by the Arts and Humanities Community Resource at Oxford University. *Aesop's Fables*. “The Fox and The Grapes”. (1912). Vernon Jones Trans. Avenel Books, New York. 1.

⁸¹ This strategy, while admittedly already appearing initially to be a bit ad hoc, would nevertheless be capable of providing a way to successfully get us out of the reductio, by adopting a strategy of simply construing non-spatialized accounts of time, as “sour grapes”. Though it might reasonably be asked, in the end, at what cost?

metaphysical bullet and simply go along with, and do our best to remain content with, the spatialization of time?

Here the ancient fable of the “sour grapes” provides a surprisingly accurate characterization of the unhappy epistemological predicament we find ourselves in when trying to convince ourselves that somehow spatialized “time” is good enough, that it gets things right, or that it is what we were really after all along, when viewed from within a context of trying to come up with a satisfactory understanding of the metaphysics of time. Contrary to prevailing scientific practice and the recurrent habits of empirical and naturalistic thinking in general, it is fallacious to assume that all our everyday beliefs about the world are on a par and that each of them need to be revised in light of, and with respect to, what the best “empirical” evidence suggests to be the case, simply because they may have originated from among what are merely everyday phenomena (and therefore, were not arrived at as the result of some formal or generalizable “scientific”, “empirical”, or “naturalistic” method, etc.). Such a widespread yet problematic (and ultimately unwarranted) assumption, is however, frequently encountered nowadays, especially within the burgeoning culture of pop-science. But it also happens to be a trenchant habit of thought found especially among the educated, and lying close to the heart of what constitutes most “scientific” thinking in general. In other words, contrary to widespread cultural practice and popular educated opinion in the West, there is no guarantee that the simple act of revising our initial everyday beliefs in a manner that renders them more amenable to, and comfortably couchable within, our current scientific methods and models, will necessarily “always” result in the generation of an improved or more adequate understanding of the phenomena we are actually trying to understand. There are occasions, for instance, where all that

such a revision actually leads to is merely an over hasty adoption of some variant of “elimintivism”, or of a crude and wanton “reductionism” (which, is not much better), with respect to some meaningful and otherwise significant part of the world. When this occurs, although we undoubtedly succeed in adding yet another respectable “deflationary” account of some worldly everyday phenomenon along strictly “empirical/naturalistic” lines to our ever-growing list of such accounts, what we ultimately end up accomplishing in the long run in cases such as these, when viewed from the standpoint of “metaphysics”, is nothing short of having effectively thrown the baby out with the bathwater. And it is worth noting that on the occasions where we do end up doing this, we wind up doing it mostly because of our current scientific methods and models having revealed themselves to be poor performers, or ill equipped, at adequately capturing (and being able to shed sufficient light on) some particular feature of our “everyday” world, which, when left in its natural state as it is originally encountered, has proven itself too recalcitrant for them; a situation which once examined more closely, begins to suggest traces of a classic instance of psychological denial.⁸²

The problem with such a proposed strategy and with simply accepting the spatialization of time (within the context of a search for a viable metaphysics of time), is that it inevitably leads us down the path of a red herring. This is because what is sought is a metaphysical account of the nature of time and role time plays with respect to reality. But what ends up being given on such an account, and on the assumption that there is nothing wrong with spatialized accounts of time,

⁸² To put the crux of matter in a different way using a more recent analytic (Quinean) nomenclature, what is being suggested here is that in cases such as these, in which we come to find ourselves being (mis)guided by a thoroughgoing and trenchant commitment empiricism and naturalism from the very get-go, our overeager attempts to apply classic deflationary principle's like “Ockam's Razor” to tangled metaphysical problems like the riddle of “Plato's beard” for instance, end up resulting (ontologically) in not so much a nice clean and close shave, but rather, something which much more closely resembles various cases of outright decapitation. See, W.V.O. Quine. “On What There Is” (1948).

are various fabricated stories and abstract depictions (however coherent) of “time” as if it were merely a species of space. At the very best, all such accounts, which treat serialized models of “time” as exhaustive of the metaphysics of time (like the A-B tradition does), end up missing the point and ultimately committing some version of the red herring or ignoratio elenchi fallacies. That is, they have plenty to say about “time” when construed as a species of the C Series, and hence of space, but they tell us very little, if anything, about time that is not already in some way dependent upon these spatial models and metaphors. Hence, their “conclusions” about the nature of “time” end up getting drawn from premises about familiar features of mathematical space, so that we are left drawing “temporal” conclusions from what are purely “spatial” premises and axioms.⁸³

Disciples of spatialized time⁸⁴ within the A-B tradition appear to come in two major varieties. There are those for whom the findings and conclusions of their metaphysical research pertains to only a fictitious realm of abstract space,⁸⁵ and then there are those who never actually conclude anything at all about the metaphysical nature of time, but in the course of providing their long-winded spatial depictions of “temporal” phenomena, merely presume that in the course of doing so, some deep metaphysical conclusions pertaining to time have therefore been established. Either way, through the act of merely diverting attention away from the original

⁸³ As evidenced once again by even the most cursory glance at the current and extant literature on both the metaphysics and logic of time (e.g, Tallant, (2013); Priest, (2000); etc.), an habitual practice which gets made particularly pronounced when examining the phenomenology of A and B time. See for example, Quentin Smith's article “The Phenomenology of A Time”, and Clifford William's “The Phenomenology of B Time”, both of which, appear in *The New Theory of Time*. Oaklander and Smith. Yale UP: (1994).

⁸⁴ Whether they are cognizant of their discipleship and the logical implications of their position, or not. That is, these comments are intended to cover cases of A theorists, in addition to B theorists, who perhaps unwittingly arrive at an endorsement and logical commitment to the spatialization of time.

⁸⁵ Despite perhaps a strong insistence that may be made on their part, to the contrary. A common insistence, typical among those who continue to operate yet remain for the most part oblivious to their own logical and ontological commitments to a spatialized conception of time.

desideratum⁸⁶, members of the A-B tradition are able to create the presumption of having successfully provided something like a viable metaphysical account of “time”.

The Bergsonian insight that many of our traditional ways of conceptualizing time involve a prior spatialization of time serves as a precursor to all of this.⁸⁷ The history of the metaphysics of A-B time over the course of the twentieth century has consisted in the repeated hypostatization of various models⁸⁸ of a fictitious spatial realm; employing at times the resources of mathematics and geometry to maintain some level of intelligibility⁸⁹ over the models, but which ultimately, has only served in the long run to cover up and disguise the genuinely temporal phenomena that are encountered in everyday experience, and by so doing, obfuscate and impede a clear and adequate understanding (from a metaphysical standpoint) of time's role with relation to ontology.

It may prove beneficial and an aid to the apprehension of what is to follow, if we take note of an observation that can be made concerning the implications of the hermeneutic nature of understanding and how this can relate to our traditional metaphysical understanding of time in general. The role of definitions in constituting meaning and aiding understanding, is that they help to partly determine what our most general picture of the world looks like from the outset. But it is also important to point out that they do so “hermeneutically”.⁹⁰ That is, definitions are counted among the parts which enable us to understand and make sense of the whole, yet at the same time they are themselves always already drawn from (and conditioned by) a prior

⁸⁶ This can be done either consciously, by attempting to construe the prospects of non-spatialized time once again, as merely “sour grapes”, or done in such a way that is performed almost completely unawares (as is most commonly the case on both sides of the A-B metaphysical tradition).

⁸⁷ Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will* (1889). passim.

⁸⁸ That once again, come in a variety of various levels of sophistication, complexity, and exoticism.

⁸⁹ That is manifested simply in terms of internal coherence and consistency.

⁹⁰ For more on the nature of “hermeneutics”, see Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time* [*Sein und Zeit*] (1927); as well as Hans-Georg Gadamer's *Truth and Method* [*Warheit und Methode*] (1960); and Richard Rorty's *Philosophy and The Mirror of Nature* (1979), esp. Chapter VII: “From Epistemology to Hermeneutics”.

understanding and primordial grasp of what we take that whole to be, which is itself an understanding that is always developing. To give an example to help clarify this point, a classic metaphysical question such as “What is real?” might initially lead to a seemingly no nonsense and concrete attempt at defining “real” to mean something like “What is real is what can be touched and grasped with your hands.”, which could subsequently be stated more formally by the assertion “X is real iff it can be touched and grasped with your hands”, etc. It does not take long to notice however, that the operational definition that has been arrived at, and given in order to try and define and pin down the term “real” in a strict and exact way, shows some obvious limitations. For instance, it betrays a narrowness of focus, and an over-reliance on just one of the five senses (at the expense of the other four) with respect to our access to reality. Were we to proceed to go on and construct a conception of reality in accordance with this definition, then phenomena of the kind denoted by such terms as “music” or “starlight” for example, would inevitably fall outside of it, and thus leave us with a general and basic understanding of the “real world” in which such phenomena did not come to be counted among (nor come to be seen as informing us in anyway about) the genuine features of metaphysical reality. Luckily, for us, we can clearly and fairly easily see that such a way of defining the meaning of “real” merely arises out of, and supports, a limited and one-sided outlook which understands only a world that it can touch. Common hypothetical cases such as these—where the possibility of drawing attention to elements of the definiendum which continue to outstrip the definiens, is either obvious and already on hand, or at the very least, still scrutable, are the easy ones. They are quickly shown to be unsatisfactory to serve as comprehensive definitions for the simple reason that the definiendum noticeably outstrips the definiens.

However, what then about the harder cases? Particularly those instances where (for one reason or another) we are not in a clear possession of the knowledge that our definitions are inadequate. There appear to be two problematic ways in which such situations arise. Either our definition has not yet been discovered to be inadequate, or, our definition had at one point been grasped and understood to be inadequate, but this knowledge has become covered up for some reason, and subsequently forgotten.⁹¹ What is being suggested here, is that serialized “time” (of the sort best exemplified by the SER thesis and traditional A-B metaphysical accounts of time), is one such definition of this uncountenanced variety. And the clue that this definition of “time”⁹² is deficient, lies in the definition's narrowness of focus, and over-reliance, on “space”;⁹³ an over-reliance which we are currently in the process of trying to expose, and which comes to play a pivotal role in setting up the initial conditions for (and the subsequent proliferation of) the ensuing “red herrings” which have continued to overpopulate our traditional understanding of time throughout much of the history of metaphysics since the twentieth century.

Given what has been proposed here, and how unconventional a departure it represents from traditional philosophy, science, and even “common sense”, the more parsimonious minded among us might reasonably inquire at this point, “What, if anything, is to be gained from a rejection of the SER thesis? As in rejecting it, we would appear to be losing an awful lot.”

⁹¹ For more on the particular ways in which these meanings eventually come to be “covered up” see, Heidegger, *Being and Time*. passim. And for an related discussion of these matters carried out in a more analytic fashion, see Thomas Gilovich's *How We Know What Isn't So: The Fallibility of Human Reason in Everyday Life* (1991). There Gilovich undertakes an investigation of the everyday tendency of people of various ranges of intelligence to hold what can be demonstrated to be either questionable or erroneous beliefs. And observes, that “We hold many dubious beliefs ... because they seem to be the most sensible conclusions consistent with the available evidence”, concluding, that many, if not most, of the questionable or erroneous views we cling to are primarily “...the products not of irrationality, but of flawed rationality.” Speaking in this vein, one of the main purposes of all the efforts being put forth here then, can be understood as an attempt to uncover, and better understand, a deep flaw that can be seen to run through traditional metaphysical research and thinking, about “time”.

⁹² In addition to, the inadequate conception of the world that it gives rise to, and makes possible. *Being and Time*, H64.

⁹³ And its analytic concomitant: “quantifiability”, as Bergson astutely observed. *Time and Free Will* (1889).

Leaping ahead a little bit, and foreshadowing what is to come in the dissertation, the answer to this question as to “What is to be gained from an outright rejection of the SER thesis with respect to our understanding of the metaphysics of time?”, turns out to be, quite literally, the world.⁹⁴

In place of the old tensed-tenseless dilemma,⁹⁵ which continues to support and reinforce a misplaced confidence in the viability of the tensed-tenseless distinction and its ability to serve as a lynch-pin to our typical contemporary metaphysical understanding of time and its proper relation to ontology, it is being proposed here that a new and revolutionary metaphysical paradigm should take its place. One with a focus not on the question of whether time is A theoretical or B theoretical, but of whether it is something which is⁹⁶ reducible to space or not.

This newly proposed dilemma would end up looking something like this: “If time is not to be thought of as a kind of space, then the traditional A-B metaphysics of time results in a contradiction,⁹⁷ but if time is to be thought of as a kind of space, then the traditional A-B metaphysics of time results in something like a red herring.” Historically, the traditional assumption within the A-B tradition has been, that it is not the case that time is identifiable with or reducible to space. If time starts off initially, viewed from the outset as a species of space however, then the failure to ever successfully discharge this initial assumption (even if it was only ever intended just to serve as a springboard), will lead any metaphysics based on that assumption, to inevitably miss the point, and to get left pursuing the path of a red herring—regardless of however elegant, sophisticated, internally consistent, or expedient to the purposes

⁹⁴ More specifically, the world as it is understood using a strictly Heideggerian vocabulary. While more on the question of what this entails will be taken up and covered in subsequent sections of the dissertation (and in much more depth), at this point, for more on the Heideggerian meaning of “world”, see *Being and Time* (1927). H91-128; specifically, Heidegger's explication what he refers to as the “worldhood” of the world.

⁹⁵ Cf. §2.1

⁹⁶ Or even, ought to be.

⁹⁷ Via the reductio in §2.1.

of the empirical sciences that conception of “time” may happen to end up.⁹⁸

The next step in this new dilemma is to note that “Time is either reducible to (or identifiable with) space, or it is not.” That is, there either is something to time which cannot be captured via Spatialized models and metaphors, or there is not. A failure, or refusal, to seriously investigate non-spatialized routes however, is tantamount to simply assuming the legitimacy spatialized ones without argument. For whatever the reason it may happen to be—either because it has enjoyed a long standing history as what the philosophical tradition has done in practice, or because it is what those exemplars of good epistemology, the empirical sciences, typically tend to do—to simply assume the legitimacy of the spatialization of time, uncritically and unquestioningly from the get go, is to increase the risk of covering up, obscuring, or ignoring altogether, the intelligibility of non-spatial temporal phenomena⁹⁹ merely for the sake of remaining expedient, parsimonious, and consistently in line with traditional “substance ontologies”, as we shall see.¹⁰⁰

The final step in constructing this new dilemma is to state its conclusion: “Therefore, the

⁹⁸ Via a red herring. A point which again suggests that the internal consistency of the traditional conception of “time” is itself just a feature of the coherency of the mathematical relations employed to characterize a fictitious abstract spatial realm. And which further helps to explain why no amount of additional “temporal” attributes, added onto the Series' after the fact, could ever be sufficient in rendering a serialized (A theoretical or B theoretical) conception of “time”, non-spatial. This is because its roots still fully lie within (and thus make it capable of still being uncovered as) a species of space.

⁹⁹ That is, the kinds of temporal phenomena, which for example, get understood not, solely against a backdrop of an abstract quantifiable space, but rather, along the concrete teleological, normative, existential dimensions of time. The natural sciences, due to the limitations of their own metaphysical background assumptions, the operational definitions which they employ for the purposes of serving merely their own highly specialized interests, and the narrow positivistic focus they have for coping with only measurable quantifiable phenomena, are simply not well equipped, and far too “thin”—in that they do not possess an competent understanding of “time” or “being” that is broad enough—to adequately address and deal with these kinds of matters. And so, given a current intellectual climate, such as our own, where, since at least the early part of the twentieth century, there has been a steady and noticeable movement towards the adoption of a fervent and thoroughgoing metaphysical “naturalism” within the analytic tradition, the unsurprising metaphysical outcome has largely been for analytic philosophers to simply forgo non-spatialized routes, either by ignoring them altogether, or by simply (and fallaciously) assuming that their own preferred A or B theoretical account already sufficiently counts as one.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Chapter 3.

traditional A-B metaphysics of time results (at best) in either a contradiction or a red herring.” In either case, it does not succeed in telling us anything helpful, or positive, about the metaphysical nature of time.¹⁰¹ Since both A theoretical and B theoretical accounts of time result in a spatialization of time,¹⁰² the traditional tensed-tenseless paradigm is either based on unsound reasoning, or it results in a red herring. What this means is that the two most general camps within our contemporary metaphysics of time, should no longer be understood as boiling down to a choice between an A or B metaphysics or a tensed or tenseless ontology, but rather, between spatialized or non-spatialized interpretations of time—this is among one of the most significant claims to be made here.¹⁰³ So that if one chooses to go the route of wanting to claim that there is nothing wrong with the spatialization of time, one then needs to show, convincingly, that one's account does not end up resulting in something like a red herring; and if, on the other hand, one chooses to remain wedded to the traditional assumption that time is not identifiable or reducible to space, then it will need to be shown, equally as clearly and persuasively, how the account which therefore results, is somehow capable of avoiding a contradiction. Any objections or responses to the arguments that have been made up to this point, will be capable of being shown to easily fit into either one of these two more general camps or schools of thought—regardless of whether

¹⁰¹ It is perhaps also worth bearing in mind here that practitioners operating within the tensed-tenseless paradigm need not be explicitly aware of all of the paradigm's basic concepts in order to be thoroughly committed to it, or continue to successfully operate within it—an important point when considering how the transmission of a paradigm through a research tradition to subsequent generations of thinkers typically takes place, a process which involves a tendency for paradigm's most basic concepts and assumptions to become deeply sedimented within the tradition, and for the most part overlooked by subsequent generations of researchers in the course of carrying out normal research—rather, commitment to a paradigm manifests itself in the normal investigatory behaviors and actual research practices of its practitioners as they go about their business.

¹⁰² Cf. §2.2

¹⁰³ Even if not all of the arguments that have been presented up to this point have been found to be fully convincing or compelling for some reason, two important points remain to be underscored, first, the validity of this new spatial-temporal dilemma, and second, the intuition that the revolutionary paradigm that it presents us with, is the one we should be focusing our attention on, and beginning to operate within, if what we are after, at the end of the day, is indeed the attainment of a viable metaphysics of time, and its proper relation to ontology.

they originate from the side of the A theory or the B theory.

Additionally, this formulation of the new spatial-temporal dilemma, also reveals it to be the more pressing of the two dilemmas that have been examined here pertaining to time, since the tensed-tenseless dilemma leaves the issue of the spatialization of time unmentioned (and as a result, entirely unresolved), on a account of its failure to even properly countenance the distinction.¹⁰⁴ If at the end of the day, what is sought is an accurate and comprehensive (temporal) understanding of time itself, then the primary focus of our research efforts should be on resolving the spatial-temporal dilemma, since the most we could ever hope to gain from a resolution of the traditional tensed-tenseless dilemma, at best, is simply an answer to the question of whether time is tensed or tenseless. But it remains hard to see what actual difference (if any) would that ultimately make to our basic understanding of time, or (importantly, and by extension) to our lives. What is needed within the contemporary metaphysics of time is nothing short of a paradigm shift away from this worn out and infertile way of thinking¹⁰⁵ towards a new one with more promising horizons; a revolutionary paradigm and fresh way of thinking which has the spatial-temporal dilemma at its core (instead of the played out, tensed-tenseless one), and that successfully replaces the traditional A-B way of viewing things in order to guide metaphysical research and thought about time on to original frontiers.

¹⁰⁴ Except, as it happens, as usually only a side issue, and as an additional charge that is sometimes leveled against B theorists (by A theorists). Incidentally, it was a repeated encounter with this charge in the professional literature on A-B time, along with a growing familiarity with Henri Bergson's writings, that led largely to the writing of this dissertation and to the arguments being made here, in an effort to clearly demonstrate that the same charge can quite easily be seen to apply to the A theory just as well as the B theory. So that if the B theory really turns out to be just a way of thinking and talking about time as if it were merely a species of space, then given their common origin, the A theory does not appear to fare much better—even if it should happen to equate time with a Series which is somehow endowed with more purportedly “temporal” attributes, than the B theory is claimed to possess. Which once again, brings up the recurring point that no amount of additional “temporal” properties added onto the Series' is ever sufficient to render an initially A or B conception of “time” nonspatial. All such efforts, rather, prove quite simply to be otiose.

¹⁰⁵ And with it, its preferred ways of understanding how time relates to metaphysics, language, and ontology.

In chapter three of the dissertation, to further motivate this shift away from the traditional tensed-tenseless paradigm to the new spatial-temporal one, the “crisis” faced by the old paradigm is to be exacerbated by showing that the tradition which it informs ends up operating not only with an unjustified temporal ontology, but with one that may actually happen to be false. The positive account that will subsequently be sketched out here adopts a non-spatialized approach, but it also (importantly) happens to be one which rejects the basic SER thesis,¹⁰⁶ on account of the fact that the one implies the other.¹⁰⁷

If the arguments that have appeared so far are taken to be any good, then the traditional bedrock belief and starting point for much of what constitutes our extant contemporary metaphysical accounts of time, the idea that temporal ontology is either tensed or tenseless, has been severed from its traditional sources of justification. The remaining portions of the dissertation, focus on furthering the rejection of this typical and trenchant belief that has been handed down over the course of the twentieth century, by providing reasons to suggest it is not only unjustified, but perhaps even false.

¹⁰⁶ Among other things, the latter portions of the dissertation will seek to “break new ground” on what may best be characterized as an “error theory” of A-B and tensed-tenseless time. Cf. Chapter 3.

¹⁰⁷ The claim that the SER thesis entails a spatialization of time may appear to some as somewhat counter-intuitive to traditional thinking. One may think, for instance, that it is possible to distinguish in some meaningful way between properly “temporal” Series' on the one hand, and “spatial” ones on the other. But even if such meaningful distinctions were possible—and any attempt to provide such an example would be welcomed, since the real culprit here that continues to plague the tradition and stand in the way of developing a satisfactory metaphysics of time is the spatialization of time, and it is what we really needs distancing from, if we are ever to develop a viable metaphysics of time—the assertion being made here is that the A-B tradition has yet to successfully provide one. For a related point, recall from McTaggart's own admission, that the A Series and B Series just are variants of the nontemporal C Series (a mere linear order) with just some additional properties added on, viz., “change” in the case of the A Series and “directionality” in the case of the B Series. (McTaggart, “The Unreality of Time”, (1908) 463).

CHAPTER 3
PHENOMENOLOGY AND TEMPORALITY

§3.1

A-B PHENOMENOLOGIES OF TIME

The typical twentieth century conception of temporal ontology, as exemplified by the tensed-tenseless distinction, has only been shown up to this point to be unjustified.¹⁰⁸ What will now be the primary focus of concern, is laying the groundwork for suggesting that this widely accepted ontological thesis is not only suffering from a lack of justification, but is problematic in other ways as well.

From the metaphysical theses that have already been presented¹⁰⁹, in what follows, what will be provided is an interpretation of temporal ontology that is non-spatialized¹¹⁰, but which is likewise capable of avoiding the contradiction implied by the spatial-temporal dilemma¹¹¹ for such accounts, since the contradiction in question, arises only after the additional metaphysical assumption that time is serialized has been introduced and added into the mix,¹¹² the account to be provided here however, makes no such special appeal to this traditional a priori assumption that is repeatedly made by the A-B tradition, but rather attempts to proceed according to a non-serialized interpretation of time.¹¹³ More specifically, since both A and B theoretical accounts of time presuppose (and are based on) an initial identification (or reduction) of time to the C Series,

¹⁰⁸ §2.2

¹⁰⁹ §2.4

¹¹⁰ §2.2

¹¹¹ §2.4

¹¹² §2.2

¹¹³ Cf. Chapter 3

and since the C Series turns out to be a spatialization of time in which time gets equated with something like an abstract depiction of linear space, and since spatializations of time are more accurately idealized depictions of abstract space as opposed to time, it follows that, if what we are truly after is affording ourselves with an accurate (temporal) understanding of time, then our account must try to avoid the long-standing traditional habit of identifying time with something like the C Series, and with space. Insofar as what we remain sincerely interested in arriving at is a less skewed understanding of the metaphysics of time, as opposed to becoming easily distracted (as is so often the case) by the quantitative-visual spectacle and epistemological expedience offered by its numerous spatialized doppelganger, it seems we are to proceed initially with a non-serialized approach, and to stick with it as long as we can, taking it as far as it goes.

Considerations such as these come to suggest the need for a non-empirical investigation into the ontology of time. Insofar as inductive reasoning and the type of inferences that are involved in making inductive generalizations and predictions are taken to be an essential feature, and a sine qua non, for any empiricist epistemology that can be said to be worth its salt, any initial investigation into the fundamental ontology of time must strive (as best it can) to remain at this preliminary stage, “non-empirical”, since one of the primary things that serves to make inductive inferences such as predictions and generalizations possible in the first place, is nothing other than the a priori background assumption that time is akin to a kind of Series. As David Hume had famously pointed out in the course of explicating his own qualms concerning induction:

All inference from experience suppose, as their foundation, that the future will resemble the past... If there be any suspicion that the course of nature may change, and that the past may be no rule for the future, all experience becomes useless, and can give rise to no inference or conclusion.¹¹⁴

What this comes to mean however, with respect to the project of attempting to properly investigate the ontology of time, is that this facet (and perhaps essential element) of empirical investigation can be seen to be something which counts against the sustainability of any prospective accounts of temporal ontology that can be seen to have already espoused (explicitly or implicitly) anything like a thoroughgoing “scientism” from the outset. That is to say, this is a feature of our current inquiry which counts against any prospective accounts of “time” that tenaciously cling to the view that philosophical problems are in some way really just scientific problems, and that they should only be dealt with as such—if they are to be dealt with at all; or that the sciences are more important than other realms of inquiry for an understanding of the world in which we live, or even all we need to understand it.¹¹⁵ Moreover, while at this early stage it still only remains something to be seen, by taking this line of thought a bit further, this particular and curious feature of our ontological inquiry might also eventually come to count against a “default” endorsement of the doctrine of metaphysical naturalism as well—by entailing some version of metaphysical non-naturalism instead—though, in what follows, while others may choose to, this thesis will not be explicitly advocated for here.

But at this point we might reasonably ask, “What would one of those purportedly non-serialized accounts even look like? And where do we even begin to look, in order to find one?” This question brings us face to face with what might be considered the *petitio principii*¹¹⁶ of the

¹¹⁴ *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. David Hume. (1748). For further issues pertaining to the “problem with induction”, see also, Nelson Goodman's “New Riddle of Induction” in *Fact, Fiction, and Forecast*. (1955).

¹¹⁵ *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*. Ted Honderich. Oxford. (1995) 814.

¹¹⁶ Here, the actual source of support for the belief that time is either tensed or tenseless is not apparent, but remains

traditional A-B (and predominantly “epistemological”)¹¹⁷ conception of the ontology of time; namely, the assumption that time itself is akin to some kind of linear Series. Traditionally minded philosophers, who, because of their training, and their having been brought up within the A-B tradition, are already predisposed to believe that time is either tensed or tenseless, are that much more likely to accept the tensed-tenseless distinction as something logically true. But this acceptance only serves to reinforce once again their preexisting inclinations and leave their fundamental metaphysical presuppositions about the nature of time unquestioned; like for instance, the presuppositions that both the SER thesis is a legitimate metaphysical assumption and that the ontology of time must be either tensed or tenseless.

Drawing upon the major lessons that are to be gleaned from the McTaggartian and Bergsonian accounts of time¹¹⁸ what they end up providing for us in the end (that remains positive) is an opening for the possibility of beginning to conceive of a metaphysics of time that is at once, non-serial and non-spatial. To those still clinging to, and operating exclusively within, the old paradigm of the A and B Series with their ready-made ontology of tensed A properties and tenseless B relations, the very idea of a non-serial, non-spatial metaphysics of time—let alone the daunting prospect of how to go about developing one—is bound to remain something close to being unintelligible. And any initial attempt to conceive of time in this way with only the limited resources of the old ontology made up of A properties and B relations would likely result in something that resembles a form of intellectual paralysis. To be sure, with many (if not most)

unstated, an omission which then creates the illusion that nothing more is needed to establish its truth. When in fact, what is needed, is precisely the one metaphysical thesis that we are no longer at liberty to assume, viz., that there is nothing at all problematic about serialized conceptions of time.

¹¹⁷ That is, as time has come to be characterized at the hands of both the rationalist and empiricist traditions for what have been pronouncedly epistemological designs and purposes. And which further opens up a path for understanding phenomenology as capable of providing a decisive third way of gaining access to, and lighting up, the world, especially with respect to its being and its ontological make-up.

¹¹⁸ §2.2

of us having grown up (and been trained) within that same hundred year old tradition, at first glance, such a prospect of outlining the contours of a non-serialized conception of time does tend to present itself as one that is extremely difficult to even imagine, let alone as one that can clearly be conceived of in any clear and definite way. Non-serialized time? Where does one even begin?

Our proposed way of approaching this difficult question, in order to begin shedding some much needed light upon it involves an approach which has come to be fairly well practiced (in one form or another) in other areas of philosophy; and put simply, involves the idea that our starting point in the search for an intelligible account of non-serialized time should begin with something like a return (as best it can), “Back to the things themselves.”¹¹⁹ That is, it is to be contended here that the phenomenology¹²⁰ of temporality is capable of providing a novel approach to the question of temporal ontology¹²¹ that successfully avoids begging the question against non-spatialized and non-serialized interpretations of time, and that discloses the fact that the tensed-tenseless distinction seems to ultimately consist in a false dichotomy.¹²²

Bergsonian intuition may be viewed in many ways as akin to a kind of proto- (or inchoate preliminary version of) phenomenology. The problem with Bergson's initial account, however, as has already been shown,¹²³ is that despite its having been one of the first accounts of time to have successfully noticed and drawn attention to the phenomenon of the spatialization of time and the

¹¹⁹ [»Zu den Sachen Selbst!«]. This is the famous Husserlian slogan of transcendental phenomenology [Edmund Husserl's *Logische Untersuchungen*, vol. 2, Part I, Halle, (1913) 6.], which eventually comes to mean, in the hands of Martin Heidegger and his “hermeneutic” phenomenology, something much closer to the idea of “To the matters that matter!”, a helpful and illuminating Heideggerian rendering of Husserl's original German slogan, which is owed to Charles Guignon and my personal exchanges with him. See Heidegger's *Being and Time*. H34; 50.n1.

¹²⁰ For a brief and helpful primer on “phenomenology”, and in particular, the idea of phenomenology as constituting a methodology for doing ontology, consult *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, which contains a short potted history of the subject. *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*. (1995) 658-660.

¹²¹ Cf. *Being and Time*. H35.

¹²² And thereby, fails in its attempt to provide us with an adequate account of the ontology of time.

¹²³ §2.3

serious problems that arise as a result of it, the alternative and purportedly non-spatial account that gets introduced in order to take its place, fails to succeed in freeing itself fully from one of the deepest and most pervasive fundamental metaphysical background assumptions that has guided a substantial portion of the Western philosophical tradition since the Ancient Greeks; specifically, the a priori metaphysical assumption that time itself is a kind of Series, a deeply held belief that remains constant, regardless of the issue of whether that Series has been successively (à la durée) or juxtapositively (i.e. “spatially”, in the Bergsonian sense) construed.¹²⁴

Traditional attempts at providing A-B phenomenologies of time¹²⁵ tend overwhelmingly in the end to be not much more than the impoverished results of these framed metaphysical hypotheses at work. Typical A-B phenomenologies of time frequently commit the circular petitito principii mentioned above, and oftentimes lead to an increased amount of post hoc theorizing that is focused on only the same limited data set. And interestingly, a commonly encountered phenomena among both the “analytic” and “continental” philosophical schools, and their similar approaches to the problem of providing something like a phenomenology of time, reveals that, in at least one important sense, these two schools of thought are really not so different after all. This common phenomenon, found within both of these traditions, might be referred to as a case of “apophenic inversion”.¹²⁶

“Apophenia¹²⁷” is a psychological term of art that refers to the act of “seeing”

¹²⁴ For similar issues, see also Clifford Williams' “A Bergsonian Approach to A- and B- Time”. *Philosophy*. vol. 73, no 285. (Jul., 1998), 379-393.

¹²⁵ See, “The Phenomenology of B-Time”, Williams; and “The Phenomenology of A-Time”, Smith, in *The New Theory of Time*. Yale UP. (1994).

¹²⁶ Another possible way of putting this would be to use instead, terms that have been provided by Wilfrid Sellars in his distinction between the “manifest” and “scientific” images, in his “Philosophy and The Scientific Image of Man” (1960). For those who enjoy some familiarity with Sellars' philosophy, “apophenic inversion”, as it is being understood here, would then be akin to something—to use the Sellarsian idiom—like a reduction of the manifest to the scientific image, which as a result, thereby fails to be conducive at affording us with a stereoscopic vision of being.

¹²⁷ Conrad, Klaus (1958). “The Onset of Schizophrenia: An Attempt to Form an Analysis of Delusion” [Die

meaningfulness in unconnected phenomena. So for instance, various cases of superstition¹²⁸, or the common example of “seeing” the “man in the moon” etc., would be good illustrative examples of this, and of cases where one thinks one “sees” something that is not really to be found there. The phenomena of apophenic inversion however (as it is being used here) would involve a failure to see, or refusal to countenance, some actual meaningful or significant item that is to be found within phenomena that do happen to be genuinely connected. Cases like these typically occur as a result of our having placed an undue or artificial restriction upon the analysis of the phenomena from the start; so that what we are left with, is a predicament in which we are left operating with what comes to be an impoverished (e.g., say merely a causal, statistical, etc.) appreciation of the phenomena, and the meaningful connections that are to be found there.¹²⁹ Instances of apophenic inversion appear to pop up most frequently in situations where, whether by training or by choice, there is a staunch refusal, hyperbolic denial, or a sheer form of mental stubbornness, to countenance anything like, or that closely resembles, “teleological” phenomena—broadly construed. In other words, in cases where there is a preexisting aversion to (or simply an underdeveloped appreciation of) what Martin Heidegger had referred to in *Being and Time* as the “worldhood”¹³⁰ of the world; which, taking a step deeper into the Heidegger's idiosyncratic nomenclature, turns out to be akin to something like becoming too fixated, and focusing too intently, on just the “ontic” features of the phenomena, at the expense of the “ontological”.¹³¹

beginnende Schizophrenie. Versuch einer Gestaltanalyse des Wahns] Stuttgart: Georg Thieme Verlag.

¹²⁸ See, for a classic example, David Hume's famous catalog and analysis of some of the more standard cases of superstition in his *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748).

¹²⁹ Leaving us with only a desiccated account of the original phenomena as it actually gets encountered, and shows up for us.

¹³⁰ Or, as others have translated this term: the “worldliness” [Weltlichkeit] of the world. *Being and Time*. §14-24.

¹³¹ “Ontological” [ontologisch] inquiry is primarily concerned with being; whereas “ontical” [ontisch] inquiry is apophantic, and primarily concerned with beings and the various facts about them. For more on the nature of the ontic/ontological distinction, see *Being and Time* H11n3; as well as, Hubert Dreyfus'. *Being-in-the-World*. MIT Press. (1991) 20.

Take for example, an audience member watching and understanding a lively game of baseball—or some other “worlded” phenomena (i.e. a normatively governed framework of meaning and significance)—by allowing themselves to “get into” the game, as opposed to someone viewing the same thing (ontically) but only as a mere spectator without much in the way of an understanding of what at all is “going on”, or what is actually “taking place”; or conversely, of someone who may be focusing far too much attention on some trivial or inconsequential (once more, ontic) features of what is happening so as to get themselves “hung up” on them, which leaves them missing the forest for the trees, and unable to derive even the most basic enjoyment or appreciation from attending the game.

Yet another particularity prominent place to find this kind of phenomena would be amid performances of the works of nineteenth century French composer and pianist, Eric Satie (1866-1925). A contemporary of Henri Bergson, and living in the famed Parisian arrondissement of Montmartre amid countless other talented artists and musicians around the turn of the century, Satie is known for having composed unconventional works. Among some of his most well known are his *Gnossiennes*, which he composed purposefully without any “time signatures” yet that he left laden with lacunae. A creative decision, which give the works the provocative effect of requiring performers of the pieces to figure out some way of intimately blending themselves with the music in order to bring forth “its time” and fully realize its mood. Something which has to be done with great care, since to proceed by playing the notes (ontically) in a way that merely goes through the motions that have been laid out well in advance by something like a predetermined “tempo”, increases the danger of one's performance of the piece passing over the lacunae much too quickly, or conversely, of failing to bridge them soon enough; dangers which,

while still technically allowing for a “performance” of the piece to “occur”, bring with them the added risk of leaving the performer simply too “out of touch” and “out of step” with the music their attempting to create. For Heidegger, these kinds of phenomena become roughly equivalent to something like the passing over, or “de-worlding” of, the world—and as commentators such as Hubert Dreyfus, Charles Guignon, and others, have aptly pointed out, remains one of the most important recent contributions to our fundamental understanding of the nature of ontology.¹³² As Heidegger points out,

When space is discovered non-circumspectively by just looking at it, the environmental regions get neutralized to pure dimensions. Places—and indeed the whole circumspectively oriented totality of places belonging to equipment ready-to-hand—get reduced to a multiplicity of positions for random Things. The spatiality of what is ready-to-hand within-the-world loses its involvement-character, and so does the ready-to-hand. The world loses its specific aroundness; the environment becomes the world of Nature. The 'world', as a totality of equipment ready-to-hand, becomes spatialized [verräumlicht] to a context of extended Things which are just present-at-hand and no more. The homogenous space of Nature shows itself only when the entities we encounter are discovered in such a way that the worldly character of the ready-to hand gets specifically deprived of its worldhood.¹³³

For better or worse, it would appear that one of the lasting (albeit seemingly unforeseen) cultural developments to occur in the West, beginning around about the mid to late sixteenth century and accompanying the rise of modern European philosophy and its perennial habit of generally equating philosophy with epistemology (and of therefore becoming preoccupied with matters “epistemological”, at the expense of those which are, say, “ethical” or “ontological”; and which stems just as much from a Cartesian rationalism as does from a Humean empiricism), has been a steady and apparent progression towards the de-worlding of the world. An ongoing cultural development which has only been further accelerated (and exacerbated) by the implementation of currently fashionable pedagogical practices in Western post-industrialized countries, such as

¹³² See, Charles Guignon's *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge*. (1983) 94-103., and Dreyfus's *Being-in-the-World*. (1991) 88-107; 205-206.

¹³³ *Being and Time*, H112.

the recent “STEM” movement in education, which takes it as its mission a need to influence the setting of educational policy and curriculum throughout higher education to favor the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, but which frequently gets carried out in practice in ways that end up somehow making it occur at the expense of the arts and humanities. This strategy brings about the less than desirable side effect of simultaneously depreciating these other academic disciplines and their perceived overall importance to academia, as well as to the greater culture at large; and it is a pattern of activity which slowly begins to transform education itself into an increasingly ahistorical, asocial enterprise, leaving its practitioners—as well as its pupils—with little to no appreciation of education's ability to serve, as it once did crucially, as a significant form of “paideia” [παιδεία] for upcoming generations.

To some erudite readers, no doubt some of this stuff may sound vaguely familiar, and simply to be echoing the similar sorts of cultural observations that were already being made around the middle to late part of the twentieth century by such theorists as Paul Feyerabend and others.¹³⁴ Any such comparison would be a welcomed one however. Pursuing this point still further, Peter Godfrey-Smith has provided a helpful and concise paraphrase of Feyerabend's views on this kind of unforeseen cultural and historical development, writing:

In the seventeenth century, according to Feyerabend, science was the friend of freedom and creativity and was heroically opposed to the stultifying grip of the Catholic church. He admired the scientific adventures of this period, especially Galileo. But the science of Galileo is not the science of today. Science, for Feyerabend, has gone from being an ally of freedom to being an enemy. Scientists are turning into 'human ants,' entirely unable to think outside of their training. And the dominance of science in society threatens to turn man into a 'miserable, unfriendly, self-righteous mechanism without charm or humour'.¹³⁵

And finally, we ought not overlook the fact that it has already been over forty years since Feyerabend first noticed this development and began making these sorts of admonishing

¹³⁴ Feyerabend, Paul. *Against Method*. New Left Books, (1975) 175. 188.

¹³⁵ *Theory and Reality*. Peter Godfrey-Smith. Chicago UP. (2003) 112.

observations with respect to the path that human culture, and an appreciation of the value and worth of the individual human self, has unfortunately historically taken here and throughout the major portions of the West.

§3.2

HEIDEGGER'S PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH TO TEMPORALITY

The primary aim of Martin Heidegger's 1927 magnum opus, was an attempt at the recovery of the meaning of being, which, as Heidegger observes, seems to have been lost since around the time of the Ancient Greeks, from Plato onward. Through the course of his perceptive phenomenological investigations and careful analytic of what it is like to be an existing Dasein that has been thrown, not of its own choosing, into what may confront us as a thoroughly physical, mechanically determined universe, Heidegger has been taken by more than just a few¹³⁶ to have been moderately successful at uncovering three distinctive modes of being, or ways of being for entities, which he refers to as the present-at-hand [Vorhanden], the ready-to-hand [Zuhanden], and Existence [Existenz].¹³⁷ These three distinct ontological modes are taken to be the ways of being of substances (objects), worlds, and the self, respectively. Later on, and deeper into the work (Division II), Heidegger also comes to draw a distinction between at least three different ways of encountering “time”, each of which correspond to one of these particular ontological modes, referring to them as “the traditional conception of time” [vulgären Zeitbegriffes]¹³⁸, “world-time” [Welzeit]¹³⁹, and “ecstatic temporality” [ekstatisch Zeitlichkeit]¹⁴⁰.¹⁴¹ One of the most significant and lasting contributions Heidegger has made to

¹³⁶ *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*. Charles Guignon ed. (2006).

¹³⁷ *Being and Time*, §4, §9, §15.

¹³⁸ *Being and Time*, §81.

¹³⁹ *Being and Time*, §80.

¹⁴⁰ *Being and Time*, §65.

¹⁴¹ As we shall see, all of these peculiar ways of encountering “time” will then be given a Kantian spin, through the

the study and investigation of time was that we first need to get right about the phenomena, and to allow for ourselves to grow once more accustomed to the forgotten practice of describing the phenomena in all its richness and fullness as it actually shows up for us in ordinary everyday experience, instead of proceeding as has traditionally, and more recently, been done, in a post hoc manner, that starts off in a manner that has already become restricted by multiple question begging and uncountenanced metaphysical posits.¹⁴² Heidegger successfully advanced the field of phenomenology a step further beyond the work of its original founder (and his personal mentor) Edmund Husserl, by having supplied a crucial insight, that once made, places the phenomenological method upon a new “hermeneutic” footing: namely, “...der methodische Sinn der phänomenologischen Deskription ist Auslegung”, (“...the meaning of phenomenological description as a method lies in interpretation”). This insight brought to light the fact which had gone largely overlooked by Husserl and others, that all description, regardless of how “pure” and free from biases and preconceptions it may purport to be, inevitably already involves an interpretation and some definite and operating background understanding of the phenomena that is encountered in experience. Providing eidetic descriptions is just one way of “making sense” of the phenomena.¹⁴³ As Hans-Georg Gadamer (one of Heidegger's former students) would later claim in his own highly influential work, *Wahrheit und Methode* (1960), “Understanding and interpretation are indissolubly bound together”.¹⁴⁴ Incidentally, this shift towards hermeneutics was also something that began to occur around the middle part of the twentieth century within

introduction of the idea of time as the “horizon of being” [Temporalität], whereby time itself comes to play a transcendental role of both limiting, and making possible in the first place, the being (i.e. intelligibility) of the present-at-hand, the ready-to-hand, and Existence. *Being and Time*, H18-19.

¹⁴² Many of which, as we are in the process of demonstrating, turn out to be unwarranted.

¹⁴³ *Being and Time*, H37.

¹⁴⁴ Gadamer, Hans-Georg, *Truth and Method*. Joel Weinsheimer, and Donald G. Marshall. Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2004. 400.

the analytic tradition in philosophy as well, and became especially apparent within the field of the philosophy of science, although it did not go by the name there, but instead, began to manifest itself there as the issue of the “theory-ladenness” of observation, etc. Of the works written during this influential period, which dealt with how to go about trying to resolve some of the metaphysical and epistemological tensions that arose surrounding this issue of “theory-ladenness” include W.V.O. Quine's *Word and Object* (1960), Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), and Paul Feyerabend's *Against Method* (1975).

Insofar as a hermeneutic phenomenological analysis of being is capable of revealing the ontological modes of the ready-to-hand and Existence, this evinces the fact that the present-at-hand is by no means ontologically exhaustive, which further implies, that any explanation of being which restricts itself exclusively to providing only a present-at-hand account (as most extant accounts currently still tend to do), makes for a grossly inadequate ontology. In other words, as can be shown, by drawing upon the illuminating phenomenological insights brought about through Heidegger's work in *Being and Time*, it is not the case that the present-at-hand provides an ontologically adequate understanding of being. This is because present-at-hand ontologies, which Heidegger shrewdly observed to be essentially derivative,¹⁴⁵ fail to supply sufficient resources for adequately capturing the ontological modes of either, the ready-to-hand (world), or Existence.

An undesirable result of focusing only on, and working exclusively with, present-at-hand ontologies, ends up being a significant loss of understanding with respect to the phenomena of

¹⁴⁵ As Heidegger notes, “The term 'property' is that of some definite character which it is possible for Things to possess. Anything ready-to-hand is, at the worst, appropriate for some purposes and inappropriate for others; and its 'properties' are, as it were, still bound up in these ways in which it is appropriate or inappropriate, just as presence-at-hand, as a possible kind of Being for something ready-to-hand, is bound up in readiness-to-hand.” *Being and Time*, H83.

both the world and the self, by forcing these ordinarily rich phenomena into artificial, epistemologically derived, and extremely desiccated, categories of “subjects” and “objects with properties”.¹⁴⁶ Others, such as Hubert Dreyfus, have shrewdly identified one of the key differences between the ready-to-hand and the present-at-hand (which Dreyfus chooses to translate as “availableness” and “occurrentness”, respectively) as largely boiling down to one of holism and atomism. Dreyfus goes on to explain the way in which Heidegger, drawing to a large extent from a familiarity with the existential writings of Søren Kierkegaard, successfully recasts and repositions the traditional understanding of the self in order for it to become more clearly seen and accurately understood as a kind of phenomena that is essentially “situated” and that must be “lived”, and because of this, will always be found to require something like a “world” in which for it to “dwell”, a phenomena which Heidegger refers to literally, as “being-in-the-world”, and which contrasts starkly with the traditionally favored epistemological (i.e. Cartesian) conception of the self, as the Cogito, or “mere beholding”, i.e., as a “self-sufficient and autonomous observer”, which begins in a state where it has initially been “cut off” from the world, and whose essential role and function then becomes the pronouncedly epistemic one of looking for ways of bridging that “gap” that seems to open up between self and world, usually through the acquisition of some form of propositional knowledge.¹⁴⁷

The implications of all this are not to be taken lightly, and they lead to nothing less than the demonstrable inadequacy of the tensed-tenseless distinction to serve as a basis for temporal ontology. Among the many important outcomes for our understanding of time to have come out

¹⁴⁶ For more again on the fundamental Heideggerian ontological distinction between the present-at-hand [Vorhanden] and the ready-to-hand [Zuhanden], by way of a helpful primer, see Hubert Dreyfus' *Being-in-the-World*. (1991) 60-87.

¹⁴⁷ Hubert Dreyfus. *Being-in-the-World*. MIT Press. (1991) 246-341.

of Heidegger's pioneering work—though which still has not been fully appreciated¹⁴⁸ (having instead, gone for the most part unacknowledged by generations of scholars working in this area¹⁴⁹)—is the implication, that if what we are initially starting out with is essentially a tensed or tenseless understanding of time, then the ontological bag that we are what we are inevitably going to be left holding at the end of the day, will not fail to be one that is characteristic of a present-at-hand [Vorhandenheit] understanding of being; in other words, the implication that the tensed-tenseless ontological distinction presupposes a thoroughly present-at-hand ontology.¹⁵⁰ In other words, a present-at-hand understanding of being turns out to be a necessary concomitant of a tensed or tenseless understanding of time.

What this peculiar, and historically overlooked, relationship between time and being comes to mean on the flip side however, is that if there should happen to be ways of understanding being that are not present-at-hand (but that still involve time in some way), then there have to be ways of understanding time that are not fully captured by the tensed-tenseless distinction, since both tensed and tenseless conceptions of “time” already entail and require a thoroughgoing commitment to an exclusively present-at-hand ontology. What Heidegger had successfully (if only implicitly, and inchoately) shown in *Being and Time*, is that if the present-at-hand [Vorhandenheit] fails to be ontologically exhaustive of our understanding of being, then by that same token, so too does the tensed-tenseless distinction of our understanding of time.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸ Heidegger too, appears to have been largely unaware of these particular implications of his own findings, as evidenced by the rather problematic characterization that he ends up giving of the notion of “ecstatic temporality”, a characterization of time that starts off still initially structured in terms of the traditional concept of tense. *Being and Time*. §65.

¹⁴⁹ *Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*. Charles Guignon ed. (2006). passim.

¹⁵⁰ This has been a historically neglected logical implication, which in the end turns out to be symptomatic of another traditional metaontological assumption that runs even deeper. See Chapter 4.

¹⁵¹ Again, while Heidegger's innovative account in *Being and Time* is sensitive enough to include at least three different ways (or modes) of encountering “time” (the traditional conception of time, world-time, and ecstatic temporality), and while his thought does begin to provide some adumbrations of this implication when he addresses the issue of world-time, he nevertheless never fully reaches a point that allows him to clearly see and

Heidegger was perhaps the first to show explicitly, and phenomenologically, that the ontological mode of the present-at-hand turns out not to be exhaustive of the being of entities. A (re)discovery which enables us to draw the further conclusion that the early Heidegger was himself unable to fully draw; namely, that it is not the case that time must be thought of as either tensed or tenseless. The ontological inadequacy of the tensed-tenseless distinction comes to reside in the fact that (despite what has traditionally been, and continues to be fairly commonly supposed) this distinction does not succeed in presenting us with jointly exhaustive alternatives for understanding the nature of time. Rather, and quite to the contrary, it turns out instead, to consist in something much more like a false dichotomy,¹⁵² and as such, is ontologically inadequate to serve as a basis for temporal ontology and for what we essentially take time—and fundamentally, matters temporal—to “be”.

§3.3

THE ONTOLOGICAL INADEQUACY OF TENSED-TENSELESS ACCOUNTS OF TIME

So despite its long favored and traditional role over the course of the twentieth century of serving as a central thesis among some of the most popular and standard views within metaphysics and the ontology of time, the tensed-tenseless distinction can be shown to consist in something more like a false dichotomy. We should remind ourselves, however, that this must be understood in terms of the “broad scope”, or under a *de dicto* reading of the proposition that “It is not the case that time is tensed or tenseless”. This is because, so far nothing has been said up to this point that would warrant a valid application of DeMorgan's rule to this proposition, which

draw this specific conclusion explicitly. And as a result of this, his overall account of “time” (especially that with respect to ecstatic temporality) ends up faltering in the end.

¹⁵² In addition to being one of the more classic instances of informal fallacy, in propositional form, a “false dichotomy”, one will recall, some of us by hearkening back to our undergraduate days in elementary logic, is simply a dichotomy (disjunction) which presents non-jointly exhaustive alternatives (there are other alternatives) as if they were jointly exhaustive (i.e. as if they were the only ones available).

would enable us to arrive at the much stronger *de re*, or “narrow scope”, reading of this thesis, to mean nothing other than “It is not the case that time is tensed, and it is not that case that time is tenseless”, that is, that time is neither tensed nor tenseless. And however unconventional it may at first seem to speak of negation as capable of manifesting the logical phenomena scope ambiguity, in contrast to the other, more common, sorts of logical situations (i.e. those involving quantification, modal contexts, etc.) with which this sort of phenomena has been more traditionally dealt with in the extant philosophical literature, insofar as the proposition that “It is not the case that time is tensed or tenseless” is taken to be representative of a false dichotomy, as it is here, then curiously enough, such an ambiguity does end up arising. And for this reason, we will be careful to distinguish in what follows between the *de dicto* (broad scope) and *de re* (narrow scope) interpretations of this crucial proposition. At this point, we have only just begun to open up the alternatives. As it stands, the *de re* reading of this proposition could be true, but this has not yet been fully demonstrated. What such a demonstration would entail, among other things, would be a *de re* reading of the proposition that does logically warrant a valid application of DeMorgan's rule, thereby making it possible to arrive (with deductive certainty) at the novel and radical conclusion that time is neither tensed nor tenseless, a revolutionary thesis which gets referred to in Chapter 4, as “ontico-temporal nihilism”. With these discoveries, we take our first crucial steps towards breaking up the sedimented and calcified background assumptions involved in both tensed and tenseless interpretations of time, and opening up new (or long forgotten and covered over) pathways to other viable alternatives.

But at this point we might wish to ask, “How then has this purported false dichotomy come to serve historically as an ontological starting point, and given, for the traditional way of

understanding of time? And why has it not been noticed until now that the tensed-tenseless distinction consists of one?”¹⁵³ The answer to these questions, and others like them, happens to be because in addition to consisting of a false dichotomy, the tensed-tenseless distinction also turns out to have become embroiled in a complex question,¹⁵⁴ which has served to obfuscate and effectively disguise this underlying fact. The tensed-tenseless distinction has served as a basic concept, and jumping off point, that has gone unquestioned for so long, and become so deeply rooted within so many of the the received and familiar ways of thinking about time, that it now effectively traps any thought which has bought into it, into continually granting other fundamental metaphysical assumptions, that there is otherwise very little reason to grant; and in this way, renders such thinking the unwitting, unsuspecting, and unfortunate victim of a complex question. The problem, of course, is that our most common and dominant twentieth century ways of thinking have grown so accustomed to innocently responding and offering up answers to the question of tense-tenselessness on the occasions it arises, that our thought has repeatedly failed to recognize what is going on, or even notice this happening.

In an attempt to lay bare the complex question, and put the matter as straightforwardly and matter of factly as we can, it can be seen that the primary import of tensed-tenseless distinction ultimately boils down to the posing of a single, basic question, namely: “Which ontology, tensed or tenseless¹⁵⁵, provides us with the most accurate depiction of the metaphysics

¹⁵³ In addition, that is, to being an unjustified assumption. Cf. Chapter 2.

¹⁵⁴ In general, a “complex question” is just another basic type of informal fallacy, specifically, one that occurs when a single “yes or no” question, that is really two questions, is asked demanding a single clear “yes or no” answer in return, so that no matter how the respondent may answer, a single answer ends up getting applied to both questions, making it effectively impossible for the respondent to deny something that they might otherwise have perfectly good reasons and grounds for denying, without first somehow getting “outside” of the initial background assumptions that have led up to the posing of the original question; as for example, in the case of a complex question like, “Have you stopped cheating on exams?”

¹⁵⁵ That is, one which employs, is committed to, or quantifies over, A properties or B relations.

and reality of time?” Putting the matter this way, means that if (by continuing to neglect and systematically tamp down the actual phenomena of everyday experience) we keep our thought too closely tethered to this question in its initial (and already somewhat theory-laden) formulation, we will continue to remain forced (as we have been historically and throughout much of the course of the twentieth century) to uncritically adopt the question's initial background assumptions, and make them our own. And in so doing, will remain incapable of supplying ourselves with the sort of recognition necessary to come to the realization that we have already become ensnared by, and left to dwell within the restrictive and artificial confines of, a complex question.

In order to have any hope then of successfully freeing ourselves from the clutches of this complex question, we must first be able to place ourselves in a suitable position somewhere “outside” of the initial question, from where it can be clearly identified and recognized as such. By operating on the basic understanding of the tensed-tenseless distinction as ultimately boiling down to a simple question¹⁵⁶, one way of gaining this proper sort of “distance” and acquiring a vantage point from which to do this effectively (and in a fairly rigorous manner), involves the deployment of the resources of erotetic logic.¹⁵⁷ Given that what we are faced with, with respect to the tensed-tenseless distinction is something resembling a false dichotomy, and given that one of the most tried and true ways of shattering a false dichotomy is to look for what both sides of the dichotomy might happen to have in common¹⁵⁸, the strategy here will be to look for a commonality that exists between the two, and to raise the question “What is it that both tensed

¹⁵⁶ That is, “Which ontology, tensed or tenseless, most accurately depicts the metaphysical reality of time?”

¹⁵⁷ Erotetic logic, or just simply, “erotetics” as it is sometimes referred to, is a branch of formal logic that involves the logical analysis of questions. For more on the historical development of erotetics and of erotetic inferences, see for example the classic texts of A.N. Prior's “Erotetic Logic” *Philosophical Review* (1955) and Nuel Belnap's “Questions, Answers, and Presuppositions” *The Journal of Philosophy* (1966).

¹⁵⁸ Which, to put the matter “erotetically”, is to look for what they might both happen to commonly “presuppose”.

and tenseless ontologies have in common?”

The answer to this question, which is not that hard to see, is the commonly shared assumption among both ontologies¹⁵⁹ that the metaphysical and predicative role of time is one of supplying an answer to the question of “When?”. From the twentieth century onward, research into the ontology of time has come to consist in mainly a search for the truth-conditions of tensed statements. An approach to doing “ontology” that appears to have been heavily influenced by the “linguistic turn” that occurred in philosophy around the middle to early part of the twentieth century. To this day, such research has remained almost indistinguishable from what has become an endless exercise merely in semantics (in the bad sense of the term), which busies itself in providing countless analyses, and counter-analyses, of statements like, “Thank goodness that’s over” in either a tensed or tenseless fashion; an approach to doing temporal ontology which, regardless of what the final analysis may turn out to be, still systematically betrays a recurring preoccupation with the question of “When?”¹⁶⁰ It is notable however that other, common, English interrogatives such as the “What?”, “Why?”, “Who?” and “How?” for instance, are rare to appear (if at all) in such contexts. Indeed, the unassuming and widely held belief that the “When?” happens to enjoy some intimate and privileged relationship with time and matters “temporal”, in ways in which these other interrogatives do not, turns out to be a sedimented assumption running so deep, and so thoroughly, throughout the traditional ways of interpreting time in the West (with roots that can be seen to extend at least as far back as Aristotle’s Πότε),

¹⁵⁹ Another common assumption is a shared underlying commitment to the Ancient idea of time as χρόνος. See, Aristotle *Categories* and *Physics IV*. This commonality helps to explain the popularity of attempts to try and define one ontology (be it tensed or tenseless) in terms of the other, a strategy which has remained especially fashionable among B theorists, and proponents of both the old and new tenseless theories of time. For more on these historical attempts, see Quentin Smith’s *Language and Time*. Oxford. (1993). 1-27.

¹⁶⁰ See, for example, *The New Theory of Time*. Nathan Oaklander and Quentin Smith. Yale University Press, (1994); as well as *Time, Tense, and Reference*. Quentin Smith and Aleksandar Jokic. MIT Press, (2003).

that in some ways, it is not all that surprising it has gone unnoticed for so long and by so many. Because of this, very few have ever questioned (let alone bothered to seriously and thoroughly investigate) what role the “When?” actively plays in initially framing our most basic understanding of time.

The commonality that is to be found holding among all tensed and tenseless ontologies seems simply to be the deep seated conviction that the essential metaphysical function of time is to provide an answer to the question of “When?”¹⁶¹. Taking the time to closely examine this fact (which has been predominantly overlooked, and which is still constantly taken for granted) and performing something like an erotetic analysis on this basic interrogative, we at once begin to cast some much needed light on a latent—yet profoundly fundamental—assumption that lies at the heart of the tensed-tenseless distinction itself. Straightforwardly put however, tensed and tenseless ontologies are not “simply” just two alternatives for answering the question of “When?”—but more specifically, and fundamentally, insofar as this “When?” is taken and understood to pertain to some metaphysical variant of “substance”.¹⁶² This peculiar feature betrays an unacknowledged prior commitment to the viability and generalizability of “substance ontologies”, broadly construed. In other words, to couch the matter once more in a Heideggerian

¹⁶¹ In other words, this is the metaphysical question that time is traditionally believed to answer, and is what constitutes what may be considered its primary role and overarching metaphysical function. Or, at least this is purportedly the case, since, as we are currently in the process of demonstrating, this “When?” typically gets cashed out in practice as really just a peculiar, or funny, kind of “Where?”. That is, given the underlying spatial framework from which the answers to these questions are eventually derived (cf. Chapter 2), the intelligibility of this (“temporal”) “When?” inevitably comes to consist, curiously enough, in terms of a peculiar kind of (spatial) “Where?”.

¹⁶² Which includes, in addition to the Ancient peripatetic conception of “substance”, the more modern notions of “objects” and “events”, as well—and regardless of whether the latter are themselves either substantively or relationally defined. Substance (οὐσία) constitutes the original Ancient formulation of this longstanding basic idea, and way of relating time to being, with the more current ontological terms of object and event serving merely as modern and contemporary philosophical cognates of this same basic idea, which, by and large, they have remained ontologically isomorphic to, with respect to how, qua beings, they are understood to ultimately relate to “time”.

parlance, tensed and tenseless ontologies are two alternatives for answering the question of “When?” insofar as this “When?” is taken to pertain to items that remain sufficiently and ontologically akin to the present-at-hand.¹⁶³ Here “substance ontology”, is taken as a blanket term referring to the kinds of atomistic accounts of being that treat beings as ensembles of self sufficient entities with various combinations of properties inhering in them. So that, at the end of the day, the way in which being ultimately gets understood, is from a standpoint of substance, or as Heidegger has referred to it, from the standpoint of the “present-at-hand” [Vorhanden], which is the mode of being of substances. This same, basic, subject-predicate understanding of being, repeatedly manifests itself throughout much of the history of ontology in the West—with the most common examples including the ontological categories of “substance/attribute”, “object/property”, “event/tense”, etc.—and continues to serve as the ontological basis and logical foundation for the modern day predicate calculus and first order logic, which, as some philosophers working within the continental tradition have accurately pointed out, is in general just the formalization of the structure of substances with properties. As the Hubert Dreyfus, for example, had observed:

You then get the interesting phenomena that it looks, if you believe this ontology, as if all you need is the right story about all the substances in the world and all their properties, or predicates, and how these are all related logically by formal relations, and you could describe everything. ... So that everything intelligible about the world and about human beings can be represented in the predicate calculus. That's exactly what you get if in your ontology you think that the only kind of being, the only way of being, is present-at-hand, then everything must be understandable as presence-at-hand, and if you've got a formal model for understanding everything as substances with properties, you ought to be able to understand everything.¹⁶⁴

A large part of Heidegger's primary aim in undertaking a sustained investigation of ontology was to show not only that all such projects aimed at a “theory of everything” (like the one Dreyfus mentions above, that seek to neatly and tidily account for everything there is, using the limited

¹⁶³ *Being and Time*, H25.

¹⁶⁴ Dreyfus, Hubert. Berkeley. (2007). Lecture 1. 53:00.

resources of the predicate calculus) are doomed from the start, but also to explain “why” it is that misguided and misinformed undertakings like this must all inevitably result in failure.

Since answering the question of “When?” with regard to some present-at-hand entity is what traditional temporal ontology within the A-B tradition primarily accomplishes, what this recognition ultimately comes to mean given our current investigation, is that the basic ontological distinction and guiding question of contemporary A-B metaphysics as to whether time is tensed or tenseless, betrays a deeper underlying, unspoken, and unwavering metaontological commitment to what has come to be known throughout the course of the mid to late twentieth century among continental philosophers, as the “metaphysics of presence”, which involves a privileging of the present-at-hand mode of being, by treating it as either ontologically basic, or in some way exhaustive of being.¹⁶⁵ In this context, “presence” serves as an English translation of the German “Anwesenheit”¹⁶⁶; a term which itself, is more than capable of supplying a definite answer to the question of “When?”, specifically, in terms of a “here” and “now” etc. It should also perhaps be noted, that from personal conversations with distinguished Heideggerian scholars Mark Wrathall and Bert Dreyfus¹⁶⁷, it appears that despite this particular phrase having grown attached to Heidegger's legacy, Heidegger never actually used it himself. Notwithstanding this interesting historical tidbit, “the metaphysics of presence” remains an increasingly influential philosophical term of art that is frequently encountered within the extant literature surrounding Heidegger,¹⁶⁸ and fair number of subsequent philosophers have come to make extensive use of it (though with varying degrees of success), most notably (or notoriously, depending on your predispositions), Jacques Derrida, in his attempt to flesh out and develop his

¹⁶⁵ Allowing for the *metaphysics of presence* to come, as it were, in both 'weak' and 'strong' varieties.

¹⁶⁶ *Being and Time*, H25.

¹⁶⁷ Conversations which I remain immensely grateful to have had the opportunity to have.

¹⁶⁸ See for instance, the *Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*. Guignon ed. (2011). 4, 120, 126.

philosophy of “deconstruction”.¹⁶⁹ All this having been said, Heidegger did however, explicitly claim that παρουσία and οὐσία meant simply, “presence” [Anwesenheit],¹⁷⁰ although contemporary commentators still struggle to fully come to grips with what he actually intended by this. The metaphysics of presence, as it will be referred to here, will be taken to include a constellation of ontological claims which both arise out of, and support, this central Heideggerian insight that historically, throughout much of the West, “being” has more or less meant something like “presence” [Anwesenheit]. One of the earliest, and most notable, examples of this, is the Aristotelian view that the archetypal form of being is “substance” [οὐσία], viz., “that which persists through change” etc; an ontological assumption, which has given rise to a highly influential twenty-five-hundred year old metaphysical preoccupation with substance ontologies. Setting the stage for this historical development (which has spanned millenia) to take place, in *Metaphysics* VII.1028b. Aristotle writes,

Indeed, the old question—always pursued from long ago until now, and always raising puzzles —'What is being?' is just the question 'What is substance?'... And so we too must make it our main, our primary, indeed (we may say) our only, task to study what is that is in this way.¹⁷¹

It should be clear however, from what has appeared here, that ontologies which can be found to display this meta-ontological characteristic of a “metaphysics of presence” are in no way limited to those found just among the Ancients, but also extend to many of the ontologies that have been maintained throughout history and up through the twentieth century. Ontologies, for instance, like those that were held by some early modern thinkers, such as Descartes, as well as later moderns like Kant, that tend to end up construing being to mean more or less something like “objecthood” [Gegenstand] and which, incidentally, have helped give rise to our own current

¹⁶⁹ See Derrida's “Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences”. (1970) 279-280.

¹⁷⁰ See Heidegger's *Logic The Question of Truth*. Lectures (1925-6) passim; and *Being and Time*. (1927) H25.

¹⁷¹ *Aristotle: Selections*. Terence Irwin. Hackett (1995)

twenty-first century understanding of beings as standing reserve [Bestand]—are arguably best understood as merely historical offshoots (i.e. just modern variations) of this same basic idea: that being is essentially presence [Anwesenheit].¹⁷²

In this way, the metaphysics of presence can be shown to have served as something of a metaontological complement of the “When?” and of tensed and tenseless ontologies of time,¹⁷³ and its treatment of the present-at-hand mode of being as ontologically exhaustive helps us to explain the vast proliferation of substance ontologies that has historically occurred throughout the Western philosophical tradition, which includes the A-B tradition.¹⁷⁴ And it also has the added effect, of making it possible for us to begin to see (clearly, and for perhaps the first time) how seemingly disparate metaphysical theories of “time” (like for instance, those of presentism, eternalism, and the growing block theories) all ultimately end up presupposing the same commonly shared and deeply rooted assumptions with regard to ontology, which subsequently (and inadvertently) lead to transforming the question of time, primarily into one of tense; so that the only real question left for a metaphysics of “time” to answer, becomes one that is concerned with determining which of the tenses actually exist (or are “real”)—be it just one of them, none of them, or all of them—an outcome which effectively traps any attempt at serious metaphysical thinking, within a literal metaphysics of “presence”. To draw from Heidegger once more in an

¹⁷² Compare also, Heidegger's *Vom Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit*. Einleitung in die Philosophie, ed. H Tietjen (1982). Lectures of 1930; with special attention to the characterization provided there of being as “constant presence” [beständige Anwesenheit] 60.

¹⁷³ And of the traditional conception of time as χρόνος.

¹⁷⁴ It would also perhaps be worth pointing out here that the “process philosophies” of Alfred North Whitehead, et al. which began to be developed in earnest around the early to part of the twentieth century, hardly fare much better than traditional substance ontologies with regard to the prospect of successfully overcoming the metaphysics of presence, insofar that is, as they still continue to presuppose and remain wedded to a traditional serialized conception of “time”, which brings with it, a forced adoption of either a tensed or tenseless ontology of time. Despite their laudable intentions, the problem with such revisionary approaches to ontology (many of which, as it happens, ended up taking their initial cues from an exposure to the writings of Bergson), is that they fail to think the question of time radically enough. For more, see *Process and Reality*. Whitehead, A.N. (1929).

effort to further illuminate and flesh out the significance of this point, in *Being and Time* Heidegger arrives at a preliminary definition of “being” as “that on the basis of which [woraufhin] beings get (or are already) understood”¹⁷⁵, and later points out, that historically, the meaning of being [ὄνσία] has just been “presence” [Anwesenheit]¹⁷⁶. Given these remarks, and the actual course of development that the contemporary metaphysics of time has taken since he made them, he appears to have been largely right on both counts. Further complicating matters however, has been the historical failure on the part of the tradition to fully countenance this initial and fundamental background assumption of the metaphysics of presence (apart from the act of simply taking it for granted right from the start), and this has had the unpropitious effect of rendering the complex question (which we are currently in the process of trying to find our way out of) inscrutable up to this point.

At this point we may recall once more the significance of the ontic/ontological [ontisch/ontologisch] distinction. Insofar as our current understanding of being continues to find itself dominated by, and to remain under the thumb of, the metaphysics of presence, “being” will continue to be understood as “presence” [Anwesenheit], and the being of beings will continue to be cashed out primarily in terms of the present-at-hand [Vorhandenheit]. What this comes to mean then, is that any inquiry that ventures into investigating the nature of ontology that proceeds merely at the level of the “ontic” (which would include most of such inquiries, especially those commonly found within the natural sciences) not only fails to be sufficiently “ontological”, but by that very same token, also implies and brings with it, a tacit commitment to the metaphysics of presence, and the belief that the being of beings is to be defined in terms of

¹⁷⁵ *Being and Time*, H6.

¹⁷⁶ *Being and Time*, H25.

by the present-at-hand. In this way, to characterize an ontological inquiry as being “merely ontic” would just be another way to critically convey the fact that it unquestioningly interprets the being of beings solely in terms of the present-at-hand. At the end of the day, the result of this analysis of the question of time as one that is primarily concerned with providing an answer to the question of “When?”, yields an erotetic inference¹⁷⁷ of the form where the metaphysics of presence comes to play the role of a necessary condition that must first be in place in order to allow for the tensed-tenseless distinction to arise erotetically.

Viewed from within the field of formal logic, the notion of an erotetic inference—while still treated to this day as something of a black sheep here throughout the States, and is rarely found among the usual fare that gets covered in graduate level courses in logic and philosophy at its universities—may be defined as “a thought process in which we arrive at a question on the basis of some previously accepted declarative(s) and /or previously posed question.” Andrzej Wisniewski, a Polish logician, whose pioneering work on erotetic logic has done much to develop the field, astutely observes, in his book *The Posing of Questions: The Logical Foundations of Erotetic Inferences* (1995) that:

Each inquiry may be viewed as a process of asking questions and looking for answers to them. In most inquiries the asked questions are dependent upon acquired or hypothetically assumed answers to the previously asked questions as well as some background knowledge: in the light of what has been established or assumed earlier some questions are admitted, whereas some others are not. These situations are usually referred to by saying that a given question arises from or is raised by what has already been established or assumed.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷ That is, if time is either tensed or tenseless, then the metaphysical function of time is to answer the question of “When?” (with respect to some substance, object, or event—i.e. with respect to some version of the present-at-hand). And if the metaphysical function of time is simply that of making it possible to answer the question of “When?” with regard to present-at-hand entities, then the ontological mode of the present-at-hand is getting privileged and treated as either ontologically basic or exhaustive of being (giving rise to a metaphysics of presence). So if time gets understood as being either tensed or tenseless, then this is nothing short of a continued endorsement of the steadfast historical commitment to the metaphysics of presence.

¹⁷⁸ *The Posing of Questions: The Logical Foundations of Erotetic Inferences*. A. Wisniewski (1995). 3.

He goes on to note that “Although erotetic inferences occur in almost every process of reasoning, they have been systematically ignored by almost all logicians”, further adding, that:

The attitude towards erotetic inferences shared by almost all logicians is that these inferences belong to the “pragmatics” of reasoning, in the very bad sense of “pragmatics” as referring to something that is not subjected to any objective rules. No doubt, there are erotetic inferences of this kind. But there are also erotetic inferences which have a well-established structure due to the existence of some logical relations between their premises and conclusions. An average logician would probably say that asking questions is a method of expressing our curiosity and curiosity is subjected to almost everything but not logical rules. But asking or posing a given question is one thing and arriving at it is another.¹⁷⁹

The intention here is not to embark on a lengthy side debate in defense of the merits of admitting erotetic inferences to our logical taxonomy and philosophical pedagogy, but rather to provide a clarification as to what is meant by such admittedly esoteric sounding phrases like “an erotetic analysis of temporal ontology”. In short, in what follows, the line of reasoning that is employed in order to further excavate and uncover the basic concepts and background assumptions that underlie and give rise to the complex question (which, again, is that which serves to obfuscate the fact that the tensed-tenseless distinction consists in a false dichotomy), will roughly parallel the kind of logical apparatus that has already been developed (and much more thoroughly) through the rigorous work of others like Andrzej Wisniewski (1995), Nuel Belnap (1966), and Arthur Prior (1955).

In order to excavate the complex question and restore its scrutability we must first take note of the way in which the question of whether time is tensed or tenseless¹⁸⁰ assumes from the outset that another one (which pertains primarily to the mode of being of beings) has already received its answer in the affirmative. That question may be understood as “Is the metaphysics of

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 210.

¹⁸⁰ That is, “Does an ontology consisting exclusively of present-at-hand entities, entail a tensed or tenseless metaphysics of time?” And this of course, is just the traditional tensed-tenseless distinction, and what has been (and remains) the primary focus of the overwhelming majority of contemporary metaphysical inquiries into the nature and ontology of time itself.

presence a legitimate metaontological assumption?” That is, “Is it the case that the present-at-hand is either ontologically basic, or exhaustive, of being so that the primary metaphysical function of time is one of supplying an answer to the question of ‘When?’ for such entities?” Notice, of course, that if this question gets answered in the negative (as opposed to the affirmative), then the central issue at stake in the other does not even come up, or “arise”.

What this tacit commitment to the metaphysics of presence comes to entail then, is that when faced with the traditional¹⁸¹ twentieth century choice between the two competing versions of conventional temporal ontology, our thought winds up getting itself trapped in a classic instance of complex question;¹⁸² in particular, by a question in which the presumed condition inherent in the questioning itself, viz. the viability of the metaphysics of presence, has already been unquestioningly granted and assumed from the outset,¹⁸³ which then leads all serious metaphysical thought about the nature and reality of time to become quite innocently trapped and forced into acknowledging something it otherwise might not find all that compelling or necessary to acknowledge, viz., the validity of the tensed-tenseless distinction, and the assertion that the ontology of time is either tensed or tenseless. Insofar as “being” continues to get construed to mean something like “presence” [Anwesenheit], the question of “When?” naturally arises.

In order then to emancipate thought from the restrictive confines and framed hypothesis of this complex question, we must begin with a repudiation the basic premise of the underlying primordial question pertaining to the validity of the metaphysics of presence. This means that we are to begin by endorsing the claim that “It is not the case that the present-at-hand is

¹⁸¹ Not to mention, that it happens to be a false dichotomous choice.

¹⁸² Only, it happens to be a complex question which for most of its history it has remained inscrutable.

¹⁸³ Although this has either been subsequently forgotten, or simply covered up.

ontologically basic, or exhaustive of the being of beings.” And we may justifiably do so based upon the illuminating phenomenological findings arrived at by Heidegger's work in *Being and Time*, and given what actually shows up in the phenomena of everyday experience; to wit, the ontological modes of the ready-to-hand [Zuhandenheit] and Existence [Existenz], which entail contrary to the central assertion of the metaphysics of presence, that the present-at-hand [Vorhandenheit] is not exhaustive of the being of beings.¹⁸⁴ Something which leaves us with the notable implication that “the question of time”, and its metaphysical function, does not consist in merely providing an answer to the question of “When?”, but involves matters that extend well beyond the traditional ontological distinction of tense and tenselessness. This is a logical implication which radically transforms our most basic understanding of what is actually at issue in the question, placing us in a position to assert in a manner even more thoroughgoing than Issac Newton himself, that “Hypotheses non fingimus”.¹⁸⁵ And from all of this, since via a transposition¹⁸⁶ of the erotetic inference it is the case that “If the metaphysics of presence is not a legitimate metaontological assumption (that is, if it is not the case that the present-at-hand is ontologically basic, or exhaustive of the being of beings), then time is neither tensed nor tenseless”, this comes to entail that “Therefore, time is neither tensed nor tenseless.” 187

¹⁸⁴ Cf. §3.2

¹⁸⁵ That is to say, that “We frame no hypotheses”. See Newton's “General Scholium”. Newton, Issac. *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica*. Second edition (1713). But here, we must also provide some mention at least in passing of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), whereby Newton's famous empiricist critique of Leibnizian and Cartesian rationalism ends up getting flipped on its head, when it comes to be shown that the very possibility of “empirical experience or evidence” itself, seems to require in turn, its own cadre of a priori “hypotheses” to be firmly in place in order for it to begin to even get itself off the ground. And given the nature of our current and sustained concern here, it is worth further noting, that one such a priori precondition for the possibility of empirical experience itself (or, one such “transcendental”, as Kant referred to them) that Kant painstakingly ends up unearthing, turns out (interestingly enough), to be time itself.

¹⁸⁶ *A Concise Introduction to Logic*. 10th edition. Hurley. (2008) 381.

¹⁸⁷ Via a simple instance of modus ponens. Though unlike the previous, and similar looking, proposition that had appeared previously in this chapter, which only succeeds in showing (de dicto) that the tensed-tenseless distinction consists in something like a false dichotomy, what can now be seen as a result of having carried out an erotetic analysis of what is ultimately at stake in the question of whether time is tensed or tenseless, is now something the much more thoroughgoing, and much deeper, i.e. that the fundamental claims made by both of

To sum all of this up, the tensed-tenseless distinction seems to consist in a false dichotomy, though this is something that has gone unnoticed historically because of an unidentified complex question, which has itself remained inscrutable to the tradition on account of a singular and widespread metaontological background assumption: the metaphysics of presence, which can be illuminated through the identification of an erotetic inference lying at the heart of the traditional metaphysical understanding of time. The problem with the tensed-tenseless distinction therefore, is not only limited to the fact that it turns out to be something like a false dichotomy, and thereby fails to present exhaustive alternatives for understanding the ontology of time (which taken by itself, still ends up amounting to be quite a problem), but extends beyond this fact, to include the additive one that the alternatives it does happen to put forth turn out themselves to be further problematic, for the simple reason that they happen to be of the wrong sort to accurately capture and adequately describe the richness and breadth of the phenomena of time. The properties and relations of tense and tenselessness remain merely ontic categories, and as such, fail to be sufficiently ontological.

Unlike the strictly results oriented and technologically driven scientists, engineers, and their various popularizers of the day, who care very little (if at all) for such matters, it remains the task of philosophers (if anyone), to critically raise the serious question as to whether the normalized heuristics of empiricism and naturalism as widespread and as thoroughgoing as they are, might actually tend to somehow stand in the way of truth and a proper understanding of metaphysical reality, as opposed to just simply delivering these things over to us (or at least, always better than anything else can). As philosophers such as Gadamer, have been careful to point out however, the quick, easy, efficient, easily replicable and indoctrinate-able ways of

these ontologies actually turn out to be false. In other words, that time is neither tensed nor tenseless (de re).

doing things, are not, by that token alone, necessarily always the best or correct ways to do them. To be sure, engineers are not scientists. But then much less so are they metaphysicians. And it remains the height of ignorance, hubris, and a general feebleness of the dogmatic mind, to simply assume that one can provide a more or less conclusive picture of reality merely from a consideration of what works or gets the job done in some technical (be it largely just a physical or mathematical) setting, and to further assume, that nothing which cannot be made to fit neatly and tidily within such a picture of the world, could possibly matter all that much. Another way to put this, is to say, that contrary to widespread popular opinion within the learned community, a metaphysical theory's consistency with the natural sciences, is not the mark of its reality (as is so often, and uncritically, supposed), but rather, merely of its expediency. And a failure to properly distinguish the two, curiously and ironically enough, ends up resulting in a metaphysics that resembles what might be thought of as a polar opposite of an extreme of something like Hegelian Idealism (of all things), where all that really ends up mattering at the end of the day, is merely some kind of coherence, a coherence with what currently accepted doctrine/dogma says is the case, which in this (naturalistic) case, would turn out to be “experience”—empirically and naturalistically construed; an important (though surprisingly neglected) point, which is made all the more salient by the discovery of the Quine-Duhem thesis, and the under-determination of theory by evidence in the philosophy of science, during the course of the twentieth century.¹⁸⁸

Before moving on and leaving this behind, it is worth noting here, that through initial adoption a Heideggerian approach to the question of ontology, a subsequent rejection of either (or both) of these polar extremes (i.e. between the metaphysical extremes of something like Hegelian Idealism and Physical-Realism/Naturalism) would not thereby imply that we get stuck

¹⁸⁸ “Two Dogmas of Empiricism” W.V.O. Quine. *The Philosophical Review*. 60. (1). (1951). 20-43

with having to endorse something like a Cartesian dualism in the end. And this, happens to be counted among another one of the most unique, and starkly original contributions of Heidegger's philosophy to the field of metaphysics in general, since by treating Dasein as being-in-the-world, Heidegger's account seems to provide us with a way to perhaps successfully subvert the issue of something like metaphysical dualism altogether.

Another (less heavy-handed) way of putting this important point, is to say that time is neither tensed nor tenseless, simply because it cannot be. Time is not something solely—or even primarily—concerned with the merely ontic affair of supplying an answer to the question of “When?”, in terms of providing a “temporal” location for what are exclusively present-at-hand entities, notwithstanding the fact that a longstanding prior commitment to the metaphysics of presence has made it seem as though this were the case. Both of these traditional “ontologies” turn out simply to be much too “thin”¹⁸⁹ to successfully capture, fully account for, and adequately explain the phenomena of time. To attempt to answer the question of time and its relation to ontology in a way that uses the narrow and constricting framework of the ontic distinction between tense and tenselessness, is to fail to provide a syntactically correct and well-formed answer to the question, and to (continue to) fundamentally misunderstand the question.

In one of his later lectures during the winter of 1941, Heidegger notes:

We do not apprehend “time” when we say “Time is” We are closer to apprehending it when we say “It is time”. That always means it is time that this happens, this comes, this goes. What we thus address as time itself is in itself the kind of thing that directs and allots.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁹ That is, “thin” in the technical sense of misleadingly providing only a non-evaluative (and excessively general and abstract) description of the actual phenomena as it is encountered and shows up in everyday experience. For more on the distinction between “thin” and “thick” concepts in normative contexts, see Bernard Williams' *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*. (1985) 129.

¹⁹⁰ Heidegger, *Grundebegegriffe*. 104.

CHAPTER 4
TIME AND ONTOLOGY

§4.1

THE A-B METAPHYSICAL TRADITION AS LEAVING SOMETHING OUT

Reversing the traditional “top-down” strategy—of proceeding (abstractly) from an inherited set of framed a priori metaphysical assumptions about the nature of time to provide an understanding of temporal ontology (a strategy which culminates in the tensed-tenseless distinction and its concomitant dilemma)—our proposal is to turn this approach on its head, by beginning instead with a focus on the development temporal ontology itself, and then taking note of the implications that necessarily follow from that developed ontology to help inform us about the more general makeup of the metaphysics of time. More specifically, the strategy employed here proceeds (concretely) from the phenomenology of temporality¹⁹¹ to arrive at a developed understanding of temporal ontology, and then from this understanding, to one with regard the overall makeup of the metaphysics of time. The habit of beginning with a set of framed and inherited metaphysical hypotheses, as the A-B tradition has customarily and historically done, has inevitably led it to distort, miss, or pass over entirely, key aspects of the phenomena of time (especially with regard to time's relation to the world, and to the existing human self) as they disclose themselves in everyday experience.

“Ontico-temporal nihilism”, as it might be referred to, is the view which entails a de re reading of the false dichotomy that appeared in Chapter 3, and simply means that the tensed-

¹⁹¹ Cf. Chapter 3

tenseless distinction as a thesis that attempts to describe the ontology of time is false, on account of the traditional “ontic” categories of temporal being with which it consists being capable of being shown (following in the footsteps of Heidegger) to be merely derivative, one-sided, abstract depictions of a more basic, primordial, and “thicker”¹⁹² understanding of time. This is not to say that there might still be much that is either helpful or useful with respect to these more traditional “thinner” conceptions; only that we first need gain some appropriate distance from them before reintroducing them back into our basic understanding of time and being, and attempt to reclaim what they provide for us that remains “positive” in respect to arriving at a viable and more accurate metaphysics of time. To begin with these traditional A-B categories right off the bat (as has typically been done), will only make it harder to properly limit and qualify them, and to keep them within their respective and appropriate place, metaphysically and ontologically. A radical claim like ontico-temporal nihilism should not be understood as the end goal in itself, but as an important step that only serves as a beneficial heuristic towards furthering the ends of developing something like Heidegger's proposed “Destruktion” of the history of ontology. Michael Inwood carefully notes that Heidegger's proposed Destruktion of the tradition should not be taken to involve a case of “destroying” in the usual sense, but more a matter of “loosening it up” so as to discern the “original experiences” that gave rise to it, in order to show the merits, failings, and limitations of traditional concepts, and reveal new possibilities that the tradition obscures, by loosening the grip that the tradition has on us and enabling us to take a fresh, unblinkered look at being.¹⁹³ Or, as Heidegger himself had characterized it:

But this destruction [Destruktion] is just as far from having the negative sense of shaking off the ontological tradition. We must, on the contrary, stake out the positive possibilities of that tradition, and this always means keeping it within its limits, [...] to bury the past in nullity [Nichtigkeit] is

¹⁹² Cf. Chapter 3

¹⁹³ Michael Inwood. *A Heidegger Dictionary*. Wiley, (1999).

not the purpose of this destruction; its aim rather is positive.¹⁹⁴

To this end, and utilizing the validity of ontico-temporal nihilism as a working hypothesis, an argument can be supplied which proceeds from temporal ontology to the metaphysics of time, which allows for the A-B metaphysics of time to begin to be viewed in an entirely new light. The argument starts by noting that if time consists of either the A or B Series, then the ontology of time is tensed or tenseless. This statement is a logical consequence of the horns of the tensed-tenseless dilemma,¹⁹⁵ and fundamental implication that results from the a priori metaphysical assumptions made by the A-B tradition. The next step in the argument is to bring about the assertion that the ontology of time is neither tensed nor tenseless.¹⁹⁶ This statement asserts that tensed-tenseless distinction consists in a false dichotomy and glosses over the fundamental distinction between phenomenological and empirical experience—where “empirical experience”, as it has been traditionally understood in both philosophy and the natural sciences, turns can be seen just to be a “thinly” construed abstract caricature of the “thicker”¹⁹⁷ phenomena of our everyday concrete dealings with the world. This means that tensed properties and tenseless relations are something like a priori theoretical presuppositions, or conceptual “posits”, that get read into the actual phenomena of temporality after the fact¹⁹⁸, and only after a reflective or theoretical stance towards beings in the world has somehow already been taken up, a stance which we have seen, equates the being of entities with the mode of being of the present-

¹⁹⁴ *Being and Time*, H22.

¹⁹⁵ Chapter 2.

¹⁹⁶ That is (de re) via ontico-temporal nihilism.

¹⁹⁷ That is, once again, “thick” in the technical (Williamsian) sense of the term, which is taken to involve matters pertaining to teleology and normativity, beyond that of the mere “brute facts” that get studied by, and are characteristic of, the sorts of investigations carried out within the natural sciences. Bernard Williams. *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (1985).

¹⁹⁸ And in a manner reminiscent of post hoc theorizing, which as a result of the circular reasoning it entails, makes them appear to be true—and be that much more likely to be accepted as being true—despite the fact that they actually aren't.

at-hand and with traditional substance ontologies.¹⁹⁹ These ontico-temporal properties and relations are themselves the result of an a priori positing of an abstract and detached serialized metaphysics of time, viz., the SER thesis.²⁰⁰ All of this then leaves us with the conclusion that therefore, time consists of neither the A nor B Series, and that metaphysically speaking, time is neither A nor B theoretical; in other words, with the conclusion that that the SER thesis is false. This conclusion follows via a simple instance of *modus tollens*.²⁰¹ In this case, the metaphysics of time consists of neither the A nor B Series, and the traditional A-B conception of time is delusory. The metaphysics of A-B time, as it has traditionally been understood, would then culminate (at best) in merely a coherent story that gets told about a fictitious and abstract realm of reality, that gets referred to as “time”, but which has been tacitly and closely modeled on a preconceived understanding of space.²⁰² A conception of “time” which—despite whatever its positivistic utility, or “success” it may tend to afford us when viewed from within only narrowly construed, thoroughly naturalistic, and strictly theoretical contexts²⁰³—has little, if any, significant role to play with respect to improving our fundamental grasp of the metaphysical nature of time (or of being, for that matter). As the phenomenological analysis of temporality (in Chapter 3) has displayed, phenomenological evidence for the existence of such merely posited, and thinly conceived, abstract spatialized ontologies, remains surprisingly lacking. In our

¹⁹⁹ Cf. Chapter 3.

²⁰⁰ Cf. Chapter 2.

²⁰¹ An argument which, when coupled with the arguments that have already appeared Chapter 2, means that two separate arguments have now been provided entailing a rejection of the traditional A-B conception of time. The first, proceeds to this conclusion by demonstrating the traditional metaphysics of time is self-contradictory at the theoretical level; while this one, arrives at a similar rejection of the traditional A-B conception of time, but by way of a careful examination of the spurious ontology which issues from this problematic metaphysics, and checking it against what actually shows up for us phenomenologically within concrete everyday experience, where the phenomenological inaccuracy and ontological inadequacy of this conventional tensed-tenseless ontology provides grounds for rejecting its progenitor metaphysics.

²⁰² Cf. Chapter 2.

²⁰³ That is to say, contexts which are themselves, concerned first and foremost merely with manipulating and trying to exercise some control over what are purely physical phenomena.

concrete successful everyday dealings with the world, and finding our way around day to day, we do not initially encounter anything like the A properties or B relations that get posited from the outset by the tradition. Although we do commonly have it suggested to us, and hear the world (and things in it) constantly talked about as if it, and the rest of reality, were somehow metaphysically carved up into something like three distinct realms of the Past, Present, and Future, etc.²⁰⁴ (including—ironically enough—in contexts which involve what might be considered to be strictly empirical matters, such as those found within the natural sciences etc., notwithstanding the fact that the initial background assumptions of those purely physical contexts, typically, and by and large, already happen to logically entail a B theoretical—i.e. “tenseless”—metaphysics).

Interestingly, matters such as these turn out to be something that even members of the tensed-tenseless tradition (especially B Theorists), have themselves been made consciously aware of at times. As prominent B theorist, Hugh Mellor, pointed out decades ago:

Our temporal interest in reality is indeed tensed; but as we shall see, the tense attaches to our interest, not to the reality. Nor do we really observe the tense of events. The idea that we do comes from confusing the events we observe with the experience of observing them. Suppose I am looking through a telescope at events far off in outer space. I observe a number of events, and I observe the temporal order in which they occur: which is earlier, which is later. I do not observe their tense. What I see through the telescope does not tell me how long ago those events occurred. That is a question for whatever theory tells me how far off the events are and how long it takes light to travel that distance. We used to think celestial events much closer to earth, and concluded that they were much more recent than we now think them to be. So, depending on our theory, we might place events we see anywhere in the A series from a few minutes ago to millions of years ago. Yet they would look exactly the same. What we see tells us nothing about the A series positions of events. It does not even tell us that the events are past rather than future. Someone who claims to see the future in a crystal ball cannot be refuted by pointing to some visible trace of pastness in the image. Our reason for thinking that we cannot observe the future rests on theory, not on observation.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁴ The proper nouns of “the Past”, “the Present”, and “the Future” set up a very peculiar and distinctive way of referring to and talking about the phenomena of the world, which, given along with their relative frequency, can be taken as a sign indicating just how far along this fictionalized spatial ontology has taken root and gained ground within a particular intellectual/linguistic community.

²⁰⁵ Mellor, *Real Time*. (1981) 26.

Of course what must also be taken into account and added to this, is the further observation that Mellor himself (qua B theorist) is already operating within, and remains deeply indebted to, the same fundamental sort of serialized metaphysics of time as the A theorist—a metaphysics of time, which, as it has been shown, more or less equates “time” with space. So that when Mellor comes to suggest, that despite the lack of observational evidence for tense (A properties), there nevertheless turns out to be plenty of it for “temporal” order (B relations)—something which he later tries to interpret as a vindication of his own preferred version of the B theory of time—he can be seen to inevitably be mistaking “temporal” phenomena for what are merely just rudimentary spatial occurrences (involving distance, direction, motion, etc.). Since, the B relations of “earlier than”, and “later than”, etc., get treated in practice—despite all the lip service that gets paid espousing the contrary—by members of the tradition (and in this practice, Mellor himself is of no exception) as logically indistinguishable from their spatial-linear counterparts and transitive asymmetrical relations of “to the left of”, “to the right of”, etc., the conflation of time with space at the level of the phenomena turns out to be an inevitable outcome of his B theoretical view.²⁰⁶ This point becomes strikingly manifest when Mellor later attempts to characterize this experience of “temporal” phenomena, writing:

Nothing is more observable than temporal order. We see it for example whenever we see something move. Suppose I see the second hand of a watch going round clockwise. That means I see the event of it passing the numeral '1' occur just earlier, not just later, than the event of it passing the numeral '2'. To see any kind of change occur in a definite direction is to see that one event is earlier than another rather than later than it.²⁰⁷

Lastly, it is also worth pointing out that the specific example which Mellor happens to stumble upon in the course of trying to make his case here, is one which involves a simple case of passive

²⁰⁶ For other clear examples of this, see *Logic: A Very Short Introduction*. Graham, Priest. 55-62. (2000); & Tallant, Jonathan. *Metaphysics: An Introduction*. 142-165. (2011)

²⁰⁷ Mellor. *Real Time*, 27

observation (and coincidentally, of a spatial-visual phenomenon to boot), which further betrays the fact that his initial metaphysical and epistemological background assumptions about nature of “time” have remained tacitly wedded to a more traditional Cartesian conception of the self as *Res Cogitans* and to something like a spectator theory of knowledge.

A more careful, and rigorous investigation of the actual phenomena of lived experience, brings out the fact that A properties and B relations are not the sort of entities that show up in the course of our everyday experience of the world, but are (at best), merely abstract theoretical posits that inhabit and enframe a realm which remains once removed from the actual world. If they do make any sort of appearance, it is noteworthy that this typically occurs in contexts that are already in some way theoretical, or somehow already abstracted from ordinary everyday phenomena, which reveals them to be to a fair extent artificial, suspect, and increasingly contrived.²⁰⁸ Moreover, the fashionable practice of referring to such ontologies²⁰⁹ as either “tensed” or “tenseless”, has only served to further obfuscate this fact, and cover things up, by conceptually distancing us from the reality that all that these “temporal” ontologies actually consist of are just the confused abstract conceptualizations that result from a misguided attempt to try and “locate” beings “in time” by means of an idealized and fictitious set of spatial locations and spatial relations, which are then said to be “temporal”.²¹⁰

The implications of all this lead us to yet another helpful heuristic for those who remain interested in taking some serious and productive steps forward towards developing something like a *Destruktion* of the history of ontology, which can be thought of as an “error theory” of A-B

²⁰⁸ In this, we understand ourselves once again, merely to be echoing the major claims that have already been made (only much more eloquently) by Henri Bergson, in his *Time and Free Will* (1889).

²⁰⁹ That is, ontologies consisting of A properties and B relations.

²¹⁰ Recall, that tenses get analyzed at the hands of the tradition as “A properties”, with tenseless relations being understood as “B relations”, but as we have seen, upon closer inspection, A properties and B relations turn out just to be fictitious locations and spatial relations within the idealized spatial-linear C Series.

time.²¹¹ The error theory of time entails an anti-realism with regard to serialized conceptions of the metaphysics of A-B time, and their attendant tensed and tenseless ontologies.

An argument has already been provided that supplies reasons for maintaining that the SER thesis is false;²¹² so if the reasons that have been given are any good, then that means (via DeMorgan) that both the A and B theories of time must be false. Though if it were preferred, the original argument could always just be tweaked to provide separate substitution instances of the reductio and to arrive at the exact same conclusion,²¹³ only using a different route. What this means, is that all that is left to show, in order to successfully characterize the traditional conception of time as one which results in an “error theory”, is for each of the two ontological theses within the central dogma of the traditional conception of time to likewise be globally false. A proposition, which coincidentally, happens to be precisely what has been taken as our initial working hypothesis and referred to here as ontico-temporal nihilism, and for which arguments and phenomenological evidence have likewise already been provided.²¹⁴

In presenting the actual argument for the error theory of A-B time, the argument can be seen to consist of two basic premises.²¹⁵ The first, is that there are no ontico-temporal features in

²¹¹ This version of error theory pertains to “time”. As it is presented here, it is intended to closely parallel a version of metaphysical error theory with which philosophers are much more familiar, and better acquainted with historically, that happens to be found within the realm of ethics and morality, and that received its first significant treatment and subsequent development in J.L. Mackie's *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*. (1977).

²¹² Cf. Chapter 2 and The reductio ad absurdum of the SER thesis and the traditional A-B conception of time.

²¹³ That is, an argument involving a separate rejection of the A theory and a separate rejection of the B theory.

²¹⁴ This makes it once more possible to glimpse the trappings of what has arguably remained a distinctively “Heideggerian” approach to the question of ontology. As Heidegger himself, famously remarks in *Being and Time*, “Phenomenology is our way of access to what is to be the theme of ontology, and it is our way of giving it demonstrative precision. *Only as phenomenology, is ontology possible.*” *Being and Time*, H35.

²¹⁵ Given the structural and metaphysical similarities that can be seen to hold between the more common and familiar moral error theories, and the temporal one that is currently being explicated here, despite the latter being a metaphysical thesis on the nature of “time” as opposed to one of “morality”, it nevertheless ends up being immensely helpful (by way of clarification) to draw from currently existing resources on error theories in the course of developing our temporal version. To this end, we will draw heavily from extant resources on the subject, such as those that can be found in Shafer-Landau's cleanly presented *The Fundamentals of Ethics* to aid us in the clarification and communicability of our temporal account. As a result, much of what is to follow will remain deeply indebted to, and will very closely parallel, Shafer-Landau's discussion of error theory as it pertains

this world.²¹⁶ The traditional claim, that time is either tensed or tenseless, consists in a false dichotomy, and one in which the disjunction put forth not only fails to list exhaustive alternatives, but where both of the alternatives that it does list, are understood to be false. The second premise in the basic argument for the error theory of A-B time, is the additional proposition that no ontico-temporal judgments are true. And this is simply because of the fact that there is nothing for them to be true of. There are no ontico-temporal facts, and so no ontico-temporal claims can be accurate, since there are no ontico-temporal facts for them to record.²¹⁷ Taken together, these two premises lead to the conclusion that our sincere ontico-temporal judgments try, and always fail, to adequately describe the temporal features of things. Rather, we always lapse into an error when thinking in ontico-temporal terms. We are trying to state the truth when thinking in ontico-temporal terms, but since there is no ontico-temporal truth, all our ontico-temporal claims are mistaken; hence the error. This means, that both the tensed and tenseless views of time are equally metaphysically bankrupt, as there is some deep mistake that everyone committed to serialized A-B conceptions of time and ontico-temporal ontologies is making. The goal here has been to reveal that mistake, and expose the truth, that serialized ontico-temporal time is (at best) nothing but a fiction.²¹⁸ Ontico-temporal claims remain globally false in that they claim certain ontico-temporal facts exist, which do not in fact exist.

At this point, despite how simple (and compelling) this basic argument for the error theory of A-B time happens to be, those still looking for a way out, might well begin to wonder

to ethics and morality—at times, serving as really just a recapitulation of that original discussion with the appropriate substitutions having been made for the words “moral” and “temporal”, etc. Russ Shafer-Landau's *The Fundamentals of Ethics* Oxford UP: (2012) 306-311.

²¹⁶ This is simply the central claim of ontico-temporal nihilism that temporal ontology is neither tensed nor tenseless.

²¹⁷ Cf. Shafer-Landau. *Ibid.*, 307.

²¹⁸ Cf. Shafer-Landau. *Ibid.*, 307.

whether the adoption of some scientifically motivated version of “instrumentalism” or a “pragmatic theory of truth” might help to provide some way of staving off, or side-stepping, the undesirable import of the theory's radical metaphysics. Any semblance of relief, however, would only be superficial. Apart from the fact that the primary motivation for the implementation of any such pragmatic strategies would simply be one of attempting to “resurrect” the traditional A-B metaphysics of time, the metaphysical result of such a resurrection (even if only to have ontico-temporal entities serve as something like “useful fictions”—and nothing more) would once more place us right back in the untenable position from which we originally started, clinging tenaciously onto what remain merely thin, and ontologically inadequate, conceptualizations of time and temporal phenomena. More to the point, Bertrand Russell once famously objected to the overhasty adoption of pragmatic approaches to truth, that beliefs can be “useful, but yet still plainly false”. Adding to this, Nicholas Rescher aptly observes that:

Various continental philosophers have disapprovingly seen in pragmatism's concern for practical efficacy—for 'success' and 'paying off'—the expression of characteristically American social attitudes: crass materialism and naïve democratism, [and] thus looked down upon as a quintessentially American philosophy—a philosophical expression of the American go-getter spirit with its-success oriented ideology.²¹⁹

Observations such as these make for some admittedly fair and pertinent (if somewhat harsh) criticisms of American pragmatism, when viewed from the standpoint of metaphysics—criticisms, which vast numbers of contemporary American philosophers are likely to have failed to even consider, but which nevertheless afford a more comprehensive understanding and appreciation of the limits of such aspirations to pragmatism, by identifying and acknowledging the socially and historically determined context from which they contingently arose.

²¹⁹ “Pragmatism”. *Oxford Companion to Philosophy*. Nicholas Rescher. 712. (1995). For a similar critique, see also, Heidegger's 'Die Frage Nach der Technik'. 'The Question Concerning Technology'. (1954). Trans. David Krell. *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*. (1976).

Digging deep enough within the traditional metaphysical paradigm, we eventually arrive at the central dogma of the A-B tradition, namely, that time consists of the A Series if and only if time is tensed, but it consists of the B Series if and only if it is tenseless (that is, that the metaphysical nature of time is A theoretical iff the ontology of time is tensed, but is B theoretical iff the ontology of time is tenseless). This thesis has been historically assumed as an a priori metaphysical background assumption by the A-B tradition, and serves as the origin and ground of the horns of the tensed-tenseless dilemma by entailing them as a logical consequence; and it has historically served to help to mask the possibility of understanding the A-B tradition as resulting in something like an error theory of time. Given the arguments that have been presented here, the central dogma of the traditional conception of time, despite being internally and logically consistent (in regards to its characterization, and listing of necessary and sufficient conditions),²²⁰ results in a proposition whereby everything it actually claims about the metaphysical and ontological reality of time seems to be false.²²¹ Ironically, and somewhat counter-intuitively however, the central dogma itself still turns out to be true, though not for the sorts of reasons that its disciples would have hoped, or have historically assumed.²²² This has been made possible because of the simple fact that a biconditional is true in first-order logic only when its two components have the same truth value, otherwise it is false. In this particular case,

²²⁰ That is, that A theoretical time is in some way “dynamic”, and taken to involve genuine change, while the B theory remains capable of affording us with only a “static” conception of time, etc. Despite the fact that (on a few occasions) there have been some who have attempted to challenge, and rebel against this standard interpretation, it remains to this day, largely unchallenged as the “received view” within the extant literature on the subject. For more relating to this, see for example, “Changes in Events and Changes in Things”. Prior. (1968). *The Philosophy of Time*. Lepoidevin and MacBeath eds. (1993); as well as “The Problem of Time and Change”. *The Ontology of Time*. Oaklander. (2004).

²²¹ More specifically, it results in a proposition in which the elements of both biconditionals are capable of being shown to be false, which thus renders the broader conjunctive statement and main logical connective true, a curious feature, and peculiar ambiguity of the central dogma, which has historically hampered the recognition of the possibility of an error theory of A-B time up to now.

²²² But rather, simply because it turns out in the end, to be a straightforward case of “F’s all across the board.” See (Figure 5).

the two biconditionals that make up the central dogma of the traditional conception of time turn out to indeed be true, because each of their respective components do end up having the same truth value, only this value is not “truth” (as has been typically supposed), but “falsity”; an unexpected outcome which curiously enough, still preserves the overall truth of the main conjunction at the heart of the dogma. Furthermore, the central dogma of the traditional conception of A-B time turns out to be derivable from the error theory and the joint claims that the metaphysics of time is neither A nor B theoretical, and that the ontology of time is neither tensed nor tenseless.²²³ This logical peculiarity of the biconditional's truth functionality is what allows for the central dogma to turn out to be true, despite the fact that all of the major metaphysical assertions it makes about the nature of time seem to be false. In other words, the truth of the dogma itself, can be taken as no indication of the truth of its major metaphysical and ontological claims. Putting this point still more explicitly by laying it all out on a truth table, at the end of the day, the actual import of the traditional A-B conception of time turns out looking something like this:

$$\begin{array}{cccc}
 (A \leftrightarrow T) & \wedge & (B \leftrightarrow L) & \\
 \mathbf{F} & & \mathbf{F} & \mathbf{F} \\
 & & \mathbf{T} &
 \end{array}$$

Figure 5

A simple yet accurate way of understanding the history of the philosophy of time as it has been conducted within the A-B tradition, is as it having consisted of a various number of attempts to show that one of the biconditionals comprising the central dogma has metaphysical and ontological elements that are all true, while its counterpart biconditional has elements that are all false; a strategy which might appear at least *prima facie* to successfully establish the truth of

²²³ Cf. Chapters 2 & 3.

one's chosen metaphysical and ontological A-B theses on time, but which notably, merely serves to preserve common belief in the traditional assumption of the SER thesis.

It is also perhaps worth pointing out here, that given his own understanding of the way the A, B, and C Series related to one another, McTaggart himself, would have understood it to be impossible for there ever to be an specific arrangement of truth values within the central dogma where there happened to be something like: all “T's on the left, and all F's on the right”, or vice versa, etc. A fact, which has been consistently overlooked by members of the A-B tradition, but ends up providing us with yet another explanation and reason for seeing why those who remain caught up in an attempt to successfully formulate a viable metaphysics of time, that begins based upon an account of time that resembles something like McTaggart's A or B Series, are doomed from the start. This is because the main connective operating within the central dogma is a “conjunction”, a fact that, astonishingly enough, somehow manages to get overlooked by the multitudes still currently operating within the tradition; who erroneously proceed, and carry on with their research, as if this conjunction were instead something more like a exclusive “disjunction”. A widespread error, that most likely results from a conflation of the central dogma of the traditional conception of time, which serves as the tacit origin and ground of the traditional metaphysical paradigm, with the SER thesis—a prominent metaphysical thesis found within the paradigm itself, and occurring in the tensed-tenseless dilemma. Recalling the previous findings of Chapter 2, it can also be seen that the actual reason for why the main logical operator of the central dogma turns out to be a conjunction (and not a disjunction), is because the dogma itself ultimately just consists of two alternative ways of interpreting the same thing; specifically, the C Series; which, as we have shown, just turns out to be a roundabout and indirect way of referring

to an abstract spatio-linear “order”, viz., space (with the subsequently appended ad hoc assumptions being made that one of these is to be thought of as “static”, with the other one getting characterized as purportedly “dynamic”, etc.).

A significant implication of this traditional strategy for our understanding of time then, is that it effectively precludes any attempt to transcend the basic metaphysical and ontological concepts and starting points that have already been assumed from the outset. The A-B tradition has historically assumed that to do the philosophy of time, in a respectful or rigorous manner, one must first off, antecedently grant these ready-made basic concepts and their concomitant a priori background assumptions. In fact, one of these fundamental assumptions, which continually gets passed along (the SER thesis), appears to have roots that can be traced back at least as far as Aristotle and his writings on time over twenty-five-hundred years ago. As Heidegger himself has noted,

Ever since Aristotle all discussions of the concept of time have clung in principle to the Aristotelian definition...”, adding, “Thus for the ordinary understanding of time, time shows itself as a sequence of nows which are constantly 'present-at-hand', simultaneously passing away and coming along. Time is understood as a succession, as a 'flowing stream' of “nows”, as the 'course of time'.²²⁴

One could argue, and quite persuasively it seems, that a major reason why progress in the philosophy of time has been so slow going over the centuries, and why it has been marked by so much repetition of what has already been said, is due in large part to the extraordinary amount of theoretical conservatism that it harbors for its most cherished (and as we have seen, problematic) basic concepts.²²⁵ In this vein, Quentin Smith, a highly prolific philosopher of time and influential A theorist, has observed that:

²²⁴ *Being and Time*, H412; H422.

²²⁵ Revealing Quine's still fashionable, and oft heeded, siren call for “parsimony” in ontological contexts, to be in the end really something of a double-edged sword. Quine, W. V. (1948). "On What There Is". *Review of Metaphysics*. 2: 21–38.

The philosophers of language have developed theories with important implications for the tensed/tenseless time debate, though they have rarely explored the implications their theories have for the philosophy of time. Likewise, the philosophers of tensed or tenseless time often make new or substantial contributions to the philosophy of language in the course of developing their arguments, though they rarely write essays that aim to establish theses in the philosophy of language as an end in itself or that aim to bring their results to the attention of philosophers of language.²²⁶

Smith, a mentor during my early years in graduate school, had frequently bemoaned the fact that so much of what had continued to pass muster and be published in professional peer-reviewed philosophy journals on the topic of time were views that were unmistakably identifiable as other ones which had already been espoused years ago—and in many cases, already been refuted, and demonstrated to be nonstarters. Smith saw the root cause of this unfortunate tendency within the analytic tradition (a tradition which, not without some irony, he himself continued to participate and play a major part in) to be the customary practice on the part of scholarly analytic journal article writers and editors, to arbitrarily and drastically limit their focus of attention almost entirely on articles that substantially referenced only recent works that appeared within the past two to three years, or so. An ahistorical practice, to say the least, which ultimately culminates in filling a vast number of academic philosophy journals with what are claimed to be “ongoing” debates, which, quite unbeknownst to the writers and editors “participating” in them, have actually already been decidedly settled years ago.²²⁷

For over the past hundred years, the A-B tradition has remained one which has repeatedly contented itself with only the semblance of progress and the illusion of advancement, having preoccupied itself instead with the proliferation and contrivance of increasingly more spectacular red herrings²²⁸, which happen to suggest ever more elaborate and exotic sets of “conclusions”

²²⁶ *Time, Tense, Reference*. Quentin Smith and Aleksandar Jokic. MIT Press. (2003) 1.

²²⁷ For a similar, and related discussion involving many of these same sorts of observations, see also Richard Rorty's incisive posthumously published article, “The Philosopher as Expert”.

²²⁸ Cf. Chapter 3.

than the last, about the nature of “time”, but which universally fail to fundamentally put to question that which has already been uncritically accepted regarding time's basic relation to being—and to ourselves. Which then comes to mean, that Augustine's frequently cited sage-like observations about time, turn out to indeed be quite meaningful and prophetic, though not for any of the sorts of reasons that have typically been touted by the philosophical tradition (which for some reason, almost always wind up involving a depiction of time as deeply profound and inherently mysterious etc.), but rather, on account of the straightforward Heideggerian-Bergsonian explanation that the traditional conception of “time” is simply not what actually shows up in ordinary everyday experience. Augustine then, was simply among the very first to have honestly and accurately observed this fact. And it is only when he misguidedly attempts to reconcile this phenomenological fact of his actual lived experience, with the traditional spatio-linear model and conception of “time” (as a Series) that he inherited from Plato and the Greeks, that problems, confusion, and “mysteriousness” begins to arise, leaving him left stuck in the precarious epistemological position of having to conclude of time that it is something that is understood, yet unknown:

What, after all, is time? Is there any short and simple answer to that question? Can anyone even wrap his mind around time so as to express it in words? Is there anything we talk about more familiarly, more knowingly, than time? And surely we understand it when we talk about it; we even understand it when we hear someone else talking about it. So what is time? If no one asks me, I know; if I want to explain it to someone who asks me, I do not know.²²⁹

At this point, some might reasonably begin to wonder whether with the proclamation of an “error theory of time”, we succeed in accomplishing anything beyond just a grandiose

²²⁹ Augustine. *Confessions*. Bk XI; Hyman, Arthur, James J. Walsh, and Thomas Williams. *Philosophy in the Middle Ages*. Hackett Publishing, (2010) p. 75. 14.17.

quid est enim tempus? quis hoc facile breviterque explicaverit? quis hoc ad verbum de illo proferendum vel cogitatione comprehenderit? quid autem familiarius et notius in loquendo commemoramus quam tempus? et intellegimus utique, cum id loquimur, intellegimus etiam, cum alio loquente id audimus. quid est ergo tempus? si nemo ex me quaerat, scio; si uarenti explicare velim, nescio.

sounding recapitulation of the major findings originally propounded by McTaggart more than a hundred years ago already.²³⁰ Insofar as both the A and B theories of “time” have been found to be equally metaphysically bankrupt, our views certainly have this much in common. But there are important respects in which the views argued for here differ to a significant degree from those originally put forth by McTaggart—two of which, happen to be well worth pointing out. First, despite all the erroneous characteristics of both the A and B Series, McTaggart still took the C Series to, in some sense, be “real”; according to the arguments that have been presented here however, the C Series is understood to be just one more erroneous view among the others, characterizable in fact, as perhaps the primordial error, that gave rise to the other two theories of time (the A and B Series),²³¹ and which itself remains the consequence of a distorted misunderstanding, and tacit spatialization, of time.²³² Second, McTaggart implicitly took the phenomenology of temporality to be essentially tensed or tenseless; but according to the line of thought that has been laid out here²³³, such attempts to describe the phenomena of time in purely tensed or tenseless terms, inevitably result in caricatures and “misperceptions” of what actually and initially shows up or us phenomenologically; misperceptions that are themselves the result of an unbridled attempt to try to force the phenomena of the everyday world into well-worn ready-made conceptual ways of thinking about time, which understand it solely in terms of the ontico-

²³⁰ Indeed, given the way that the error theory has been characterized up to this point, there can be seen to be a lot of agreement not only between it and McTaggart's own views, but also with the views of Bergson and Heidegger vis-a-vis the traditional conception of time; so much so, that there begins to arise a detectable sense in which all three of these early twentieth century thinkers (who are typically thought of as having held vastly disparate views) in fact, shared a common interest in developing something like an “error theory of time” in the course of providing their own idiosyncratic critiques of the accepted ways in which time has been traditionally understood and handed down through the generations.

²³¹ Cf. Chapter 2.

²³² As McTaggart himself quite clearly put it, in the second volume of his *Nature of Existence*, “We ... call this real series by the name of the C Series.” *The Nature of Existence*. Volume II. McTaggart. (1927) 213. A fatal error, which arises from mistakenly equating time with merely a thinly conceived linear “order”.

²³³ Cf. Chapter 3.

temporal—the traditional way of thinking about time that has arguably been with us ever since the Ancient Greeks, but which McTaggart was unable to successfully extricate himself from.²³⁴

One helpful way to briefly sum up the major arguments that have appeared up to this point in the dissertation, and how they have made possible our eventual arrival at proclaiming the possibility of something like an error theory of A-B time to be true, is to understand what we have undertaken here as something akin to what might be considered a “deconstruction” of time. A deconstruction which has proceeded by demonstrating the traditional conception of time to consist of a metaphysics that is self-contradictory, and an ontology that remains ontologically inadequate. Since serialized conceptions of time are seen to involve a tacit spatialization of time (i.e. the prior identification with, or reduction of, time to space),²³⁵ and since the metaphysics of presence turns out to be necessary precondition for time to be considered either tensed or tenseless (i.e. for the tensed-tenseless distinction itself to arise erotetically),²³⁶ the central thesis of the error theory of A-B time—that time is not a Series, and the ontology of time is neither tensed nor tenseless—follows from the two additional theses, that time is not space (that is, it is not identifiable with or reducible to space), but is something altogether different in kind,²³⁷ and a rejection of the metaphysics of presence as a legitimate metaontological assumption,²³⁸ which can be arrived at via a Heideggerian hermeneutic phenomenology of being on account of the discoverable and extant modes of being of the ready-to-hand [Zuhandenheit]²³⁹ and Existence [Existenz]²⁴⁰, that together demonstrate that it is not the case that the present-at-hand is anything

²³⁴ *The Nature of Existence*, McTaggart. 212.

²³⁵ Chapter 2.

²³⁶ Chapter 3.

²³⁷ Cf. Chapter 2; This is once again simply a background assumption that has been historically assumed by the tradition.

²³⁸ Cf. Chapter 3.

²³⁹ And by extension, “worldhood”.

²⁴⁰ And by extension, “the self”.

like ontologically basic, or exhaustive of being.²⁴¹ To persist in trying to hold onto this mistaken belief and continue down the path of conceptualizing time in this traditional way, inevitably leads to what Heidegger has identified as the “de-worlding” of the world, and the “leveling-down” of the subjectivity of the subject (i.e. human existence). To be human (qua Dasein) however, is to require a world.

One possible objection to all of this, that is worthy of consideration and worth responding to, would be what has come to be known as “the argument from disastrous results”,²⁴² which typically goes something as follows: “If the widespread acceptance of a view would lead to disastrous results, then that view is false. Widespread acceptance of the error theory of time would lead to disastrous results. Therefore, the error theory of time is false.”

Our way of responding to this objection is to begin by pointing out that the first premise of the argument is just patently false. The truth of a theory does not depend on the results of everyone's embracing it.²⁴³ In addition, while it may be an interesting question whether the second premise is true, we need not venture an opinion here on whether it is,²⁴⁴ since the first premise of the argument here is most definitely false.²⁴⁵ The point then is that we cannot undermine the error theory by arguing that its popular acceptance would lead to the downfall of civilization—even if it would.²⁴⁶ And this means that the claim that the error theory of A-B time is false, based on the argument from disastrous results, is simply a non sequitur. Nicely summing

²⁴¹ Or, to put it another way, what this comes to mean is that the metaphysics of presence (as a instance of ontological reductivism) turns out to be a nonstarter.

²⁴² Once again, this argument, and the discussion which follows, has been drawn heavily from a discussion on the more traditional *moral* version of error theory appearing in Shafer-Landau. *Ibid.*, 309.

²⁴³ Shafer-Landau. *Ibid.*, 309.

²⁴⁴ Although it appears to involve something like a half-baked version, or perhaps even something like an “inversion”, of either argumentum ad populum (bandwagon) or the ad baculum fallacies.

²⁴⁵ Shafer-Landau. *Ibid.*, 309.

²⁴⁶ Shafer-Landau. *Ibid.*, 309.

up this point, Shafer-Landau carefully notes:

Metaphysical theories try to tell us what the world is like. Such theories might contain some bitter truths, ones that, if widely accepted, would lead to heartache, or loss of faith, or the breakdown of longstanding customs and social practices (That's what makes them bitter.) At best, this might give us some reason not to publicize these claims, but that is no reason to suppose that they are false.²⁴⁷

Since the central dogma of the A-B tradition turns out ironically (and counter-intuitively) to be true, despite the fact that the actual metaphysical and ontological content of what it claims seems to be entirely false, the error theory of time also begins to shed some light on the phenomena of how the deployment of the traditional conception of time comes to be able to function at times as a form of ideology (understood in the Critical Theorist/Marxist sense of the term), insofar as the experience of encountering a metaphysical doctrine that is heralded and paraded about as a “natural” or a “necessary” truth, but which nevertheless can be shown to be rife with falsehoods and internal contradictions, is taken as a clue—or better, a telltale sign—that one is dealing with ideology, and an imagined relation to the real conditions of existence. Unfortunately, there will not be sufficient room here to provide a fully developed account of such phenomena, although initial adumbrations of the way in which “time” can, and does function as ideology can already be found in the early works of both Karl Marx and Heidegger. As Marx famously observed:

If my own activity does not belong to me, if it is an alien, a coerced activity, to whom, then, does it belong? To a being other than me. Who is this being? ... The alien being, to whom labour and the produce of labour belongs, in whose service labour is done and for whose benefit the produce of labour is provided, can only be man himself. ... If his own activity is to him an unfree activity, then he is treating it as activity performed in the service, under the dominion, the coercion and the yoke of another man.²⁴⁸

And as Heidegger noted:

In order to speak in keeping with the ontological character of our theme here, we must talk temporally about time. We wish to repeat temporally the question of what time is. Time is the

²⁴⁷ Shafer-Landau. *Ibid.*, 310.

²⁴⁸ Karl Marx. “Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844”. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. Tucker. (1978) 77-78.

'how'. If we inquire into what time is, then one may not cling prematurely to an answer (time is such and such), for this always means a 'what'. ... Let us disregard the answer and repeat the question. What happened to the question? It has transformed itself. What is time? became the question: Who is time? More closely: are we ourselves time? Or closer still: am I my time? In this way I come closest to it, and if I understand the question correctly, it is then taken completely seriously. Such questioning is thus the most appropriate manner of access to and of dealing with time as in each case mine.²⁴⁹

A more thoroughgoing examination of this phenomenon however, would include, among other things, a detailed analysis of the alienation of human lived time by means of estranged labor; a discussion of the manner in which the currently dominant technological understanding of being enframes, levels-down, and “orders” the world, and others in it, as merely standing reserve [bestand]²⁵⁰; and an account of the measure of power that ruling class elites have historically yielded from the practice of indoctrinating the lower, subjugated classes with versions of the traditional serialized conception of “time” to ease and expedite their ability to administer, regulate, and control the exploited members of the population, and keep them living in compliance with the status quo.

§4.2

THE METAPHYSICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE ARGUMENTS PRESENTED AND TURNING TOWARDS THE DESTRUKTION OF THE HISTORY OF ONTOLOGY

The metaphysical implications of the arguments that have been presented here are that the metaphysics of time consists of neither the A nor B Series and that the traditional conception of time²⁵¹ is false. One of the most significant implications to come out of the ontological

²⁴⁹ *Der Begriff der Zeit*. (1924). Heidegger, *The Concept of Time*. McNeill Trans. (1992) 22.

Sehen wir nicht auf die Antwort, sondern wiederholen wir die Frage. Was geschah mit der Frage? Sie hat sich gewandelt. Was ist die Zeit? Würde zur Frage: Wer ist die Zeit? Naher: sind wir selbst die Zeit? Oder noch naher: bin ich meine Zeit? Damit komme ich ihr am nächsten, und wenn ich die Frage recht verstehe, dann ist mit ihr alles ernst geworden. Also ist solches Fragen die angemessenste Zugangs- und Umgangsart mit der Zeit als mit der je meinigen.”

²⁵⁰ “Die Frage Nach der Technik”. Martin Heidegger. (1954). “The Question Concerning Technology”. Trans. David Krell. *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*. 1976.

²⁵¹ *Being and Time*, H412; H422.

argument²⁵² is that it provides a critical first step in what can be seen as a serious attempt at further developing the proposed second part of Heidegger's groundbreaking work in *Being and Time*, which he left unfinished, and which was to involve “the phenomenological destruction (Destruktion) of the history of ontology, with the problematic of Temporality [Temporalität] as our clue [Leitfaden]”.²⁵³ As Charles Guignon remarks, “Using the results of the first stage as its clue or guideline, the historical stage is supposed to de-structure the history of ontology, 'staking out the positive possibilities of that tradition,' until it arrives 'at those primordial experiences in which we achieved our first ways of determining the nature of Being—the ways that have guided us ever since’”.²⁵⁴ Guignon further notes, that “The historical reduction or 'destruction' is designed to recover a deeper, more primordial sense of the temporality of Being which underlies our common-sense misunderstanding of being as mere presence.”²⁵⁵ As it was originally conceived by Heidegger, *Being and Time* was supposed to consist of two parts:

Accordingly our treatment of the question of Being branches out into two distinct tasks, and our treatise will thus have two parts: *Part One*: the Interpretation of Dasein in terms of temporality, and the explication of time as the transcendental horizon for the question of Being. *Part Two*: basic features of a phenomenological destruction of the history of ontology, with the problematic of Temporality as our clue.

Part One has *three divisions*

1. the preparatory fundamental analysis of Dasein;
2. Dasein and temporality;
3. time and Being.

Part Two likewise has *three divisions*:

1. Kant's doctrine of schematism and time, as a preliminary stage in problematic of Temporality;
2. The ontological foundation of Descartes' 'cogito sum', and how the medieval ontology has been taken over into the problematic of the 'res cogitans';

²⁵² Although the sense in which this argument is taken to be “ontological” needs to first be distinguished from the way in which ontological arguments have been traditionally understood. Traditionally, an “ontological argument” is taken to be one that begins with “reason”, and with “nothing but analytic a priori and necessary premises”, the argument appearing here however, begins with nothing of the sort, but begins instead with our “being-in-the-world”, and the ordinary concrete ways in which we cope and deal with the world, which is at once made possible, and further reinforced by, the temporal particularity of our human existence. *Ontological Arguments and Belief in God*. Graham Oppy. Cambridge UP, (2007).

²⁵³ *Being and Time*, H39.

²⁵⁴ *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge*, Guignon. (1983) 224; as well as *Being and Time*, H22.

²⁵⁵ *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge*, Ibid., 81.

3. Aristotle's essay on time, as providing a way of discriminating the phenomenal basis and limits of ancient ontology.

As English translators of *Being and Time*, Macquarrie and Robinson point out, “Part Two and the third division of Part One never appeared”.²⁵⁶

Yet bearing all this in mind, insofar as the proposed task for ontology is to seriously remain one of *Destruktion*, in order to be able to ever accurately discern just what the positive possibilities and contributions of the A-B tradition are, we must first critically acquire sufficient distance from the old tensed-tenseless paradigm and its problematic ways of thinking, in order to arrive at a position where we can properly reclaim what remains “positive” within that tradition.

As Heidegger himself had put the matter:

The question of Being does not achieve its true concreteness until we have carried through the process of destroying the ontological tradition”; [...] “How then, are we to define the time which is manifest within the horizon of the circumspective concerned clock-using in which one takes one's time? *This time is that which is counted and which shows itself when one follows the travelling pointer, counting and making present in such a way that this making-present temporalizes itself in an ecstatic unity with the retaining and awaiting which are horizontally open according to the “earlier” and “later”*. This, however, is nothing else than an existential-ontological interpretation of Aristotle's definition of “time” : τούτο γάρ ἐστιν ὁ χρόνος, ἄριθμος κινήσεως κατὰ τὸ πρότερον καὶ ὕστερον. “For this is time: that which is counted in the movement which we encounter within the horizon of the earlier and later.” This definition may seem strange at first glance; but if one defines the existential-ontological horizon from which Aristotle has taken it, one sees that it is as 'obvious' as it at first seems strange, and has been genuinely derived. The source of the time which is thus manifest does not become a problem for Aristotle. His Interpretation of time moves rather in the direction of the 'natural' way of understanding Being. Yet because this very understanding and the Being which is thus understood have in principle been made a problem for the investigation which lies before us, it is only *after* we have found a solution for the question of Being that the Aristotelian analysis of time can be interpreted thematically in such a way that it may indeed gain some signification in principle, if the formulation of this question in ancient ontology, with all its critical limitations, is to be appropriated in a positive manner.²⁵⁷

According to the analysis that has been presented here, the source [Ursprung] and genesis of the traditional conception of time turns out, in the end, to be something like space [Gegend]. And if the early claims in *Being and Time* concerning the transcendental role that time plays with

²⁵⁶ *Being and Time*. Harper Collins, Macquarrie and Robinson Trans. (2008). 64.

²⁵⁷ *Being and Time*, H26; H421.

respect to being and “any understanding whatsoever of being”²⁵⁸ are taken to hold any water, then the Western philosophical tradition, which has historically tended to interpret “being” in terms of “substance” [οὐσία] and “presence” [Anwesenheit]²⁵⁹, turns out to be one that is based upon a primordial spatialization of time and a fundamental misconstrual of time as a kind of area, region, or place [Gegend] (i.e., as a kind of “space”); an historical development in the history of Western thought which has led to the subsequent rise and continued dominance of an ontology of the “object” [Gegenstand].

Interestingly, among contemporary Heideggerians, serious attempts at trying to further develop and carry out Heidegger's original project are not all that commonly found. Rather, what is typically found, is the curious practice of simply talking a bit about what the original project (and the second part) of *Being and Time* was supposed to include,²⁶⁰ pointing out that Heidegger himself was unsuccessful at completing it, and then just leaving it at that, and with the help of some hand-waiving, quickly moving on to another (and quite often, needlessly turgid) discussion about something else; a peculiar practice, which leaves one with the impression of wondering whatever was the point of even bringing it up in the first place. For some unfortunate reason, there has been (and remains) a widespread penchant among philosophers—and among Heideggerian scholars especially—for simply citing what the master has said, and leaving it at that; for merely passing the word along; for being thorough, yet at the same time otiose.

What is more, it could also be averred here that much of what explains Heidegger's own failure to successfully carry out to completion the primary aim of his magnum opus, and why he was ultimately forced to abandon its central project, has much to do with the fact that he failed to

²⁵⁸ *Being and Time*, H1.

²⁵⁹ *Being and Time*, H225.

²⁶⁰ As we ourselves have just done.

fully appreciate and take seriously enough, Bergson's central insight with regard to the spatialization of time.²⁶¹ While Bergson's views do have their shortcomings,²⁶² from what has been shown here however, they nevertheless can be seen to have been on the right track.²⁶³ Going against what has become, and largely maintained itself as, the received view within current Heideggerian scholarship, a view which tends to underscore only the differences that are to be found between Heidegger's and Bergson's writings on time (and this, only on those infrequent occasions where Bergson has not been overlooked entirely), one could argue that much of Heidegger's own progress and indeed his inspiration for working on the question of time is owed largely (much like Sartre after him) to an initial exposure to Bergsonian ideas, which helped orient him at the start, and point him in the right direction.²⁶⁴ Bergson was among the first to glimpse the possibility of thinking time non-spatially. Heidegger, on the other hand, was among the first to successfully recover the possibility of thinking about time in non-serialized terms. Both however, ultimately came to be unsuccessful with regard to their respective grander projects, though for different reasons. Bergson was unable to find a way to sufficiently free himself from thinking in the traditional terms of serialized time²⁶⁵, and as a result, ended up pinning all his hopes of being able to provide a positive conception of non-spatialized time on the strong insistence and rigid requirement that there be a hard and fast, and well discernible,

²⁶¹ See, *Being and Time*, H18, H333.

²⁶² To Heidegger's eyes, Bergson's failure was due in large part to his inability to think time radically enough, as he took Bergson's treatment of non-quantitative non-juxtaposed time to be just one more variant of the "traditional conception of time", writing: "Bergson's view of time too has obviously arisen from an Interpretation of the Aristotelian essay on time." And insofar as it remains possible to construe Bergson's positive conception of time as *durée* as nothing more than just a colorful description of succession occurring within a Series, then Heidegger appears to have been right. *Being and Time*, H26; H432nxxx.

²⁶³ *Being and Time*. Ibid., H47.

²⁶⁴ For textual evidence of this, compare Heidegger's *Being and Time*, (1927), and some of his other earlier works, such as *The Concept of Time*, (1924), with Bergson's *Time and Free Will*, (1889).

²⁶⁵ And because of this, Heidegger's characterization of Bergson in *Being and Time* as just one more member of a tradition that stretches all the way back to Aristotle, is at least partly correct (H26; H432nxxx).

distinction between the serialized notions of juxtaposition and succession, and opting to equate “time” (à la durée) with the latter variety.²⁶⁶ And despite the preponderance of ingenuity and unparalleled originality that characterizes Heidegger's account at the start, his own failure to fully appreciate significance and metaphysical import of Bergson's primary insights with respect to the perils of spatialized time²⁶⁷ and find a way to incorporate them seamlessly into his own thinking, eventually led him to reintroduce a spatialized “temporal” ontology right around the point where he was well-poised to distance himself furthest from all of the traditional ways of thinking about time that had come before him; and adding to this irony, he did so in precisely those areas where he had already begun to make the most progress on the issue of “being and time”, and the question of the latter's relation to former, namely, within his account of “ecstatic temporality” and of “world-time”.

Despite all the ingenuity and profundity that characterizes Division I of *Being and Time*, in Division II, Heidegger comes to analyze his account of ecstatic temporality (time understood through the lens of authentic subjectivity) in terms of “being alongside”, “beings towards”, and “having beenness”²⁶⁸, and his account of world-time (time as understood against a backdrop of

²⁶⁶ And so given the metaphysical import of his own original insight regarding spatialized time this is what largely helps to explain why his project became doomed to failure in the end.

²⁶⁷ We necessarily express ourselves by means of words and we usually think in terms of space. ... Nevertheless it is generally agreed to regard time as an unbounded medium, different from space but homogenous like the latter: the homogenous is supposed to take two forms, according as its contents co-exist or follow one another. It is true that, when we make time a homogenous medium in which conscious states unfold themselves, we take it to be given all at once, which amounts to saying that we abstract it from duration. This simple consideration ought to warn us that we are thus unwittingly falling back upon space, and really giving up time. Bergson, *Time and Freewill* (1889).

Nous nous exprimons nécessairement par des mots, et nous pensons le plus souvent dans l'espace. ... Néanmoins on s'accorde à envisager le temps comme un milieu indéfini, différent de l'espace, mais homogène comme lui : l'homogène revêtirait ainsi une double forme, selon qu'une coexistence ou une succession le remplit. Il est vrai que lorsqu'on fait du temps un milieu homogène où les états de conscience paraissent se dérouler, on se le donne par là même tout d'un coup, ce qui revient à dire qu'on le soustrait à la durée. Cette simple réflexion devrait nous avertir que nous retombons alors inconsciemment sur l'espace.” Essai sur les Données Immédiates de la Conscience. Bergson 1889. Avant-Propos, 74.

²⁶⁸ *Being and Time*, H325-326.

teleology/normativity) along the lines of the “now”, the “then”, and the “on the former occasion”²⁶⁹, analyses which continue to be readily and fairly easily mappable onto the traditional conception of time (i.e. “time” conceived as a species of space, and the very sort of thing that these analyses were supposed to “distance” us from) that happens to be constituted by the “now”, the “not yet”, and the “no longer” and treats time merely as a sequence of “nows”²⁷⁰(and, as we have also seen, gives rise to the problematic temporal ontologies of tensed A properties and tenseless B relations). Despite the considerable advances that he had made with respect to the extraordinarily difficult and demanding task of trying to understand time, non-serially, Heidegger eventually stumbles, by failing to fully appreciate and successfully heed Bergson's previous admonitions to those aspiring to undertake a serious investigation of time, and instead, bases his account of these contexts largely upon the concept of tense, which effectively spatializes his overall account of time in the end, and dampens much of the progress he had initially made by readmitting the traditional serialized approach back into his basic understanding of time.

Since, just like the rest of the tradition that he was in the process of providing a massively ambitious critique of, Heidegger ultimately continued to advocate the simple, basic, and common assumption that “time is not a kind of space”²⁷¹, so too, like the rest of the tradition, does his own account of time ultimately come to result to an extent in confusion and contradiction. In particular, in Division II where his account makes an unwise appeal to the problematic²⁷² concept of tense during its attempt to provide a more focused and thematized discussion of the nature of time. In certain places, Heidegger himself appears to have been vaguely aware of this troubled

²⁶⁹ *Being and Time*, H406-407.

²⁷⁰ *Being and Time*, H421.

²⁷¹ *Being and Time*, H18.

²⁷² A concept which lies at the heart of the crisis of traditional metaphysics. Cf. Chapter 2.

outcome, which continued to loom just on the horizon²⁷³, and which he was struggling desperately at certain times to avoid, writing:

If the expressions 'before' and 'already' were to have a time-oriented [zeithafte] signification such as this {'not yet now—but later'; 'no longer now—but earlier'} (and they can have this signification too), then to say that care has temporality would be to say that it is something which is 'earlier' and 'later', 'not yet' and 'no longer'. Care would then be conceived as an entity which occurs and runs its course 'in time'. The Being of an entity having the character of Dasein would become something present-at-hand. If this sort of thing is impossible, then any time-oriented signification {zeithafte Bedeutung} which the expressions we have mentioned may have, must be different from this.²⁷⁴

However, despite his becoming vaguely aware of the problem, Heidegger remained unable to successfully plot a course out of this pressing situation because of his failure (clearly illustrated here) to properly identify traditional tensed and tenseless significations of “earlier”, “later”, “not yet”, and “no longer”, etc. (i.e., A properties and B relations), not as a species of zeithafte Bedeutungen (time-oriented significations), but of something that would be much more accurately referred to as Gegend-hafte Bedeutungen von Zeit (i.e., space-oriented significations of time).

Despite his failure to successfully root out “space” [Gegend] from his own account of time, Heidegger had nevertheless still gone further than anyone before him (including Bergson) in mapping out (if only inadvertently) what some of the detrimental consequences for our understanding of time—and by extension, the world and ourselves—turn out to be, when operating only within the narrow and restrictive confines of a spatialized understanding of “time”:

When space is discovered non-circumspectively by just looking at it, the environmental regions [Gegenden] get neutralized to pure dimensions. Places and indeed the whole circumspectively oriented totality of places belonging to equipment ready-to-hand—get reduced to a multiplicity of positions for random Things. The spatiality of what is ready-to-hand within-the-world loses its involvement-character, and so does the ready-to-hand. The world loses its specific aroundness; the environment becomes the world of Nature. The 'world', as a totality of equipment ready-to-hand, becomes spatialized [veräumlicht] to a context of extended Things which are just present-at-hand

²⁷³ *Being and Time*, H112.

²⁷⁴ *Being and Time*, H327. The words occurring in the braces have been added for emphasis.

and no more. The homogenous space of Nature shows itself only when the entities we encounter are discovered in such a way that the worldly character of the ready-to-hand gets specifically deprived of its worldhood.²⁷⁵

Through the spatialization of time, the world's organic holism of significance and meaning, its normativity, and teleology, as well as our own basic human capacity for authenticity, begins to become drained from the world, leaving us with an increasingly enervated grasp and narrow calculative view of metaphysical reality. Indeed, by the Winter of 1941, Heidegger himself finally begins to explicitly admit that,

The modern habit of thinking time together with “space” (already prefigured in the beginning of metaphysics with Aristotle) leads us astray. For according to this way of thinking time is considered solely in terms of its extension, and this as a counting up of fleeting now-points. Thought in modern terms, time is a parameter, like space, a standard scale according to which something is measured and estimated. Space and time are essentially related to “calculation”.²⁷⁶

Some commentators, such as the late Bert Dreyfus, have tried at times to accentuate the separation between Heidegger's work in the two Divisions of *Being and Time*, treating them separately and focusing almost exclusively on the first, while treating the second with what at times seem to be almost dismissive airs, claiming that the ideas presented there are left confused and inchoate, etc. Those that are inclined to follow Dreyfus' lead in doing so, frequently cite the historical fact that at the time it was being written, the book was being rushed for publication, in order to try and further lend these views more credence. And while to a certain extent they are right, and Division II does have its failings (as we have shown here), there is however, in the course of Heidegger's discussion of time in Division II, also much that is well worth salvaging, and which should not be so quickly dispensed with, or so readily overlooked. A few examples of these would be (i) the call for a critique of the traditional conception of time (“time as a series of nows”; or χρόνος), (ii) the project of providing a genealogy of the lineage of this conception of

²⁷⁵ *Being and Time*, H112. See also, Chapter 3.

²⁷⁶ Heidegger, *Basic Concepts*. (Gesmtausgabe, vol. 51). Gary Aylesworth Trans. (1993).

time through Bergson, Hegel, Kant, Descartes, and all the way back to Aristotle's *Physics IV*, and (iii) the provision of a clearing through which we can come to better understand how time can come to have authentic, teleological, normative, and transcendental aspects; are but just a few.²⁷⁷

Arguably however, it is Heidegger's use of world-time [Weltzeit] to translate the Presocratic temporal notion of αἰὼν in his lectures of 1929-30, taken together with a recognition of the primary ontological role that world-time plays with respect to being (in contrast to merely derivative one played by the traditional conception of “time” as a Series of nows [χρόνος] which, following Plato and Aristotle, has historically supplied most of the framework for interpreting the meaning of “temporality”) provides perhaps the clearest, most crystalline glimpse that has yet been provided since the Presocratics, of a non-serialized, non-spatialized understanding of time.²⁷⁸ Understanding time as αἰὼν enables us to better capture the organic thickness (i.e. the teleological and normative dimensions) of time, and the fact (repeatedly overlooked by the tradition) that it involves something much more like an organization, as opposed to just a thinly conceived linear “order” modeled on, and mappable to, some idealized vestige of quantifiable space.

All this having been said, and notwithstanding the shortcomings of this account, Heidegger had still progressed further than any other modern thinker before him in providing one of the most illuminating accounts of time and temporal phenomena to ever have been given; with perhaps the partial exception of Kant. As Heidegger himself notes:

The first and only person who has gone any stretch of the way towards investigating the dimension of Temporality [Temporalität] or has let himself be drawn hither by the coercion of the phenomena themselves is Kant. Only when we have established the problematic of Temporality, can we succeed in casting light on the obscurity of his doctrine of the schematism. But this will also show

²⁷⁷ *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time Division I*. Dreyfus, MIT Press. (1991).

²⁷⁸ Heidegger, *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik. Welt-Endlichkeit-Einsamkeit*, ed. F._w. Von Hermann (1983), lectures of 1929-30. 414.

us why this area is one which had to remain closed off to him in its real dimensions and its central ontological function. Kant himself was aware that we he was venturing into an area of obscurity: 'This schematism of our understanding as regards appearances and their mere form is an art hidden in the depths of the human soul, the true devices of which are hardly ever to be divined from Nature and laid uncovered before our eyes.' (*Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, 1781. 180f.) Here Kant shrinks back, as it were, in the face of something which must be brought to light as a theme and a principle if the expression "being" is to have any demonstrable meaning. In the end, those very phenomena which will be exhibited under the heading of 'Temporality' [Temporalität] in our analysis, are precisely those most covert judgments of the 'common reason' for which Kant says it is the 'business of philosophers' to provide an analytic.²⁷⁹

But before coming to largely discard the central project of *Being and Time* as it was originally conceived,²⁸⁰ Heidegger nevertheless still advances far enough in his preliminary investigation to leave us with a promising clue as to how to go about answering the question of time. Having taken an initial cue from Kant, who had written extensively on the subject, Heidegger eventually arrives at the auspicious suggestion that we should begin by thinking time transcendently,²⁸¹ but in a way, that interprets it not merely as an a priori precondition for any possible object²⁸² of experience²⁸³ (as Kant had),²⁸⁴ but as an even broader, and even more radical adaptation of this basic Kantian insight, with its transcendental role expanded and amplified to become even more comprehensive so as to provide the limit and background for any²⁸⁵ understanding of being in the first place; that is, to understand "time as the transcendental horizon for the question of being."²⁸⁶

²⁷⁹ *Being and Time*, H23.

²⁸⁰ Which again, as has been suggested here, was the inevitable result of his failure at key points to keep his own thought from reverting and collapsing back into a spatialization of time. *Being and Time*, H39-40.

²⁸¹ *Being and Time*, H1; H25; H437.

²⁸² À la the metaphysics of presence.

²⁸³ Immanuel Kant. *The Critique of Pure Reason*. [*Kritik der reinen Vernunft*] (1781) Paul Guyer Trans. ed. 2008. B50. See especially, Kant's "Transcendental Doctrine of the Power of Judgment and the Schematism of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding" (B176-B187); and it is noteworthy (cf. the arguments of §2) that the Kantian "Transcendental Aesthetic" begins first, with space (of all things), and that the treatment of "time" which follows, remains one where "time" gets characterized and distinguished for the most part simply by way of a qualification of this same, initial (spatial) starting point. B37; B50.

²⁸⁴ Heidegger himself remarks, "[Kant's] analysis remained oriented towards the traditional way in which time had been ordinarily understood; in the long run this kept him from working out the phenomenon of a 'transcendental determination of time' [transzendentalen Zeitbestimmung] in its own structure and function". *Being and Time*, H24.

²⁸⁵ Including, for example, that of worlds and selves, in addition to that of only objectified present-at-hand entities.

²⁸⁶ [Zeit als des transzendentalen Horizontes der Frage nach dem Sein.] *Being and Time*, H39.

Heidegger notes, correctly it seems, that time is not itself a being²⁸⁷, writing:

Time is not the kind of being that befits some entity that is merely-present. It simply “is” not; its being is not a determinate kind of being, it is not the being of some entity. Rather it is the condition of the possibility of the fact that there is being (not entities). Time does not have the kind of being of any other thing; rather time [constantly] unfolds [zeitigt]. And this unfolding constitutes the temporality of time.²⁸⁸

The clue however, that Heidegger leaves us with for coming up with a satisfactory answer to the question of time and of ontology, lies in the transcendental formal indication [Formaler Anzeige]²⁸⁹ of time as “Temporalität”. Where the idea of a “formal indication” [Formaler Anzeige], as Bert Dreyfus had plainly put it, is just:

The idea that we've got to start somewhere. And so we begin by specifying that this is the essence of such and such, but only provisionally, so that further investigation may call it into question. And it is only at the end of our investigation that we will either discover that we got it wrong, or that we had the right to say that.²⁹⁰

As Heidegger writes:

The fact remains that time, in the sense of 'being [sein] in time', functions as a criterion for distinguishing realms of being. Hitherto no one has asked or troubled to investigate how time has come to have this distinctive ontological function, or with what right anything like time functions as such a criterion; nor has anyone asked whether the authentic ontological relevance which is possible for it, gets expressed when “time” is used in so naïvely ontological a manner. 'Time' has acquired this 'self-evident' ontological function 'of its own accord', so to speak; indeed it has done so within the horizon of the way it is ordinarily understood. And it has maintained itself in this function. In contrast to all this, our treatment of the question of the meaning of being must enable us to show that *the central problematic of all ontology is rooted in the phenomenon of time, if rightly seen and rightly explained*, and we must show *how* this is the case. If being is to be conceived in terms of time, and if, indeed, its various modes and derivatives are to become intelligible in their respective modifications and derivations by taking time into consideration, then being itself (and not merely entities, let us say, as entities 'in time') is thus made visible in its 'temporal' character.²⁹¹

²⁸⁷ “Temporality 'is' not an *entity* at all. It is not, but *temporalizes* itself.” [Die Zeitlichkeit »ist« überhaupt kein *Seiendes*. Sie ist nicht, sondern *zeitigt* sich.] *Being and Time*, H328.

²⁸⁸ An observation which makes the very prospect of an attempt to provide something like an “ontology of time”, begin to sound rather suspect, and perhaps something which should itself be called into question. Also, well worth noting here, would be the patent, dual influences of both Kantian and Bergsonian thought on Heidegger concerning this point. Heidegger's Lectures of Winter Semester 1925-26 *Logik. Die Frage nach der Wahrheit*, ed. W. Biemel (1976) / *Logic: The Question of Truth*. Trans. Thomas Sheehan. 2010. 338.

²⁸⁹ For a quick but thorough discussion of Heidegger's use of formal indications, in his early years, see “Heidegger's Method: Philosophical Concepts as Formal Indications.” Dan Dahlstrom. Vol 47, no. 4 (June) 1994 *The Review of Metaphysics*. 775-795.

²⁹⁰ Dreyfus, Hubert. Berkeley Lectures (Fall 2007).

²⁹¹ *Being and Time*, H18.

Das Faktum besteht: Zeit, im Sinne von »in der Zeit sein«, fungiert als Kriterium der Scheidung von Seinsregionen. Wie

And adding further:

[T]he way in which being and its modes and characteristics have their meaning determined primordially in terms of time, is what we shall call its “*Temporal*” determinateness. Thus the fundamental ontological task of interpreting being as such includes working out the *Temporality of being*. In the exposition of the problematic of Temporality [Temporalität] the question of the meaning of being will first be concretely answered.²⁹²

Considerations such as these, coupled with careful phenomenological investigations of both the world and of human Existence—which afford us with a broader and more thoroughgoing examination of these phenomena (and by extension, of being itself) than either the natural sciences or traditional philosophy have been capable of providing on their own—supply us with strong evidence and reasons for understanding time metaphysically, not as “the measure or dimension of change”²⁹³ as has traditionally been the case²⁹⁴, but rather—and much more

die Zeit zu dieser ausgezeichneten ontologischen Funktion kommt und gar mit welchem Recht gerade so etwas wie Zeit als solches Kriterium fungiert und vollends, ob in dieser naiv ontologischen Verwendung der Zeit ihre eigentliche mögliche ontologische Relevanz zum Ausdruck kommt, ist bislang weder gefragt, noch untersucht worden. Die »Zeit« ist, und zwar im Horizont des vulgären Zeitverständnisses, gleichsam »von selbst« in diese »selbstverständliche« ontologische Funktion geraten und hat sich bis heute darin gehalten. Demgegenüber ist auf dem Boden der ausgearbeiteten Frage nach dem Sinn von Sein zu zeigen, *daz und wie im rechtgesehenen und rechtexplizierten Phänomen der Zeit die znetrale Problematik aller Ontologie verwurzelt ist*. Wenn Sein aus der Zeit begriffen werden soll und die verschiedenen Modi und Derivate von Sein in ihren Modifikationen un Derivationen in der Tat aus dem Hinblick auf Zeit verständlich werden, dann ist damit das Sein selbst – nicht etwa nur Seiendes als »in der Zeit« Seiendes, in seinem »zeitlichen« Charakter sichtbar gemacht.

²⁹² *Being and Time*, H19.

[...] nennen wir die ursprüngliche Sinnbestimmtheit des Seins und seiner Charaktere und Modi aus der Zeit seine *temporale* Bestimmtheit. Die fundamentale ontologische Aufgabe der Interpretation von Sein als solehem begreift daher in sich die Herausarbeitung der *Temporalität des Seins*. In der Exposition der Problematik der Temporalität ist allererst die konkrete Antwort auf die Frage nach dem Sinn des Seins gegeben.

²⁹³ This is interpretation which, given the traditional understanding of substance [οὐσία] that been passed down through the ages as “that which persists through change”, can be seen to provide the a priori preconditions only for the possibility of substance ontologies (broadly construed). As Heidegger himself had penetratingly observed: ...[T]he Greeks have managed to interpret being in this way [as presence “οὐσία”] without any explicit knowledge of the clues which function here, without any acquaintance with the fundamental ontological function of time or even any understanding of it, and without any insight into the reason why this function is possible. On the contrary, they take time itself as one entity among other entities, and try to grasp it in the structure of its being, though that way of understanding being which they have taken as their horizon is one which is itself naïvely and inexplicitly oriented towards time. *Being and Time*, H26.

²⁹⁴ And in a manner, which we may now begin to see, suggests that “time”, understood merely as χρόνος, is perhaps nothing more than just a transcendental illusion, that has been brought about not by an attempt to go beyond (transcend) “the limits of possible experience”, but by being fundamentally mistaken from the outset (on account of its own distorted metaontological background assumptions), about just what those “limits” initially are. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Immanuel Kant. Paul Guyer Trans. ed. (2008). B35-B355. A rejection of the metaphysics of presence enables us to begin to see through traditional spatialized distortions of time (like the SER thesis), and reclaim an understanding of temporality that is appreciative of time's ability to show up in our everyday lives as an inherently thick (i.e. a teleological, normative, significant, and at times, authentic, and value-laden) phenomenon, as opposed to merely a thin (spatial/quantitative) one, to see time as involving something more like an organic organization of being, as opposed to providing just a linearly construed cosmological “order” of objects, and to understand time in the positive sense, as more accurately depicted by

accurately and profoundly—as “the possible horizon for any understanding of being, whatsoever”.²⁹⁵

something like αἰὼν {Weltzeit; Zeit zu}, as opposed to χρόνος, a conception of “time” which seeks to reduce the sole purpose of time to the subservient one of merely tracking the “changes” (by means of a “When?”) that are taken to be discoverable among substances [οὐσία]. All of which, then further enables us to begin the arduous process of trying to progress beyond the narrow traditional, one-sided, reductive, and objectifying approaches to “time” and “being”, which have historically led us down the path of the de-worlding of the world and the leveling-down of the subject (human existence), and to begin an earnest pursuit and serious development of an ontology of the world and the existing human self.

²⁹⁵ [...Zeit als des möglichen Horizontes eines jeden Seins-verständnisses überhaupt...] H1.

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