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God and Time

Exploring the nature of and God's
Relationship to Time

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Introduction

The nature of time has enormous implications in philosophy. For example, it could make the difference whether the Kalām Cosmological Argument for the existence of God works, whether future or past entities exist, and whether God is located in time or not. The first of these was examined last semester, and the following two will be examined this semester. After thorough investigation into the main arguments for each theory of time, the A-Theory and the B-Theory of time, it was concluded that the A-Theory of time has more warrant for belief in it than the B-Theory of time. The importance of this was that the reality of temporal becoming was vindicated, which gave the Kalām Cosmological Argument the ontology which it needed to work. This semester, the nature of time is developed more fully, and the implications of this with Divine Eternity is examined.

The first chapter aims to provide a coherent model for the A-Theory of time, exploring three main models that have been propose over the past century: the Growing Block Theory, Presentism, and the more recent Moving Spotlight Theory. Two arguments are proposed for why Presentism is superior to the other two theories, including McTaggart’s famous paradox. From there, the nature of what time is is discussed, investigating whether time is a substance or is a relation to change, and how long the present instant lasts. After all of these aspects of time are considered, the theological implication of time are developed. Two arguments are provided for belief that God is inside of time given the A-Theory of time, and one argument is given for why God should be timeless. After long debate, it was concluded that God is inside of time.¹

¹ Alas, the exact meaning of this with regards to the Trinitarian God were not considered. This topic will require more research and time, and thus were not included in this thesis. For the present moment, take the term “God” to refer to the three people of the Trinity.

Part I: Presentism and the Nature of Time

Chapter 1: Experience, McTaggart, and Presentism

1.1. Models of the A-Theory

It is of secondary order as to what model of the A-Theory is true, as it does not necessarily influence the truth of there existing an ontological, not merely a semantic, present. However, now that the A-Theory has been established, as was shown in the previous thesis, one may now inquire as to which model of the A-Theory should be adopted. There are three main types of the A-Theory that is generally proposed and held by philosophers: the Growing Block Theory, the Moving Spotlight Theory, and Presentism. A short exposition of each of these models is required for understanding purposes. The Growing Block Theory states that as what was once present moves into the past, those things and events never go out of existence. The only things and events which exist are those which are currently present and those that had been present. This allows for an easy explanation of how one can refer to the past and make truth statements about it (barring tenseless truth statements about it). For if truth is grounded in reality, then the past must exist, in some ontological sense, in order to ground truth statements about the past. Also, the Growing Block theorist would maintain that there is nothing about the movement of the present that would require one to stipulate that any change has happened to the constituents of the present moment once they become past. As one defender of the Growing Block theorist has stated

Nothing has happened to the present by becoming past except that fresh slices of existence have been added to the total history of the world. The past is thus as real as the present. On the other hand, the essence of a present event is, not that it precedes future events, but that there is quite literally nothing to which it has the relation of precedence. The sum total of existence is always increasing and it is this which gives the time series a sense as well as an order.²

² C.D. Broad, *Scientific Thought*, (New York City: Humanities Press, 1969), pp. 66-67.

Thus, what is constituted within existence are timeless entities and any object or event which is past or present, with the present moment constantly adding onto the growing block.³

The second theory, the Moving Spotlight Theory, is a rather new theory which has been popularized by philosophers such as Robert Koons and Ross P. Cameron.⁴ The theory attempts to reconcile McTaggart's original ontology, which had been abandoned after the invention of his famous argument against time, of there existing a present moment as well as a true B series through which the present moves. The best parts about the A-Theory and the B-Theory are combined together: temporal becoming and there existing an objective, ontological present, is maintained, while the fact that all times exist which allows for reference to facts across all past and future times is also held. This is a rather radical view, but if true, could potentially reconcile B-theorist and A-theorists alike. However, as will be shown, the theory falls susceptible to McTaggart's paradox, and thus does not offer a valid model for the A-Theory.

The final model for the A-Theory is an equally, if not more, radical view known as Presentism. Presentism normally refers to the theory that the only moment which exists is the present moment, and thus the only things and events which exist are those things and events which exist presently. Being present is thus synonymous with existing (of course, there can exist timeless entities on Presentism). This restriction upon existence has led le Poidevin to characterize this theory as a theory of "temporal solipsism."⁵ This theory faces great criticism, such as the problem of reference across time and the extent of the present, but these problems will be dealt with in the

³ For a defense of the Growing Block Theory, see Tooley, *Time, Tense, and Causation*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), and Broad, *Scientific Thought*.

⁴ See Ross P. Cameron, *The Moving Spotlight Theory: An Essay on Time and Ontology*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015) for a discussion of the Moving Spotlight Theory.

⁵ Robin Le Poidevin, *Change, Cause, and Contradiction: A Defense of the Tenseless Theory of Time*, (London: Macmillan, 1991).

second chapter regarding what time is. For right now, arguments will be proposed that will prove that in order to have a consistent and pure A-Theory, one must adopt the theory of Presentism.

1.2. Presentism and Experience

The first argument for Presentism comes from Franklin C. Mason who argues from the experience that people have of the present to the fact that only the present moment exists. Mason presents a scenario:

Let F be a conscious being that exists at the times t_1 and t_2 and let F have made the judgment, at t_1 and at t_2 , that the experiences she has now are present. Let J_1 and J_2 be the names of the judgments F made at t_1 and t_2 , respectively.... if presentism were true, either one or both of t_1 and t_2 do not exist. But presentism was assumed to be false, and thus there is no reason that t_1 and t_2 cannot both exist. Assume, then, that both t_1 and t_2 exist. Now, since t_1 and t_2 both exist, all that exists at them exists. Thus J_1 and J_2 exist, for J_1 occurs at t_1 and J_2 occurs at t_2 .⁶

As was discussed prior,⁷ this judgement that an experience is present proves the existence of the property of presentness, as well as the fact that the statement “the experiences which I am now having are present” is not tautologous. Suppose a man makes two statements: one is “I am presently getting into my car” and the other is “I am presently getting into my bed.” Now, suppose that both of these statements have occurred, are true, and the man is not a crazy old kook who has a race car bed. According to these statements, and the fact that someone’s present experience entails the property of presentness of that experience, both actions, getting into his car and getting into his bed, are present, or possess the property of presentness. Thus, their existing the property of presentness in those experiences or in those actions is part of the truth of those statements.

⁶ Franklin C. Mason, “The Presence of Experience and Two Theories About Time,” *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 35 (1997), pp. 79-80.

⁷ Ethan Walker, *God! It's About Time!*, (Sugarland: Fort Bend Christian Press, 2016), ch. 2.

It will be pointed out that this argument is made under two assumptions: (i) the A-Theory of Time is true, and (ii) Presentism is false. Hence, the A-theorist is left with either adopting the Growing Block Theory, the Moving Spotlight Theory, or any variation of the two. Since these theories at the least claim that the past and the present both exist, both of these statements about these actions possessing presentness exist. Now, Mason inquires as to the truth of these statements. For, part of the truth value of these statements is whether or not they are truly present. But if the present is a moving, monadic entity, and the two times are temporally separated, then both times cannot be present: only one or the other time can, but both cannot. Thus, only one statement about those times, either that the events happening at t_1 are present or that the events happening at t_2 are present, can be true. But since the truth of these statements is part of the world at the times in which they are said, there is no reason why they should become false once the time becomes past. Mason states that

Presentness inheres in the t_1 world-state when t_1 is present but not when it is not present. Let me explain.

The t_1 world-state, when t_1 is present, includes some among the possible states of affairs. Must it include precisely those states of affairs when t_1 ceases to be present? How could it not? When t_1 has ceased to be present, still there is a t_1 world-state, for we assumed that past times are real. Moreover, when t_1 ceases to be present, the t_1 world-state does not thereby become empty, and what content could it have when t_1 is not present except that content it had when t_1 was present? In general, if the past exists, the t world-state, where t is an arbitrary time, undergoes no change in content when t ceases to be present; in particular, if the past exists, the t_1 world-state undergoes no change in content when t_1 ceases to be present.⁸

In other words, the states of affairs at t_1 cannot change when it is past to be different than that state of affairs when it is present, because then the two states of affairs would violate the indiscernibility

⁸ Mason, "The Presence of Experience," p. 81.

of identicals. Thus, the statement that both times are present cannot be true, as the present does not extend over both times, but since the existence of the world at the times at which the statements are said require the truth of these statements in order to follow the law of the indiscernibility of identicals, both times cannot exist. Only the present time, it is seen, can exist, if one is to believe that our belief in the presentness of our experiences is veridical, which has been shown to be.

One may object at this point that the property of presentness only inheres in t_1 when t_1 is present, but once it becomes past, pastness inheres in it. The problem is that this would violate the law of the indiscernibility of identicals and go against the words of Broad that there is nothing about the present becoming past that changes anything about it. Mason points out that the state that F is in at t_1 is part of the total state of the world at t_1 . Part of F's state is that she is making the judgement that her experiences at t_1 are present (simpliciter), which would not be true if t_1 existed, but was not present. Mason states

J1, then, cannot be true when t_1 is not present, for when t_1 is not present, nothing that occurs at it possesses presentness. Thus if F at t_1 , when t_1 is present, has sufficient justification for knowledge of J1, F at t_1 cannot have that same sufficient justification when t_1 is past. (If F at t_1 had the same sufficient justification when t_1 was past, F at t_1 would know that J1 when t_1 was past; but F at t_1 cannot know it when t_1 is past, for then it is false and the false cannot be known.) But what is the justification F at t_1 has for J1 when t_1 is present? Its being self-evident to F at t_1 is the justification she has then. But *J1's being self-evident* to her is a property of F at t_1 , and thus is a property of F at t_1 no matter if t_1 is present or past. Hence that same justification F at t_1 has for J1 when t_1 is present she has when t_1 is past. But, as I said, she cannot have that same justification.⁹

The same justification exists for F that her experiences at t_1 are present when t_1 is both present and past. However, the statement that her experiences are present are obviously not true when t_1 is past, but the same justification exists, unless one wants to suppose that F would experience her

⁹ Ibid, p. 82.

events in a pastly manner when t_1 is past. This, however, would seem an absurd notion, for what would it even mean to experience something pastly? Thus, in order to maintain that the experience of presentness is veridical, which is properly basic, one must state that past times do not exist.

Daniel Deasy, a Moving Spotlight theorist, has attacked this argument, postulating a hypothetical scenario. He claims that as of 1776, George Washington believes that 1776 is present, and as of Presento (the present moment), Dan believes Presento to be present. He then states that

at some instant t in 1776, George Washington thinks that t is (absolutely) present, and at Presento, Dan thinks that Presento is (absolutely) present. Now, notice that there is no disagreement here: George Washington thinks as of t that t is present and I think as of Presento that Presento is present. Given that every instant is present relative to itself, as of our respective instants we are both right: t is indeed present at t and Presento is indeed present at Presento.¹⁰

There are two problems with his argument. The first is that his examination of the experience of presentness is similar to that of D.H. Mellor's, that he says that presentness that the experience is the presentness of some time t at t . This would be a tenseless explanation for the experience, which does not truly explain the experience of an event being present simpliciter, or one picking out a specific experience amongst their numerous experiences as being the only one present.

Second, Deasy wishes to change the property of presentness, to the property of presentness at t . Not only is the property "being present at t " reducible to "being present", but also, it would seem that presentness would have to stand in a relation to the time t . As Trenton Merricks states when discussing potential escape routes for endurantists from the problem of temporary intrinsics, "it seems that, for example, an object's shape (its being bent) is neither a relation to a time, nor a time-indexed property."¹¹ While presentness does relate to time, it is not a property to a specific

¹⁰ Daniel Deasy, "The Moving Spotlight Theory," *Philosophical Studies* 172, 2015, p. 2087.

¹¹ Trenton Merricks, "Endurance and Indiscernibility," *The Journal of Philosophy* 91, 1994, pp. 165-184.

time, but rather is a property that switches from time to time. For while at 1776, 1776 is always present, such as a possible world is always actual to itself, but this is not what the ascription of presentness in the sentence token “the events of 1776 are present” mean. Instead, it is ascribing a more basic property that is not time-indexed: that is, being present simpliciter. As William Lane Craig states, “odd locutions like ‘E is present in the past’ or ‘E is present in the future’ should be construed to mean that the statement ‘E is present’ either was true or will be true.”¹² These statements use presentness as a relational property, not as the non-relational property that A-theorists take it to be, which do not ascribe true presentness. While the ascription of pastness and futurity are anchored in the present, the present itself is a non-relational property, and we should bar any attempt to describe it as such, as the Moving Spotlight theorist wishes to do when stating that a time is present to itself.¹³ Furthermore, it makes the tensed property of presentness a semantical thesis, applying no ontological status to it. While we can say that an event or thing being present at the time at which it exists, this establishes no more ontological status to “being present” than does saying that a unicorn is existent in some possible world. This is not true existence that we are talking about, and neither is the presentness that we are referring to when stating that the events of 1776 are present at 1776. Though times are considered present to themselves, this is not true presentness, it is merely existing in itself. The Moving Spotlight theorist seems to be holding onto some odd definition of presentness, in which there exist things or events which are not only present simpliciter, but also present at the times at which they exist, both of which seemingly possess equal existence. Deasy is thus left with the question of how he is to define presentness, a question which can easily be answered on a Presentist ontology, stipulating that to

¹² William Lane Craig, “Is Presentness a Property?” *American Philosophical Quarterly* 34, 1997, p. 29.

¹³ It will be discussed later in this chapter as to why presentness should not be taken as a relational property. This is due to the fact that it gives rise to McTaggart’s famous paradox against the A-series.

be present simply is to exist temporally. It would also seem that this objection would be similar to the Old B-Theory of Language's date-sentence analysis of tense, stating that being present would simply mean occurring at some time, and the sentence-token occurring at that time. But this, however, does not convey the same information that the tensed belief contains.¹⁴

The non-presentist could at this point make the radical claim that the belief which people have about their experiences is not that the experiences they are now having are present, but simply that they are present now. This belief is just as self-evident and does not change in truth-value, unlike the first belief. Thus, they would be allowed to avert the presentist's claim that the experience of the present requires one to adopt Presentism. This, however, is a bold and costly move on the part of the non-presentist. For by their stipulation that people do not experience events as happening presently, but rather presently at the current moment in time, it would seem that this would open up the door for someone to form the belief that they experience events pastly. Mason points this out, saying:

But if you yet doubt the self-evidence of the claim that the experiences you have now are present, consider for a moment its negation. Consider, that is, the claim that the experiences you have now are not present but are past or future. Can you, in all seriousness, maintain that this is the case? If so, you must agree that you and what is most intimate to you, viz. the act of awareness that is now your own, lie out of the reach of the present, sealed in the past or in the future. Possibly, you must say, someone or other is in the present. But she, you must continue, is not you. Moreover, you must conclude, you will never meet her. A second passes. Are you yet in the present? You cannot be, for if a second does pass, the present must progress by one second. Thus after the second did pass for you, the distance in time that separates you from the present is the same. If you are behind the present, you will never catch it; if you are ahead of the present, you will

¹⁴ See William Lane Craig, *The Tensed Theory of Time*, (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2000), ch. 2.

always remain ahead of it. Thus if ever you and the experiences you have now are not present, the entire course of your conscious life will be played out in the past or in the future.¹⁵

Not only does this end in a paradoxical belief that is not supported by any experience, but it would also seem to undermine the entire thesis that the experience of the present is an experience of the property of presentness in reality, which thus proves the A-Theory. Luckily for the A-theorist, this belief proposed by the non-presentist is not like the belief in the presentness of experiences. For people do not self-reflect to conclude that their experiences are present at the moment of time in which they occur. Rather, it is simply assumed via being appeared to presently that the experiences they are now having are present simpliciter, as is seen with the unconscious usage of present tensed verbs. It is not the belief that their experiences are present with respect to some time. Also, the belief in the presence of their experience could pick out *de re* one experience amongst the numerous other experiences at different times one that is present, not simply that it is present at the time at which it occurs.

It has been argued through the existence of one's experience of presentness in events in things that Presentism must be true. For the statement that one's experience is present to them is part of the world at the time at which the statement is tokened. This statement does not change, but the truth of it does, since it is only true when the time at which it is said is present, but is not true when it is past or future. However, in order to follow the indiscernibility of identicals, the world at that time must include the justification for the statement being made both when it is past and future. But there is no justification for one's experience to be present at a time that is past or future, and so one must either forego the belief that one's experience discloses presentness (which has been argued and defended thoroughly in the previous thesis), or one must adopt Presentism.

¹⁵ Mason, "The Presence of Experience," p. 84.

Since there is great justification for the belief that one's experiences disclose A-determinations, Presentism must be true.

1.3. Presentism and McTaggart's Paradox

McTaggart's Paradox for the unreality of time is perhaps the most important development in the Philosophy of Time to date. It is from this paradox that the distinction between the A-Theory and the B-Theory of Time originated, as philosophers reshaped their views of time in order to preserve its existence. Before examining the argument and how it relates to Presentism, it is imperative that a short discussion of McTaggart's Philosophy of Time is had.

1.3.1. McTaggart's Philosophy of Time

McTaggart first presented his ontology of time, along with why it is non-existent, in his article "The Unreality of Time."¹⁶ According to McTaggart, the B-series is a series of all the events that take place in the universe, or the universe's timeline of events (called the C-series), which has the A-series, the present moment, move across it. It is important to unpack these terms a little. First, the A-series is the moving present. The moving present of the A-series creates A-determinations, such as past, present, and future. The past is the time which the A-series was at, but has now moved on past. The present is the time at which the A-series is currently at, and the future is the time at which the A-series will eventually move to. As the A-series moves, times progressively go from being future, to being present, to being past.

In order to understand what the B-series is, the third series, what McTaggart called the "C-series," must first be understood. The C-series is a static, atemporal series akin to the set of natural numbers. It is the timeline of events in the universe's history which are laid out along a line, like

¹⁶ J.M.E. McTaggart, "The Unreality of Time," *Mind* 17 (1908), 457-474. The argument was later presented and revised in his *magnum opus*, *The Nature of Existence*, 2 vols. ed. C.D. Broad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927), ch. 33.

a set of numbers. McTaggart believed that in the actual world, the A-series and the C-series both existed and were incorporated with each other. This combination of the present moment moving across a C-series timeline created McTaggart's B-series. It is the A-series that gives time any reality on McTaggart's view, for he believed that time required some sort of change, change that could only be recognized by the moving present of the A-series. For, according to McTaggart, "the fundamental substance in time is events," events which constitute the C-series.¹⁷ Nathan Oaklander, when commentating on McTaggart's philosophy, states:

He [McTaggart] reasons that time involves change, and therefore that for the B-series alone to constitute time (as the detenser maintains), it too must involve change. But, he continues, there is nothing in the B-series that can change. Since it follows, according to McTaggart, that events in the B-series do not change by coming into existence and going out of existence; nor do they change their relations to each other. Consequently, if the B-series is to be a time series, then its terms (events) must exemplify the temporal characteristics of pastness, presentness, and futurity and change with respect to them as time passes. But this is to say that time and change require an A-series and temporal becoming.¹⁸

Without the moving present, the B-series would be robbed of any temporal aspect, as it would consist of no change, and would become the static C-series. McTaggart states "And this—the B-series—cannot be got out of the A series alone. It is only when the A-series, which gives change and direction, is combined with the C-series, which gives permanence, that the B-series can arise."¹⁹ He also claims

The B series... cannot exist except as temporal, since earlier and later, which are 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.

¹⁷ Craig, *Tensed Theory*, p. 170.

¹⁸ L. Nathan Oaklander, "Introduction," in *The New Theory of Time*, ed. L. Nathan Oaklander and Quentin Smith, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 158.

¹⁹ McTaggart, "The Unreality of Time," p. 464.

But it does not follow that, if we subtract the determinations of the A series from time, we shall have no series left at all. There is a series—a series of permanent relations to one another of those realities which in time are events—and it is the combination of this series with the A determinations which gives time. But this other series—let us call it the C series—is not temporal, for it involves no 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 of the Peers on the Parliament Roll, implies any change.... It is only when change and time come in that the relations of this C series become relations of earlier and later, and so it becomes a B series.²⁰

Thus, the moving present of the A-series establishes A-determinations, such as past, present, and future, which is the necessary foundation for any temporal relation, as these determinations change with respect to the moving *now* of the A-series. But since the present is moving, it must be moving across something already existent, and thus it moves across the static C-series, creating a temporal B-series, where all moments are equally real. But as the A-series moves across the B-series, different times are highlighted as the present.

Two important things are to be glimpsed from this in order to understand McTaggart's Paradox. The first is that according to McTaggart, all times exist. Fundamentally, since time is constituted of events, and people observe these events as being related by the permanent *earlier than*, *later than*, and *simultaneous with* relations, all events must exist. The second is that time also requires change, and thus it is not enough to stipulate that all events exist. For, if all events existed in the aforementioned temporal relations, they would always exist in those relations, and thus there would be no change. Rather, an A-series which introduces the moving present is required, as this introduces the temporal relations of past, present, and future which change with respect to the

²⁰ Ibid, pp. 461-462.

movement of the present. With this in mind, the exposition of McTaggart's Paradox will commence.

1.3.2. McTaggart's Paradox for the Unreality of Time

McTaggart's Paradox is based around the concept of times changing in their tensed properties of *pastness*, *presentness*, and *futurity*. This relates closely, as Craig points out, to the problem of temporary intrinsics.²¹ This is due to the fact that McTaggart is asking how events along the B-series are able to preserve their identity yet change with respect to the A-determinations that they have: they all have the property of futurity to start with, then as the present moves along they gain the property of presentness and then pastness. McTaggart questions how it is possible for an event that is permanently located at an instant t to gain and then lose certain properties. While it is this change that allows for time to exist, it then become incomprehensible as to how one can reconcile the fact that an event E changes in its properties, and yet remains the same event. Thus, his argument for the unreality of time can be formulated as follows:

1. Time consists of events which exist in a B-series.
2. The only way for time to exist is through change.
3. The moving present of the A-series provides change in the A-determinations of events.
4. According to (3), an event E changes with respect to its property of *pastness*, *presentness*, and *futurity*.
5. It is impossible for E to change in its properties without violating the indiscernibility of identicals.
6. Therefore, according to (5), E does not change.

²¹ William Lane Craig, "McTaggart's Paradox and the Problem of Temporary Intrinsics," *Analysis* 58 (1998), pp. 122-127.

7. Therefore, according to (2), (3), and (6), time does not exist.²²

McTaggart is seen to believe that the temporal becoming of the A-series ascribes some type of qualitative change to the events. Of course, one does not need to state that it is events which change in these qualities. One could instead, *pace* McTaggart, state that time consists of things, not events, changing with respect to their properties. For if one does this, then it is possible to claim that the B-series can consist of change without there existing a moving present, since the things would change in their properties from moment to moment. While the facts about this thing possessing different properties at different times never changes, this is irrelevant, since change on the B-Theory is simply some object possessing different properties at different times. Doing this then makes the situation much more similar to that of the problem of temporary intrinsics, as the problem deals with how some thing can change over time with respect to its properties. It is, as will be seen, slightly different when dealing temporal properties, but the same basic premise applies.

The first premise is perhaps the most crucial premise for the purposes of showing that the only coherent model of the A-Theory is Presentism. For this premise assumes what the Moving Spotlight theorist and the Growing Block theorist believe, but not what the presentist believes. On the Moving Spotlight Theory, time does in fact consist of events (or things) existing at their temporal locations along a B-series, through which the present moves, highlighting each successive moment as present, like a moving spotlight. The Growing Block theorist does not go quite as far as the Moving Spotlight theorist in saying that all times exist, but rather stipulates that

²² Though most expositions of McTaggart's Paradox include reference to hypertimes and vicious infinite regress', this one will stick strictly with the problem of temporary intrinsics and qualitative change due to the relative simplicity of topic. For McTaggart's Paradox construed with hypertimes, see McTaggart, "Unreality of Time," McTaggart, *Nature of Existence*, and C.D. Broad, *An Examination of McTaggart's Philosophy*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938), 2.

the future is unreal, but the past and present are. Thus on the Growing Block Theory, all moments up until the present moment exist in a B-series. On Presentism, however, neither the future nor the past are real, and thus all temporal moments (or at least all past temporal moments) do not exist in a B-series (though they could be said to exist in an *ersatz* B-series). Only the present moment exists: before some thing is present, it is located in the future and did not exist, and after some thing was present, it is located in the past and does not exist. Thus, the presentist can happily avoid McTaggart's Paradox.

But before one gets ahead of themselves and concludes presentism is true, justification for the paradox and objections to it are required to be examined. As stated before, McTaggart's Paradox is an argument against the qualitative change of temporal moments; that is, against some time changing in its properties. For, as mentioned in the discussion of Presentism and experience, the world state at a time t_1 does not change with respect to the properties that exist in the world at t_1 , if it is to follow the indiscernibility of identicals. The paradox is geared towards attacking that belief that change "is the changing tense of things and events moving from future to past."²³ For, as D.H. Mellor claims, on the A-Theory "the reality of the clock hand's movement consists ultimately in the events of its passing the figures "1" and "2" and these becoming successively present and then past; and similarly for all other changes."²⁴ What Mellor is saying is that there is an event, the clock's hand pointing to "1", that starts off possessing the property of presentness. Once the clock's hand reaches "2", however, the event of the clock's hand pointing to "1" no longer possess the property of presentness. It instead possesses the property of pastness. Thus, change has occurred with respect to the event, and thus time exists. The situation could be restated in terms of an object, say a T-rex, possessing the property of futurity when the Big Bang is present,

²³ D.H. Mellor, "The Unreality of Tense," in *The New Theory of Time*, pp. 164.

²⁴ Ibid.

then possessing the property of presentness when the Jurassic era is present, and then possessing the property of pastness when the Chicxulub Comet is present. This is the sense that temporal becoming is given by Mellor and McTaggart on the A-Theory: the becoming of some event or object possessing new temporal properties.

It is easy to see from this how the tensed theory of time commits, as Mellor states, “the capital offense” of “self-contradiction.”²⁵ He states that

Many A-series positions are incompatible with each other. An event which is *yesterday*, for example, cannot also be *tomorrow*. Past, present, and future tenses are mutually incompatible properties of things and events. But because they are forever changing, everything has to have them all. Everything occupies every A-series position, from the remotest future through the present to the remotest past. But nothing can really have incompatible properties, so nothing in reality has tenses. The A-series is a myth.

What Mellor is getting at is that some event *E* exists at a moment in time and obtains the properties of futurity, then presentness, then pastness. Since presentness, and by extension all tensed properties, are monadic, in that only one of them can be held by an object or event at a time, there is thus a contradiction. For if the event *E* existed when some earlier time was present, then it possessed the property of futurity. But then when *E* became present, it possessed the property of presentness. Then when some later time than *E* became present, *E* possessed the property of pastness. The tensed theorist cannot say that *E* possesses these properties at different times, for *E* could exist at only an instant in time. But even if this were not true, the problem of how *E* could be self-identical across time appears. Thus the A-theorist must say that *E* possesses each of these properties successively. But, as Craig points out, the A-theorist would have to say that *E* would possess each property, such as presentness, in relation to the present, which is then present in

²⁵ Ibid, p. 165.

relation to the present, and so on.²⁶ For if some event is only present relative to the present, then presentness then becomes a relational property, and the present itself would have to be present relative to some hyper-present, which leads to a vicious infinite regress.

Now, with respect to this last problem, this could be avoided by simply stating that presentness is not a relational property, but rather is a property simpliciter (or, is not even a property, but is synonymous with temporal existence). This would be the obvious presentist approach, for on Presentism, things and events do not have relational temporal properties. All that exists are the constituents of the world at the present moment. Thus there are no other existing things or events which have futurity or pastness in relation to the present. On the hybrid A-B theories, such as the Moving Spotlight Theory and the Growing Block Theory, there would be past and future events which would have pastness or futurity with respect to the present, which would then be present with respect to the present, *ad infinitum*.

While this may result in a vicious infinite regress, what about the problem of temporary intrinsics? While presentism does avoid the infinite regress problem, what about the problem of some event *E* being self-identical as it changes in the properties of pastness, presentness, and futurity? Suppose, for instance, that the Moving Spotlight theorist and the Growing Block theorist could avoid the infinite regress problem. Would one then have any justification from McTaggart's paradox to suppose that Presentism is true? As mentioned earlier, some event cannot have both the properties of presentness and pastness instantiated within them, for they are mutually exclusive properties. How then would the A-theorist avoid such a problem of a thing being future, then present, then past, and yet being self-identical?

²⁶ Craig, *Tensed Theory*, p. 175. For an account of an A-theorist using the riposte mentioned above, see David H. Sanford, "McTaggart on Time," *Philosophy* 43 (1968), p. 371-378.

First, the three major options for how some thing or event is able to remain identical across time must be examined. The main problem of identity over time has been dealt with in part during the discussion of how the experience of tense justifies Presentism, but it will be fleshed out in more depth here. The problem is: how is it possible that an object could possess one property at one time, and a contradictory property at another time, and yet still remain self-identical? Merricks gives this illustration:

- (1) O at t is identical with O at t^* . [assume for reductio]
- (2) O at t is bent. [premiss]
- (3) O at t^* is not bent. [premiss]
- (4) If O at t is identical with O at t^* , then O at t is F iff O at t^* is E [Indiscernibility of Identicals]
- (5) Therefore, O at t is bent and is not bent.²⁷

If object O possesses different properties at different times, then how is it the same object? This can be translated into McTaggart's Paradox: if some event E be the same event when it possessed all three tensed properties, pastness, presentness, and futurity? As Craig puts it,

A-determinations are taken to be intrinsic properties which are exemplified by temporal items. But some event E cannot have both the properties of presentness and pastness, for example, since these are different properties. It does no good to say that E possesses presentness and pastness at different times, for this is precisely the problem of temporary intrinsics: how can E be self-identical when it possesses different intrinsic properties at different times? If E was present and is past, then E has undergone a change in its intrinsic tense determinations – but then how can E be self-identical if it has different intrinsic properties at different times?²⁸

It would also do no good to say that tensed properties are not intrinsic properties, and thus one does not have to worry about the problem. For, while it may be a dubious claim that temporal properties are not intrinsic properties to temporal beings, one still has items possessing different

²⁷ Merricks, "Endurance," p. 168.

²⁸ Craig, "McTaggart's Paradox," p. 123.

properties at different times, and so one still must face the question of how those items are self-identical. For example, how could some person, say Dim, be friends with some other person, Lemming, at one time, and then not be friends with him at another time, and yet still be the same person? For, if Dim is to be said to be identical across time, then he must possess the contradictory properties of “being Lemming’s friend” and “not-being Lemming’s friend.”

In order to answer the problem of temporary intrinsics and how it relates to McTaggart’s Paradox, a brief synopsis of the three main options one has to overcome this problem must be presented. David Lewis presents a nice summary of the options to overcome Merricks’ problem in his “Prisoners’ Dilemma is a Newcomb problem.” The three options are as follows:

First solution: contrary to what we might think, shapes are not genuine intrinsic properties. They are disguised relations, which an enduring thing may bear to times. One and the same enduring thing may bear the bent-shape relation to sometimes, and the straight-shape relation to others. In itself, considered apart from its relations to other things, it has no shape at all. And like wise for all other seeming temporary intrinsics; all of them must be reinterpreted as relations that something with an absolutely unchanging intrinsic nature bears to different times...

Second solution: the only intrinsic properties of a thing are those it has at the present moment. Other times are like false stories; they are abstract representations, composed out of the materials of the present, which represent or misrepresent the way things are. When something has different intrinsic properties according to one of these ersatz other times, that does not mean that it, or anything else, just has them—no more so than when a man is crooked according to the Times or honest according to the News....

Third solution: the different shapes, and the different temporary intrinsics generally, belong to different things. Endurance is to be rejected in favor of perdurance. We perdure; we are made up of temporal parts, and our temporary intrinsics are properties of these parts, wherein they differ one from another. There is no problem at all about how different things can differ in their intrinsic properties.²⁹

²⁹ David Lewis, “Prisoners’ Dilemma is a Newcomb Problem,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 8 (1979), pp. 235-240.

The first solution, that properties are truly time-indexed properties, has been briefly discussed earlier in this chapter, and will be reexamined in the case of McTaggart's Paradox. The second solution is Presentism, stating that the only properties that a thing possesses are the properties that the thing presently possesses. For on Presentism, saying that an object did possess a property is no more incompatible with it now possessing the contradictory property than saying that in some possible world the object possesses a property that is contradictory with the property that it possesses in the actual world. The last solution is what is known as perdurantism and is the main solution to the problem of temporary intrinsics for B-theorists.³⁰ This solution maintains that objects are consisted of temporal parts, which are more or less the state that some object exists in at a given time. All of these temporal parts are then combined into a four-dimensional object which truly describes the object itself: objects appear to observers as three-dimensional since they observe them at specific moments, and thus only see a part of the entire object, but when one combines all of the parts one obtains the true, four-dimensional description of that object.³¹

With regards to the first solution, it has already been shown that the claim that all properties are time-indexed properties is dubious, as those such properties require the basic property to be part of them. So saying that an object possesses the property of being bent-at- t presupposes the existence of the property being bent, and so does not solve the problem. But how would it relate to tensed properties? One could say that an object O possesses the property of being past with respect to some later time, present with respect to itself, and then future with respect to some earlier time. Now, the problem with this, apart from the aforementioned problem, is that this is basing

³⁰ There are, as always, a few odd balls who try to go against the grain by combining two generally-believed-to-be-incompatible views. For an example of this for the problem of temporary intrinsics, see D.H. Mellor, *Real Time*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 105 who combines Spacetime realism with the view that things endure from moment to moment and do not consist of temporal parts.

³¹ For a good introduction to the problems and solutions of temporary intrinsics, see, *Persistence: Contemporary Readings*, (Cambridge: MIT University Press, 2006), ed. Sally Haslanger and Roxanne Marie Kurtz.

tense determinations off of the B-series. For if the property of being past only exists with respect to some later time (a B-series position), then one has effectively reduced tensed determinations into tenseless ones, undermining the basis for the A-Theory. For one turns “being past” into simply “being earlier than,” which is a B-relation, which eliminates tense from their ontology. This would then force the proponent of this solution into saying that *O* possesses pastness, presentness, and futurity with respect to the position of the present. However, it then becomes immediately clear that this solves nothing, for once again the problem arises of how is *O* self-identical, since it has possessed all three tensed properties. Since the present is ever moving, *O* would still find itself being the successive possessor of contradictory properties. This goes for time-indexing tensed properties to A-relations, such as possessing presentness 5-years-ago, as well. For even that property changes. As the present moves forward, 5-years-ago becomes 6-years-ago, 6 years becomes 7, and so on and so forth. In order to effectively espouse this solution, one must stipulate that the present is a fixed moment, which is quite silly and renders the existence of the present pointless. Therefore, the hybrid A-B theorist cannot run to this solution to explain McTaggart’s Paradox.

But what about the third solution? This is the only option left for the hybrid A-B theorist, as once they accept the second option, they become pure A-theorists. Well, as Craig points out, this solution is rather useless with regards to McTaggart’s Paradox.³² For the perdurantist solution is used only with regards to objects persisting across time. However, one could conceive of an object or event existing at a single moment and thus not persisting throughout time.

Thus we are not concerned, as in normal cases of the Problem of Temporary Intrinsics, with some entity which persists from *t* to *t** but has different intrinsic properties at those respective locations and yet remains self-identical. Rather *E* may exist only at *t* and yet is self-identical at that moment despite its being the case

³² Craig, “McTaggart’s Paradox,” 125.

that E-at-t has both presentness and pastness. Because E does not persist through time, there is no place for a solution postulating temporal parts of E each having different intrinsic properties.³³

Moreover, it would seem contradictory to stipulate that the timeless four-dimensional object which truly describes the event could consist of tensed, and therefore temporal, properties.

Thus this leaves those wishing to hold onto the existence of objective temporal becoming with only one option left: accept Presentism. For on Presentism, whenever some object or event was future, it did not exist, and thus had no property of futurity. When it became present, it had presentness, but then once it lost presentness, it does not possess the property of pastness, but rather slips out of existence. Hence, McTaggart's Paradox has no sting, as there are no contradictory tensed properties that an event or object possesses.

1.4. Conclusion

From considerations such as the presence of experience and McTaggart's Paradox, it has been shown that Presentism is the only coherent model of the A-Theory. It allows for one to consistently stipulate that their experiences are present, which then justify the belief in their existing a present moment, as well as evading the charge that times on the tensed theory would possess contradictory tensed properties. For temporal becoming is not a series of qualitative change, but is the true coming into existence of some object or event. This leaves one with the doctrine of Presentism. However, Presentism faces strong criticism from A- and B-theorists alike, and so a coherent model of Presentism, as well as a further definition of what time is and how it acts, is required before one can move onto the main purpose of this paper: how God relates to time and can know the future.

³³ Ibid.

Chapter 2: What Even is Time?

2.1. Time and Change

Before moving onto the discussion of how God relates to time, some more explication as to the nature of time is required. It has already been shown that if one is to be an A-theorist then they must also be a presentist. But there are certain problems that are raised against Presentism which an examination of would help to clarify the presentist doctrine as well as how they construe time to exist. These problems include the question of how long does the present moment last, and whether Presentism entails temporal solipsism.³⁴ The answer to both of these questions will come in effect later when discussing how God relates to time, as well as how God can know future and past tensed truths given Presentism. But, before examining these questions, which will be done in the latter portion of this chapter, it is imperative to look more closely at what time truly is. While it has been shown that time is just the present moment, not much has been said about the relational-substantival debate.³⁵ Since this is crucial to the foundational nature of time and how things exist temporally, a review of the debate is in order.

2.1.1. Time as a Relation

While of secondary interest regarding the Philosophy of Time, the question of whether time is a substance or is relational is immensely important to understanding how things exist in time, which is crucial to the discussion of God's relationship to time. For the two theories entail

³⁴ Another question which ties in with the extent of the present moment is what is the rate at which events lapse, or similarly, what is the rate at which time elapses. While this is an interesting question and one that merits discussion, it is not necessary for the purposes of this paper. Instead, dealing with how long the present lasts deals directly with the belief in temporal becoming and also ties into how temporal beings exist in the present. For a discussion on the lapse of time, see Donald C. Williams, "The Myth of Passage," *Journal of Philosophy* 48 (1951), pp. 457-472, A.N. Prior, "Changes in Events and Changes in Things," in *Papers on Time and Tense* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), and Craig, *Tensed Theory*, pp. 218-227.

³⁵ This debate is on whether time is just a relation to events (changes in things) or if it is some substance that can exist in the absence of events.

different requirements in order to be considered inside of time. The first theory that will be discussed is the relational theory. Time, on the relational view, is the dimension of change. It is in fact related to change, for obtains its existence from change. To say that something is one way, and then another way, requires recourse to time. For what one is really saying is that at one moment that object exists with some properties, and then another moment it exists with other properties. These moments are implicit references to time, and thus time is simply the dimension of things changing. Whenever there is change, there is time. It is interesting, however, that on a relationalist view of time, there can still exist time without change.³⁶ For suppose, as Sydney Shoemaker imagines, that there exists a universe that is “frozen” every few years for an interval of time, and then is “unfrozen.” During this period of frozenness, no physical event occurs; all objects and particles of the universe are frozen in place. The relationalist is posed here with a problem: if it is possible that all constituents of the universe could be frozen in place, then either one must say that time drops out of existence in that universe over that interval of time, or that time can in fact exist without change.

According to Shoemaker, time cannot exist without change. But it is also true to assert that all things change as time passes, for “the date and time of day is constantly changing, it is constantly becoming later and later, whatever exists is constantly becoming older and older,” all of which include the notion of time passing.³⁷ Thus, it would seem that time would require a first change in order to exist, given a relational view of time, but then once it starts, the flow of time cannot end, as all things would be constantly changing with regards to their age or arbitrary

³⁶ See Sydney Shoemaker, "Time without Change," *Journal of Philosophy* 66 (1969): 363-381 and Graeme Forbes, "Time, Events, and Modality," in *The Philosophy of Time*, ed. Robin Le Poidevin and Murray MacBeath (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 80-95 who both develop ways in which time could exist without change on the relational view of time.

³⁷ Shoemaker, "Time Without Change," p. 364.

temporal properties such as date of existence. This makes a sort of relational-substantial view of time, where time cannot exist without change, and thus cannot exist until a first change, but once it starts there would be constant change in all temporal objects, at least with respect to their temporal property of age, since they would constantly be getting older as time flows. This relational view of time is able to make sense of Shoemaker's thought experiment of there existing a universe which every few years is "frozen" in that no physical change in the universe occurs for a specified period of time. In a universe such as this, one is not willing to say that time drops out of existence just because all of the objects in the universe are "frozen" and then suddenly reappears once change occurs. For, then it would make no sense to say that the universe is frozen for a temporal interval, since there would be no time to record that interval. It would also be more preferable to state that time still exists in that the age of the universe continues to change, even though no physical change occurs.

Thus, according to the relational view of time, time requires change, change which can be supplemented through the very flow of time. Time is thus necessarily related to change on this view. In order to make this point more prominent, it will be helpful to observe how time is created on this model. The following discussion will be held under the assumption that the Kalām Cosmological Argument is valid, which shows that the universe, and thus time, did in fact begin to exist, and that this proves God's existence.

The nature of time ties in with the Doctrine of *Creatio ex Nihilo*. For on Big Bang models of our universe, time is said to begin either at or after the Big Bang. But if God is said to be the creator of the universe, then, as Prof. Adolf Grünbaum points out, one runs into a problem. For the cause of the universe must occur either before the universe exists, and thus before time exists,

or after the universe, and thus time, is brought into existence.³⁸ But, both of these options are unsatisfactory. On the first option, given a relational view of time, God would have to act before time began in order to create time. But that action would thus create time before the original starting point of time. But then one has to say again that God would have to act before his first act in order to create time, and thus we end in an infinite regress. The argument could be stated differently: saying the God acts to create time before time began is circular, since the term *before* requires the existence of time, which would mean that God would require time to exist in order to create time, which is meaningless. If one runs to the second option, they are confronted with the problem of backwards causation. This point becomes more poignant to the A-theorist who is required to adopt the belief that only the present exists, and thus there would be no things or events in the past which exist which would be capable of being affected by God.

The answer to this dilemma is so glaringly evident that it is a surprise the Prof. Grünbaum did not see it himself. For one need not stipulate that God acts before or after the Big Bang to create time, but simply simultaneous with it. For on the relational view of time, any action or change brings about time. Thus time supervenes upon the first action. The action does not first occur and then time appears, but instead the two occur concurrently. While the first change is causally prior to the existence of time, this does not require temporal priority. For example, consider a light hanging on a chain. The chain is causing the light to be suspended in the air. However, this causation is not temporally prior, but simply causally prior. For the moment the chain becomes taught, the light is suspended in the air. This helps to explicate more of what the relational view of time entails: any change whatsoever exists in time. The first

³⁸ Adolf Grünbaum, "Pseudo-creation of the Big Bang," *Nature* 344 (1990), 821-822.

change is causally prior to the existence of time, but is not temporally prior. Thus, time can be said to begin to exist on the relational view of time simultaneously with the first change.

At this point, the reader who is attuned to the great philosophical works of history would point to Kant's first antinomy of space and time that it is impossible to state that time came into existence. Kant states

For let us assume that it has a beginning. Since the beginning is an existence which is preceded by a time in which the thing is not, there must have been a preceding time in which the world was not, *i.e.* an empty time. Now no coming to be of a thing is possible in an empty time, because no part of such a time possesses, as compared with any other, a distinguishing condition of existence rather than of non-existence; and this applies whether the thing is supposed to arise of itself or through some other cause. In the world many series of things can, indeed, begin; but the world itself cannot have a beginning, and is therefore infinite in respect of past time.³⁹

According to Kant, in order to speak about something beginning is to speak about a beginning *inside* of time, for it must be preceded by a moment in which it did not exist. But time itself cannot be said to exist because this would require a moment before it begins to exist in order to be said to begin, which leads one to an infinite regress. But why should one accept this analysis? One should someone stipulate that in order for something to begin to exist it must be preceded by a temporal interval in which it does not exist? In fact, if coming into being is defined as

X comes into being at t iff (i) x exists at t , and the actual world includes no state of affairs in which x exists timelessly, (ii) t is either the first time at which x exists or is separated from any $t' < t$ at which x existed by an interval during which x does not exist, and (iii) x 's existing at t is a tensed fact⁴⁰

then it would seem that time could be said to come into existence. For one thing, time does exist at the first moment, call it t_0 , and does not exist timelessly. t_0 is the first moment at which time

³⁹ Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. N. Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan Press, 1929), p. 397.

⁴⁰ William Lane Craig and James D. Sinclair, "The Kalam Cosmological argument," in *The Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), ed. J.P. Moreland and William Lane Craig, p. 184.

does exist, and if time is tensed then time existing at t_0 is obviously a tensed fact. It seems as if Kant has just assumed *a priori* that time could not begin to exist through his own definition of what it means to begin to exist, a definition that no one should be inclined to adopt. Therefore, it does in fact make logical sense to speak of time beginning to exist.

Hence, on the relational theory, time would begin on the first action or the first change that takes place. As Craig states, “the creative causal act and the physical effect occur simultaneously.”⁴¹ The creative causal act is God’s action to create the universe. The effect is the existence of time. The two occur simultaneously, so that there is no action or change that is apart from time, and no time apart from any action or change. Thus, one sees through the doctrine of *Creatio ex Nihilo* that on the relational view, time starts once the universe is made (assuming the creation of the universe is the first action that takes place). Time supervenes upon this, so that there is no change without time and no time without some initial change. On the relationist view, time is the measure of change.

This view thus helps one to make sense of what it means to be inside of time and outside of time. Being inside of time would simply mean that the object is subject change, nothing more, nothing less. Since time is the dimension of change, anything that is said to be timeless is also said to be changeless. Therefore, God, before the creation of time and the universe, exists timelessly, and thus changelessly. But, “we should not be warranted, however, in inferring the immutability of the First Cause [God], since immutability is a modal property, and from the Cause’s changelessness we cannot infer that it is incapable of change.”⁴² Just because something is timeless does not mean that it could not change and thus become temporal. Especially in the case of God, since God is a personal agent, He could choose to act, taking Him out of His

⁴¹ William Lane Craig, *God, Time, and Eternity*, (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), p. 276.

⁴² Craig and Sinclair, “The Kalam Cosmological argument,” p. 192.

timeless state. It is interesting to note that if anything, on the relational view, is timeless, it must therefore be immaterial. Since “whatever is material involves incessant change on at least the molecular and atomic levels.”⁴³ Hence, if anything is spatial, it is inside of time, since it is always changing. This does not necessarily require that time and space are wrapped up in a bundle deal, however. For, given the belief that if God is timeless He is must be immaterial, He could change in some immaterial way, a change that would bring about the existence of time.

2.1.2. Time as a Substance

On the opposing side is the view that time exists as a substance, a substance that does not require any change or events. Le Poidevin, reflecting upon the discussion of time being relational or substantival, comments that “another paradigmatically philosophical dispute is that between relationism and absolutism, that is, whether times are logical constructions out of events and their relations, or quite independent of their contents.”⁴⁴ This shows that on the substantival view of time, time is not related at all to any events which take place. These events do not constitute the temporal series, but rather are independent of it. Time just exists, and it is a contingent truth of whether its existence is empty or filled with events.

Now this last point should arouse the studious reader. For earlier in this chapter it was shown how time can exist without change, according to Shoemaker’s groundbreaking thought experiment. This proof could be used by the substantival theorist to show that it is coherent to speak of time without change, and that if this basic doctrine of the substantival theory is coherent, then it would be simpler to be a substantival theorist than to hold to the modified version of the relational theory that was presented here. However, the problem is that

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Robin Le Poidevin, "Relationism and Temporal Topology: Physics or Metaphysics?" in *Philosophy Of Time*, p. 149. Le Poidevin uses the term absolutism as equivalent to the term substantivalism.

“Shoemaker's *Gedankenexperiment* envisioned temporal intervals without change bounded by earlier and later events,”⁴⁵ which is dissimilar from the claim of the substantialist that time can exist before any change. Time still exists in his thought experiment not only because objects change in their age, but it is also possible for change to occur during this time. But, says W.-H. Newton-Smith, this possibility of events cannot constitute the actuality of time before any events, but only when it exists between events, for in the second case time has already started moving, whereas in the first it seems unreasonable to state that a possibility causes an actuality.⁴⁶ Thus, the experiment does not work to prove the substantialist's claim that time can exist before any events occur.

Even if the substantialist can prove that time can exist without change, they seem to run into an even larger, insurmountable problem. In order to understand this problem, it will be necessary to look at how time comes into existence on this model, as was done with the relationalist theory. For the substantialist, the beginning of time is a little different than for the relationalist. Time is not related to change, and thus time does not come into existence with the first event. In fact, as has been said by Le Poidevin, time does not require events in order to exist, and thus can exist in a changeless world. However, this does not entail that time could be beginningless. In fact, as Craig states “on a substantialist view, no reason has been given to think that time could not have a beginning.”⁴⁷ This is due to the fact that there are still arguments against the existence of an infinite amount of time/causal chain.⁴⁸ For example, one simple

⁴⁵ Craig, *God, Time, and Eternity*, p. 273.

⁴⁶ W.-H. Newton-Smith, *The Structure of Time* (London: Routledge, Kegan & Paul, 1980), pp. 44-46, 104.

⁴⁷ Craig, *God, Time, and Eternity*, p. 274.

⁴⁸ See Craig and Sinclair, “Kalam Cosmological Argument,” for a couple of these arguments. One of them is based off of the fact that the mere concept of there existing an actual infinite amount of something is pure nonsense, while the other is based off of the impossibility to reach an actual infinite through successive addition. This last argument, as Craig admits, presupposes a tensed theory of time, which was proved in the first thesis. Even if one is a B-Theorist and believes that an actual infinite amount of non-causally connected things can exist, there are still arguments that can prove the past's finitude. For example, since time is a series of moments each causally connected

argument that Leibniz gave in his famous Leibniz-Clarke debate is that if time is infinite, then why did God not make the universe sooner?⁴⁹ One is of course assuming that the Kalam Cosmological Argument is true, which strides were taking in the first thesis to prove this, which would show that the universe began to exist and that God exists. But if time is infinite, then that means that God was sitting around waiting for an infinite amount of time and then suddenly decided to create the world some finite time ago. Though this argument was originally used against the substantivalist view, as Leibniz believed that the substantivalist was forced to adhere to the belief that there existed empty time before creation, Craig has reformulated it as an argument against the past's infinitude, since "the substantivalist who believes in the finitude of the past will also find the question inappropriate, since there are no empty instants of time preceding creation."⁵⁰ Hence, there is nothing in the substantivalist view that would require them to adhere to time being infinite. But if the substantivalist were to hold to the past's infinitude, then given the truth of the Kalam Argument, they would have to answer the question of why God took so long to create the universe.⁵¹ Of course, there is nothing in the nature of a substantivalist

to each other (for it is impossible to have a t_1 without a t_2) then this would fall susceptible to paradoxes such as Pruss' Grim Reaper Paradox (see Alexander Pruss, "The Grim Reaper Paradox," *Alexander Pruss' Blog* (January 25, 2008)).

⁴⁹ G. W. Leibniz, "Mr. Leibniz's Third Paper," in *The Leibniz-Clarke Correspondence*, ed. with an Introduction and Notes by H. G. Alexander (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1956), p. 27

⁵⁰ Craig, *God, Time, and Eternity*, p. 261

⁵¹ Brian Leftow attempts to answer this question by stating that God needs some sufficient reason to create the universe at some finite time, with that sufficient reason being his anticipatory pleasure of creation. Leftow claims that "So (I submit) God can delay creating to enjoy anticipating a universe and/or desiring to create one. Parents can find joy in the anticipation of a child. ... So God a fortiori can savour in advance the coming-to-be of a universe whose precise nature He foreknows." (Leftow, "Why Didn't God Create the World Sooner?" *Religious Studies* 27 (1991): 163). The reason why God created the world at a certain time is because past that time he would no longer receive the maximal pleasure from anticipating creation, and thus He would want to create. This does, however, seem highly dubious, for that would mean God waited patiently for an infinite amount of years, and then decided, 13 billion years ago that His joy from anticipation was no longer at its highest peak. It would seem reasonable to say that if God had waited that long, then He could do it for another infinite amount of time. Also, it makes no sense to say that God creates specifically at t and not sooner or later, given an infinite amount of time.

view of time that would require them to adhere to the past's infinitude. So, in fact, time can be created on the substantivalist view.

From this statement, the problem occurs. For, if time is created on the substantivalist view, that leaves open the possibility of change outside of time. Since events do not constitute the temporal series that would mean that there could be some change in God before He created time. He could have created the angelic realm and interacted with the angels before He created time. He could have even created space, which on a relational view would require time, since all things in space are always changing, but on the substantivalist view, there is no reason to believe that space requires time. But this would make the existence of time vacuous. For if time is not based upon change but can exist independent of it, then change can exist independent of time. It then becomes difficult to explain what the purpose of time is on the substantivalist view. For if change does not require time, then there seems to be nothing that requires time, unless humans wish to measure the duration of something. But then time just becomes the construct of the human imagination. Hence, if one believes that time has to be substantival and cannot be infinite, then they would be justified in believing that time does not exist, which is absurd.

On the substantival view of time, time would exist as some substance which just flows. But one could rightly ask what this even means. How would time be anything different from space on this view? On the relationist view, time is the measure of change, but on this view, time would be able to exist in the pure absence of change, and space, and so one is at a loss for what time even is, and if one needs to stipulate its existence. One could, following Occam, opt out of adding the existence of time into their ontology due to it being unnecessary, for the functionality of such an ontology would be equivalent to the ontology which stipulates time as a substance.

Thus, it would seem that the substantivalist theory of time gives no meaning to the concept of time.

Are there any reasons then to accept the substantival theory of time over the relational theory of time? To le Poidevin, the question of whether time flows and if time is relational or substantival is a matter of *a priori* reflection. He states that “the issues both concern the question whether there is any incoherence in the very concept of temporal flow and changeless time respectively.”⁵² If one is to discuss which view of the nature of time is true, it is perhaps best to show the incoherencies in the opposing view. As has just been shown, it would seem that time on the substantivalist view is a triviality that need not exist. Le Poidevin attempts to provide a definition of the relational doctrine, one which ends up to be a triviality. Thus, if the relational view is a triviality, then it should be on equal terms with the substantival view of time, while also entailing the same principles of the substantivalist doctrine. Thus, no matter which theory one claims to adopt, they both describe time exactly the same, and thus are equivalent.

How does Le Poidevin define relationalism? Le Poidevin states that “the modern doctrine known as relationism regards times as constructions, not just out of actual events, but out of actual and possible events.”⁵³ From this he defines relationism as follows:

$$“(\exists t)(Rn(t,e)) \leftrightarrow \exists x(\text{Event}(x) \ \& \ Rn(x,e))”$$

That is, there exists a time t which is n units before/after some actual event e if, and only if, it is possible that there should exist an event n units before/after e .⁵⁴ The problem with this definition of relationalism is that it is circular. As Craig states “this formulation makes relationalism a triviality, for it amounts to saying, since the units referred to must be temporal units, that time

⁵² Robin Le Poidevin, "Relationism and Temporal Topology: Physics or Metaphysics?" in *Philosophy of Time*, p. 149.

⁵³ Le Poidevin, "Relationism," p. 152.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

exists before/after e iff time exists before/after e .”⁵⁵ Since Le Poidevin states that there must be temporal units in which some event might exist before some actual event does exist, he either states that time exists before some event because it exists before some event, or that time must be infinite, which we have seen to be false due to the Kalām Cosmological Argument. Since this definition is trivial, and would allow for empty time before any event, it is on par with the substantialist view, and thus both describe reality equally.

Now, why should anyone adopt this definition of relationalism? In fact, it has already been shown that just because time can exist without change on the relational view of time due to the possibility of change in that empty temporal interval, this cannot be extended to the first moment. Thus it would seem as if this definition is only partly satisfactory. For a definition of relationalism has already been implicitly given in this chapter. Time cannot exist unless there is a first event to start it, and then it continues to exist due to the potentiality for other events to occur. As Craig says “Necessarily, if a first event occurs, times exist only at or after the occurrence of that event.”⁵⁶ This definition not only precludes the possibility of time before the first event, but it also makes the relational thesis non-trivial, and thus separates it from the substantial thesis.

Therefore, relationalism is the doctrine that time is related to, and is the dimension of, change. Anything that changes in any way is considered inside of time. Time can only come into existence once there is a first change, from there it continues to flow due to the possibility of other changes. Substantialism states that time can exist without change, and flows equably without any relation to anything external. Thus, time does not depend upon change, and change does not depend upon time. It would therefore seem as if time has no meaning or purpose on the

⁵⁵ Craig, *God, Time, and Eternity*, p. 274.

⁵⁶ Craig, *God, Time, and Eternity*, p. 274.

substantival thesis. Thus, the only meaningful way to speak about time is to adopt the relational theory of time.⁵⁷

2.2. How Long is the Present?

One mode of attack against the presentist is to ask how long the present is. For, since Presentism states that only the present moment exists, and thus only presently existing things and events exist, one must be able to answer how long this frame of existence is in order to have a proper understanding of what is real and what has passed away into non-existence. However, if the present is truly a “moment” or an “instant”, then how could anything be said to exist, or time be able to flow? As D.C. Williams states “a concrete object can no more exist with zero duration than with zero breadth of length.”⁵⁸ If this is true, then nothing would be able to exist in the present, since the present is only an instant, an instant with no duration. Also, one runs into Zeno’s Paradox of motion if time is constructed of non-durational instants, which would preclude the passage of time and change.⁵⁹

The answer to this problem helps to give one a deeper understanding of the concept of time. If the present moment is not truly a moment, as is typically conceived, what is it then? The reference earlier to Zeno’s Paradox will help clear up this question, as the answers to the problems are similar. With regards to Zeno’s Paradox, philosophers stated that space is not dense, constituted of points, as that would prevent motion, but rather is continuous, like a line. Thus, all points are derived from this line, but the line is logically prior to the mathematization of it into points. Therefore, there do not exist in reality the infinite number of points of space that

⁵⁷ Of course, the relational theory of time is proven by people’s experiences, since no one has ever experienced time apart from change. This is, however, quite trivial, since humans exist in space, and as was stated before, space is constantly changing.

⁵⁸ Williams, “The Myth of Passage,” p. 459.

⁵⁹ For a more in depth discussion of the problem of construing the present as an instant, see Craig, *Tensed Theory*, pp. 228-239.

can be conceived which would prevent motion. This helps to provide what is needed to answer the question of “how long is the present?” Dr. Craig recognizes this point, and makes the analogous comparison with the question “how long is here?” For “in order to answer this latter question, it must be specified what it is that is here: are we talking about the point of an atomic collision, the office in which I sit, or our solar system’s place in the galaxy?”⁶⁰ “Here” is an ambiguous term that is clarified only when put with respect to something else. Space is not composed of extensionless points that one could refer to when saying “here”, but is rather consisted of spatial intervals which can be expanded or collapsed, depending on what the operator “here” is referring to.

Likewise with time. Andros Loizou has stated that “...no event or state of affairs is ever present *simpliciter*—it is present by implicit or explicit reference to a kind of events or states of affairs, as when we speak of the present eclipse, or by reference to a time scale, as when we speak of the present hour or day, and so on.”⁶¹ Likewise, Craig says “there is no such thing as “the present” *simpliciter*: it is always ‘the present ___,’ where the blank is usually filled by a reference to some thing or event.”⁶² What they mean when they say that nothing is present *simpliciter* is not as what was meant when it was stated earlier. What was meant in discussions earlier was that there is a time which is simply present, not present with respect to itself, but is the only time which possesses the property (or predicate) of presentness. What is meant in the current discussion is that there is no moment which is simply present, but instead presentness is extended to intervals of time which are referred to, just as how there is no point designated as here, but rather intervals of space which are referred to.

⁶⁰ Craig, *Tensed Theory*, p. 245

⁶¹ Andros Loizou, *The Reality of Time* (Brookfield, Ver.: Gower, 1986), p. 156.

⁶² Craig, *Tensed Theory*, p. 245

From this it is seen that asking how long the present is is simply a malformed and ambiguous question. Since time is a continuous, there is no present instant, but instead there are intervals of time which can be taken to be present. The so-called instants or moments of time are mere creations by humans, things that do not exist in reality but help one to understand and refer to the temporal series. Henri Bergson and Arthur Prior both took note of this, with Bergson stating that “as soon as we make a line correspond to a duration, to portions of this line there must correspond ‘portions of duration’ and to an extremity of the line, an ‘extremity of duration’; such is the instant—something that does not exist actually, but virtually.”⁶³ No one can ask which moment is present, since moments are not real or actual, only the line from which humans derive the points is. Hence, asking what time is present or how long does the present last is an incomplete question, since the questioner has not given the presentist the proper frame to work in. But once the question is clarified, it becomes a triviality. For if someone were to ask, “how long is the present hour?” one cannot refrain from giving them the tautological answer that it is an hour long.

Before the questioner can accept this question, they must ask how is this notion of the present even coherent. For if the length of the present is related to events, then one must ask if this does not thus make the length of the present arbitrary as it fluctuates in length based upon which event is referred to as present. For (1) there are numerous events, each of which are different in temporal length, and (2) within each event, it would seem as if one could divide it into smaller portions that are past, present, and future. This was what troubled Augustine about the present in his *Confessions*, as he believed that since whatever interval was taken to be the

⁶³ Henri Bergson, *Duration and Simultaneity*, trans. Leon Jacobsen, with an Introduction by Herbert Dingle, Library of Liberal Arts (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), p. 53. See also A. N. Prior, "The Notion of the Present," *Studium Generale* 23 (1970), pp. 245-248.

present interval could be potentially infinitely divided into smaller and smaller portions of past, present, and future, then one eventually comes to the conclusion that the present is a durationless instant. But since the past and future are unreal, then the only thing left is the present, which is instantaneous and takes up no time, and thus time cannot exist.⁶⁴

This problem helps to clarify the concept of the present. For this problem only appears once one tries to apply mathematical concepts to time, and thus try to instantiate points into time. These points are the center of the temporal interval that one refers to when they state that a specific event or time is present. For this interval could always be divided further, getting closer and closer to the point which the interval was based around. Craig gives an example of this,

In certain contexts it is appropriate to refer to the present minute; but if we wish to narrow our consideration of what is going on now, we are at liberty to divide the minute into seconds and to focus on the present second. The present minute can thus be analyzed into a past phase composed of seconds earlier than the present second, a present phase which is the present second, and a future phase composed of the later seconds remaining in the minute. This process of narrowing can be continued indefinitely, with the present instant as a conceptual limit, so that there is no minimal temporal interval which is now.⁶⁵

This shows that what people have in mind when dividing the present interval into smaller intervals is some sort of mathematical concept of time which consists of points, a concept that is denied for the obvious reasons of avoiding Zeno's Paradox. It also helps to exemplify that referring to events that are occurring is beneficial to describe how long the present lasts, but the present truly only refers to those things which have temporal existence. While the intervals of time can be constantly divided, it is undeniable that at the specified instant upon which the division goes towards there are objects that exist. As was stated, these instants do not exist

⁶⁴ Augustine, *Confessions* 11.15.19-20.

⁶⁵ Craig, *Tensed Theory*, p. 247

except as “an ideal limit toward which the process of division converges,”⁶⁶ an instant which would consist of only things that do not change. By trying to find out which part of an event is present really shows that one is trying to find out what things are present, and thus temporally existing. Events refer to the period of change that those things are undergoing and give one a frame of reference for how long the present lasts. But really, all that the present refers to is those things which are in existence and can be accessed and interacted with by temporal agents, with its length being arbitrarily set conceptually by looking at the changes that these things undergo.⁶⁷ Thus the present is non-metrical, referring to whatever things exist temporally, the length of which being arbitrarily chosen by whatever changes are occurring to those things.

2.3. Conclusion

Time is thus the dimension of change. Whenever there is change there is time. Time supervenes upon events, allowing things to properly be said to change, due to them being one way at one time and another way at the next time. If anything is said to be in time, it is said to change in some way, whether that be in its intrinsic properties such as its shape or size, or in its extrinsic or relational properties. Anything that is in space must be in time, due to the constant change in motion of subatomic particles and energy (however, space that has been frozen from eternity could be said to be in a timeless state, due to no initial change to create time), but being inside of time does not require one to be inside of space. Time itself is a continuous flow that is not consisted of points, but rather is consisted of events. The length of the present is thus determined by the changes in the things which are said to exist. If anything exists and is

⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 248.

⁶⁷ Notice the “can be.” For it is obvious that there are things which are not accessible to temporal agents, especially human ones, due to physical reasons, such as distance, or the impossibility of agents existing under the conditions required to interact with those things (such as in the ocean or inside of a star). However, it is still logically possible for temporal agents which exist at a specified time to interact with all those items which exist at that time.

changing in some way, it is said to be present. Thus, presentness is equated with temporal existence, the length of which is determined by the events that are in existence, where temporal existence is simply being subject to change, whether inside or outside of space.

Part II: Divine Eternity and God's Relationship to Time

Chapter 3: Scripture on Divine Eternity

One of the most important doctrines in Christianity is that God is eternal. Isaiah describes God as “the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity” (Is. 57.15). But what does this mean to inhabit eternity? Other scripture, as well as reference to other commonly held beliefs in theology, help to clarify this. In Isaiah, God states “I the LORD, the first and the last; I am He” (Is. 41.4). In Hebrews, it is claimed

Thou, LORD, didst found the earth in the beginning,
And the heavens are the work of thy hands;
They will perish, but thou remainest;
They will all grow old like a garment,
Like a mantle thou wilt roll them up, and they will be changed.
But thou art the same,
And thy years will never end (Heb. 1. 10-12).

The psalmist proclaims that “before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting thou art God” (ps. 90.2). In Revelation, the angels proclaim “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!” (Rev. 4.8). In Proverbs, wisdom states that “the LORD possessed me at the beginning of His way, before His works of old. From everlasting I was established, from the beginning, from the earliest of times of the earth” (Prov. 8.22-23).

These Biblical passages help to make sense of what is meant when it is said that God inhabits eternity, or is eternal. They are referencing that at the very least God does not go out of or come into existence. He is permanent. Time does not mean anything to Him; it does not decay Him, it does not cause any change in His nature. God has no beginning and He has no end. The temporal language that is used by the Biblical authors helps to highlight the idea that God’s

existence is permanent. There is no time at which He did not exist, and there is no time at which He will not exist. This seems to support one of the models of Divine Eternity discussed below, but one must always be weary of using Biblical passages to construe philosophical doctrines, due to the fact that the authors many times use metaphors and anthropomorphisms to help discuss the unfamiliar in terms of the familiar, and because the authors were not trying to write a philosophical textbook. The authors wished to get the point across that God never began and will never stop existing.

This idea of God's everlastingness ties in with the commonly held doctrine of Divine Necessity and Divine Aseity. To exist necessarily means that there is no possible world in which God could fail to exist. He must exist in all possible worlds and possible states of affairs. Without time, God exists. With time, God exists. He cannot fail to exist. To exist *a se* is to exist in a mode of necessity, where God does not gain His necessity from any external thing, but rather from His own nature, and every other object gains their existence from Him. He is the ultimate grounds for all reality. Aseity is a stronger version of necessity. Where something can exist necessarily because some other necessary entity entails that it must exist, if it exists *a se* it does not gain its ontological status in any other entity. From these two doctrines it is evident that God must be eternal, or permanent. It is just a matter of how this eternity is construed in the actual world.

God's relationship to time has been construed historically under two broad camps: Divine temporality and Divine timelessness. Those who adhere to Divine temporality stipulate that God is inside of time, or in other words, is temporal. This, as shown from the preceding discussions, means that God changes in at least one of His traits or qualities. It does not entail that God exists in space, for even though all things inside of space are inside of time due to the constant change

of the fundamental particles, it does not follow that all things inside of time are inside of space. It is logically consistent to think of an immaterial, causally efficacious being which changes in some sort of quality. From this, it is consistent to think of God as an immaterial being which changes in some way, which is what Divine temporalists hold to. Divine temporalists also hold that God exists at every time, or that He is omnitemporal. At whatever time someone points to, it is always true to say that God exists at that moment.

One could question if this, given the truth of Presentism, does not contradict the statement that God is permanent and has no ending. For, according to Presentism, only the Present moment exists and thus there is no future time that exists. Accordingly, God would only exist up to the present moment, but then His existence would have an end in the present. However, this “cap” on His existence, so to speak, is only a relative end to His existence, sort of how graphs can have relative maximum values and minimum values. His existence does not stop at the present moment because time does not stop at the present moment. Even if it did, then after time’s end (logically speaking), God would become timeless once again. One could push further and state that since the future does not in fact exist, God would have a true cap in the present and would continually have moments of time added onto His existence, which shows that God does truly have an end, albeit, an end that keeps being pushed back. Even if this objection is sound, it would only mark a score against the Open Theist who stipulates that the future is completely empty, as opposed to the presentist who adheres to an ersatz B-series which allows them to discuss coherently about times other than the present.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ This point will be developed further in chapter 6. An ersatz B-series is a B-theoretical temporal series of events which are constituted of all the things and events which exist at the arbitrarily specified time, but which does not have any ontological significance due to the fact that those times are not present. The ersatz B-series is considered abstract, and a useful tool for reference to the past and future.

On the other side are those who adhere to Divine timelessness. This means that God does not change in any way, shape, or form. Adherents of Divine timelessness hold to a strong version of the Doctrine of Divine Immutability (that is, that God is completely unchanging in both His intrinsic necessary properties, and in His extrinsic relational properties). On this view, God cannot be said to exist at a moment of time, since He transcends time. Rather, it is only coherent to state that God exists in a tenseless manner, meaning that He does not change in His existence from moment to moment, as opposed to existing in a tensed manner, meaning that He exists at the present moment. It is thus obvious that timelessness and temporality are contradictory properties, one cannot exist in a state of change and yet remain timeless, or exist in a state of immutability and yet be temporal. Of course, as discussed previously, temporal entities do not become timeless just from the fact that they are no longer changing in any intrinsic or physical sense, for they still change in their relation to time and which moment of time exists. If it is possible to conceive of time ending, however, then one does not say that God, given that He is temporal, stops existing, but would rather enter back into a timeless state.⁶⁹

These two doctrines are contradictories, and while one could stipulate that Divine temporality is supported by Scripture, those claims could be easily discarded by stipulating that the terminology is just discussing the unfamiliar (eternity, or timelessness) in terms of the familiar (temporal existence and duration). In fact, several verses seem to make reference to God existing timelessly, or at least before all time. Jude 25 reads “to the only God, our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever.” Titus 1.2-3 states that those who God has chosen “in hope of eternal life which God, who never lies, promised before age-long time but manifested at the proper time.” II Timothy 1.9

⁶⁹ For discussion on the ending of time, see A.N. Prior, “The Logic of Ending Time,”

uses similar language, discussing God's "purpose and grace, which were given to us in Christ Jesus before age-long time but now manifested by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus." The term "before age-long time) is translated from *pro chronon aionion*, which has been taken to mean "before time began."⁷⁰ Thus the Scriptures at least give some justification in the belief that time had a beginning and that before that time God would have to exist timelessly. However, due to the mixed signals that are being sent from Scripture, it is imperative to look at the philosophical arguments which support each model of Divine Eternity and to determine its validity.

⁷⁰ W. Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, trans. and ed. W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1979), s.v. "aionios."

Chapter 4: God and Time I: Divine Temporality

Two arguments for Divine temporality will now be proposed and examined. These arguments presuppose the validity of the A-Theory of Time, which was defended in the first thesis, as well as the fact that to be inside of time means to change in some way, either intrinsically or extrinsically, which was argued for in chapter 2. The two arguments will thus be based off of the truth of temporal becoming, and will attempt to show minimally that God changes. These two arguments are based in the fundamental Christian Doctrines of Divine action and Divine Omniscience, and will attempt to show how if God acts in the world and is to know all truths that are possible to know, then God changes and is therefore inside of time.

4.1 Change and Divine Action

God, as construed by Christianity, is constantly acting inside of the world and interacting with its denizens. As mentioned earlier, the Doctrine of Divine Aseity stipulates that God is the basis for all reality; He maintains everything in its existence at every moment. This requires some sort of action by God. Now, numerous theists claim that God cannot remain timeless and still interact with a temporal world, as doing so would temporally locate Him inside of time. This is what Nelson Pike maintains, stating that “a timeless individual could not *produce, create, or bring about* an object, circumstance or state of affairs.”⁷¹ Pike even goes so far as to claim that a timeless God is not omnipotent, due to the aforementioned impossibility. For if God is timeless, then there could be no action by God inside of the temporal world, as that could be said as a change in God and would temporally locate God. Pike’s analysis fails in that it requires some sort of action by God to be realized in order for Him to be omnipotent, which would exclude the certainly metaphysically possible worlds in which only God exists only in His trinitarian nature.

⁷¹ Nelson Pike, *God and Timelessness*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1970), p. 110.

Omnipotence is better understood as the potentiality for some being to bring about all possible state of affairs. Thus God does not have to act in order for Him to be omnipotent, He only needs to have the potentiality to do so. This would undercut Pike's argument, for a timeless God could certainly act to create a temporal world, though doing so, under Pike's analysis, would make him temporal. Thus a timeless God can be omnipotent. If He were to act and create time, then He would no longer be timeless, but He would still be just as omnipotent.

But what about Pike's original contention that no timeless being can act within time and remain timeless? Is all that is required to be considered inside of time is to be temporally located? It would seem that this is not the case. For, abstract objects are constantly referred to inside of time, thus temporally locating those objects. But one would not therefore claim that the object itself is inside of time, for there is no change in the object except for going from "being referred to at t " to "being referred to at t_1 " which is not any change within the object. While this conviction is true, it is, however, irrelevant to the current issue at hand. For one is not simply stating that to be in time one must be temporally located, but that one's *actions* must be temporally located. Craig states that "if there is a time at which God acted to create O , then God's act has a temporal location. So unless there is some strange way in which one's acts can be divorced from one's being, it therefore follows that God has a temporal location, that is to say, He is temporal."⁷² There is a disanalogy between the case of reference to abstract objects and God's action in the world. For being referred to is not a true property that really relates the abstract object to the temporal world, as it is not a true property of that object. It is rather just a state of affairs that occurs at the time of reference. It is an asymmetrical relation that occurs between the speaker and the referent. However, the actions of a being do not appear to function

⁷² Craig, *God, Time, and Eternity*, p. 57.

the same way, for those actions are based upon their intrinsic property of causal ability. When a being acts, it would seem to influence both that being and whatever it is acting upon, which would not be the asymmetrical case of reference that was described earlier.

Therefore, there does seem to be a basic argument from Divine action for the belief in Divine temporality. Craig formulates it as follows:

1. God is timeless
2. God is creatively active in the world.
3. If God is creatively active in the temporal world, God is really related to the temporal world.
4. If God is really related to the temporal world, God is temporal.⁷³

Any change in God would be sufficient to make Him temporal, and Christianity construes God as constantly acting inside of the world. God is said to do one thing at one time, and then another thing at another time. For example, He is said to be talking to Abraham at one time, but later on is causing fire and brimstone to rain down on Sodom. These are two different and distinct actions on God's part, which shows that He has undergone some sort of relational change from one moment of time to the next. If one wishes to state that these are mere anthropomorphisms of God, then the point could be made in a different, more poignant way. For if God is the only being that exists *a se*, then all things external to Him rely on Him for its existence. Thus, the world relies on God's action to uphold it in existence from moment to moment. But since the world is in time, those things that are in existence are constantly changing, and therefore God is constantly changing in what He acts to uphold. For at t_0 , all that exists is the Big Bang singularity, which God is acting to sustain. But at t_4 , there exists galaxies which consist of planets and stars, which God is also acting to sustain. At the two different times God is acting to maintain in existence two different sets of things, and thus changes in His action

⁷³ Ibid.

and relation to the world.⁷⁴ Therefore, God's simple act of sustaining the world from moment to moment constitute the necessary and sufficient requirements for God to be inside of time.

4.1.1. Causation over time

A first and immediate objection is that why could we not state that God only performs, and is always performing, one action which maintains the universe in existence. By always performing only one action, God never changes from going from a state of non-action to a state of action, nor does He change from going from one state of action to another. He would always exist in the same eternal state of action, which would be a changeless, and thus timeless, existence. This objection could be stated in two different ways. The first is that God only performs one, eternal action to create the universe and all times that exist. This would be how creation works on the B-Theory of Time. The Spacetime block would always proceed from God, for if God changed from a state of inaction to a state of action to create the Spacetime block, then that action would be contained inside of a higher Spacetime block, and thus God would be inside of time. This one action would create and sustain all times, and thus God would always exist in the same, constant state, hence being timeless. He would not change in acting to uphold different times, for all the times would exist from His one action. The exposition of this objection helps to clarify why one cannot hold to it. For it has been shown previously that the B-Theory of Time is false, and that

⁷⁴ The person who holds to mereological nihilism could stipulate that there are no new things that exist from t_0 to t_4 , but only the matter and energy that compose these objects, which has always existed at both moments. Thus, God does not uphold two different sets of things, but rather the same set, which means that God does not change in His actions and relations to the world. Now, while it might be true that God does not uphold two different sets of things from each time, it does not follow that God does not change in His action to uphold all of the matter and energy in existence. For there is still change that occurs with those pieces of matter and those quanta of energy, either in relation to where they are located in space or in how they interact with other pieces of matter or quanta of energy. If this were not so, then there would be no time. But since they are changing in some way or another, God is thus acting to sustain these two different states of affairs, which consists of different relations to the objects in existence. Therefore, while God would not be acting to maintain two different sets of things in existence, He would none the less be acting to maintain two different states of affairs, which constitute a change with God.

the only time that exists is the present moment.⁷⁵ If the B-Theory is false, then it is not true to state that all times exist. And if Presentism is true, it is only true to state that only the present exists. Therefore, it is impossible for one to stipulate that God upholds all times from one eternal act, for that would require the already falsified B-Theory. Rather, one would have to say that God upholds the several different present moments consecutively, which it would seem would require different actions, placing God inside of time.

The second version of this objection is much more amiable to the A-Theory. This version is that God performs one, eternal action, which unfolds as time goes on, maintaining each successive moment of time through only one unchanging action. This is similar to the first account in that God is performing the same action from eternity, thus not changing, but is different in that it does not stipulate that God creates all times from that one action. Rather, it takes the A-theoretic notion of temporal becoming into account, and stipulates that times come into existence only from the unfolding of His one action as time progresses. For example, God's eternal action creates t_0 , but His action is not yet complete, for it would continue to create t_1 , t_2 , t_3 , and so on. Now, this requires an interesting idea of action over time, which would require one to adopt two odd beliefs: (1) that it is possible for all the necessary and sufficient conditions for an event to occur to exist, and yet the event still not occur until an interval of time has elapsed, making time causally efficacious, and (2) that it is possible for a timeless being to act, to have that action occur over time, and yet to not have the being who is acting become temporal.

Alan Padgett, in his book *God, Eternity, and the Nature of Time*, discusses this objection at length, utilizing the idea of what he calls zero time relation.⁷⁶ This term, believe it or not, refers

⁷⁵ See Ethan Walker, *God! It's About Time!*, (Sugar Land: Fort Bend Christian Academy Press, 2016). See also ch. 1 of this paper.

⁷⁶ Alan Padgett, *God, Eternity, and the Nature of Time*, (New York: St. Martin's, 1992), pp. 21-22.

to events which occur with a temporal duration of zero between them. These are called simultaneous events. They occur at the same time, and thus there is no duration between the two events. The difference between the term zero time relation and simultaneity is that Padgett uses zero time relatedness to refer to two events which are causally connected to each other. It refers to a cause and its effect which occurs simultaneously with each other, and thus have a temporal duration of zero between them. The effect is instantaneous whenever the cause is present. Since this idea is another way of stating instantaneous causation, the category of zero time relatedness can extend from cases of a temporal cause and a temporal effect, to cases of an atemporal cause and a temporal, and even an atemporal, effect. Of course, the term zero time relation does not technically apply to these cases, due to the fact that there simply cannot be any temporal relation between the cause and its effect, since at least one of those are not temporally located. Without a temporal location of the cause, there could be no duration between the causes' action and its effect.⁷⁷ Though the concept of duration cannot be applied to cases like this, the underlying meaning behind zero time relatedness, the simultaneity of cause and effect, is still applicable. For simplicity's sake then, zero time relatedness will be applied to all cases referring to the simultaneity of cause and effect.

Now, Padgett states that all causes are zero time related to their immediate effects. He assumes that if all of the sufficient requirements for an event to occur are present, then there is no reason for the event not to occur. This more or less begs the question against those who believe in action over a temporal distance, as it leaves no room for the causal efficacy of the passage of time. Granted, this is an unordinary belief that goes against the common intuitions of what time is, and thus requires some type of argument. The most promising argument that has

⁷⁷ This cause would have to be in this exact eternal state of action, lest it change from not acting to acting, which would then temporally locate it. An example would be God acting from eternity to maintain the Spacetime block.

been found for the efficacy of the passage of time is that it helps to explain events in the quantum world. Craig states the argument,

The causal conditions of some quantum event, say, the decay of an elementary particle, might be present at t and be sufficient for the occurrence of the event in the sense that no other conditions are necessary and yet the event not occur at t because the conditions do not deterministically produce the effect. But given sufficient time and some finite probability of the event's occurrence, the event will eventually happen. In such a case, we must either say that the cause is not zero time related to the effect or else that the passage of time is part of the causal conditions of the effect in each particular case, so that the passage of time is causally efficacious or else that the event in question is simply uncaused.⁷⁸

Now this requires first and foremost that quantum indeterminacy is true, the acceptance of which is not incumbent upon the Divine temporalist, especially considering there are fully deterministic models of Quantum Mechanics which are equal to the indeterministic ones, such as the Bohm-de Broglie model. Second, this case, while interesting, is ultimately unimportant to the relationship between zero time relatedness and Divine action. Since God is omnipotent, His deterministic will and actions are zero time related to their effects. The passage of time would only be causally efficacious in indeterministic causes, but it does not play a role in the deterministic causes of agents, especially omnipotent ones. God's actions are not befuddled because insufficient time has passed since His action. Therefore, whenever God acts, He acts directly and its effects are seen immediately.

This is important for the Divine temporalist, because this means that God's actions are zero time related to its effects. God's acting to maintain the world in existence changes from moment to moment as He is constantly upholding different states of the world, and so He must therefore be inside of time. Even if the will of His action was that it not occur until a certain time has

⁷⁸ Craig, *God, Time, and Eternity*, p. 57.

passed, He would still be changing in His action at that time, and thus would be in time. For example, say God wills that His action to maintain the world to be delayed from t_3 to t_5 . If this were so, God would still go from not acting to maintain the world at t_3 to acting to maintain the world at t_5 , and thus He changes in His action nonetheless. Zero time relatedness shows that actions, especially in the case of an omnipotent being, occur simultaneously with their effects, and thus each new time that is upheld is a result of a new action on God's part.

But what about the belief that God could remain timeless and yet have His action occur over time? This is similar to the Deistic belief of a God who establishes all of the necessary and sufficient conditions for the world to exist, and then lets the world run by itself without His act to keep it in existence. God would act to create the world, and then let the world run by itself. As theologically unsatisfying this is, as it would infringe upon Divine Aseity since the universe would exist as an independent reality outside of God, it too would fail to keep God as timeless. Since He was in a state of action to create the universe, the only way that He could remain timeless is if that action was eternal and unchanging, which is inconceivable considering that creation is a one time action. One could instead stipulate that God is in an eternally static state of maintaining the world in its existence, and thus never changing in His action. But this argument has already been discussed, and it has been shown that this will only work on the B-Theory of Time, but not on the A-Theory as it fails to account for the reality of temporal becoming. As things come into and out of existence, it would be impossible for God to be in a constant state of action of upholding the universe, for He would change in what things He acts to uphold.

4.1.2. ET-Simultaneity

Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann have tried to develop a way in which God can act within the world and remain timeless no matter which theory of time one adopts.⁷⁹ They expound a view in which God and temporal entities are related through a new form of simultaneity called “eternal-temporal simultaneity.” God exists in His eternal present, relative to which all events in time are simultaneous, or, occur/exist together or at once. This ET-Simultaneity requires two types of simultaneity: temporal simultaneity and eternal simultaneity.

The first type of simultaneity, temporal simultaneity, is generally thought to be the only type of simultaneity that exists. In order for two objects to be temporally simultaneous with each other, they must exist at one and the same moment of time. This is a pretty basic concept and is the one that is almost always referred to when people describe simultaneity. The second type of simultaneity is an interesting concept that has been around since the early church fathers, and includes the idea of an eternal present. To be eternally simultaneous with something means simply to exist at one and the same “eternal present” with that object. Now, the concept of an “eternal present” is a vague one which includes notion of “atemporal duration” as they stipulate that “no eternal entity has existed or will exist; it *only* exists” and yet “the eternal, pastless, futureless present is not instantaneous but extended, because eternity entails duration.... The eternal present... is by definition an infinitely extended, pastless, futureless duration.”⁸⁰ This means that the eternal present is extended, having infinite duration like a line, and yet cannot be subdivided into any parts. It is extended yet partless. It is extended because God exists eternally and infinitely, and not for single point in time. However, it must be partless so that it could be said that God possesses all of His life at once. This absence of parts refers not only to the fact

⁷⁹ Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann, “Eternity,” *Journal of Philosophy* 78 (1981), 434-440.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*,

that eternity cannot have any physical separation into points, but also that it cannot be conceptually separated into points. This makes it challenging to describe what eternity's extension is like, but it would seem as if it could be characterized as stating that every conceptual point along the line of eternity is identical with each other. Therefore, eternity has no parts, as all parts that could be conceived are identical with each other, and yet eternity is not one self-identical point, but rather an extension of identical points.

Discussion about the eternal present would be too incumbent upon the purposes of this chapter. For now, it will be assumed that the eternal present that Stump and Kretzmann wish to impose is coherent, which will allow for the truly important discussion to the current argument about ET-Simultaneity.

Eternal existence is thus extended yet atemporal. It is permanent and has duration, and yet it is nothing like the temporal duration that creatures experience. Temporal existence is fleeting and not permanent. It has duration and is extended, but it is not like eternal existence in that it is not permanent. It is this lack of permanence that causes Stump and Kretzmann to state that this is “only apparent duration” whereas eternal duration is “genuine, paradigmatic duration.”⁸¹ Existing eternally and existing temporally are therefore two different modes of existence. They state, “What is temporal and what is eternal can co-exist... but not within the same mode of existence.”⁸² Their doctrine of ET-simultaneity is therefore meant to propose a way in which God and temporal entities, who do not share any mode of existence, can be simultaneous with each other, and how the one can interact with the other.

Stump and Kretzmann define ET-Simultaneity as the following:

⁸¹ Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann, “Atemporal Duration: a Reply to Fitzgerald,” *Journal of Philosophy* 84 (1987), pp. 216, 218.

⁸² Stump and Kretzmann, “Eternity,” p. 436.

For every x and for every y, x and y are ET-simultaneous iff

(i) either x is eternal and y is temporal, or vice versa; and

(ii) for some observer, A, in the unique eternal reference frame, x and y are both present-i.e., either x is eternally present and y is observed as temporally present, or vice versa; and

(iii) for some observer, B, in one of the infinitely many temporal reference frames, x and y are both present-i.e., either x is observed as eternally present and y is temporally present, or vice versa.⁸³

The main point of this definition is the fact that x and y share the property of presentness. If x is present to y and y is present to x, then, given that one is eternal and one is temporal, the two are ET-Simultaneous. Each of these requirements will be taken in turn. The first requirement is an obvious one for two entities to be called Eternally-Temporally Simultaneous. One of the entities must be eternal and the other temporal, otherwise it is just eternal simultaneity between two entities or temporal simultaneity between two entities, which is hardly exciting. The next premise stipulates that the one eternal observer from its standpoint of the eternal present must observe the temporal entity to be present. This property of “being present” is different for both entities: one possess the property of “being eternally present” while the other possesses the property of “being temporally present.” This point becomes a problem when one remembers what it was that Stump and Kretzmann were trying to accomplish with their conception of ET-Simultaneity. This was not some fun brain exercise, but it was rather a model for describing how God could remain atemporal and yet be related to the temporal world. They attempted to do this by making God’s frame of reference, eternity, to be simultaneous with the world’s temporal frame of reference. Therefore, the two are now truly related to each other, and thus God, being simultaneous with the world, could remain timeless and interact with the world.

⁸³ Ibid, p. 439.

First and foremost, the biggest problem with this is that though Stump and Kretzmann state that eternity is a timeless state, they continue to use the temporal term “present” to designate God’s existence. If they wish this to be taken literally, then that means that God is inside of time, and they have accepted the opposing side’s argument, only with their own caveat of God being inside of a hyperplane of time titled “eternity.” The usage of the term “present” brings up another issue. Since God and temporal entities exhibit different properties of presentness, they do not share any mode of existence, at least not any mode of temporal existence. This then makes it impossible for Stump and Kretzmann to create a way for them to be simultaneous. For they first, as Craig points out, wish to base their simultaneity relation “in terms of a shared property.”⁸⁴ This is the property of presentness. If the eternal entity is present to the temporal entity, and the temporal entity is present to the eternal entity, then the two are considered simultaneous. This is all nice and dandy until one realizes that they are equivocating the two different types of presentness. Since they do not, in fact, share the same type of presentness, they cannot be said to be simultaneous. Both of these problems, however, can be avoided if one replaces the term “presentness” with the term “existent” or “real.” If x and y are considered to both be “real” relative to one another, then they do share the property of being in existence, solving the property problem and the temporality problem. But there also appears another problem with Stump and Kretzmann’s idea of ET-Simultaneity. For they wish to say that their definition suffices to make God and temporal beings simultaneous, and thus capable of affecting each other. However, they are simultaneous relative to what? While they both share the property of “realness” and thus both exist, they exist together relative to what? It cannot be relative to the temporal frame, for then that would make God temporal, but it cannot be relative to the eternal frame, for that would

⁸⁴ Craig, *God, Time, and Eternity*, p. 89.

make all temporal entities eternal. So they share the same property of existence or “realness” but do not share the same mode of existence. There is no frame of existence relative to both that they could be said to exist concurrently. They both exist, no doubt, but they exist in two different reference frames of sorts, of which some way of how these two frames can interact would need to be devised. Otherwise, it could not be said that the two entities are simultaneous or co-existent in the way that Stump and Kretzmann envision.

Stump and Kretzmann do, however, attempt to construct a way in which the two frames of reference can consider each other as simultaneous. They claim that an eternal being and a temporal being are ET-Simultaneous if they both observe each other to be present, or real. It is this notion of observing temporal beings to exist that allows will allow God to be said to be ET-Simultaneous with temporal creatures. Now, Stump and Kretzmann employs the term “observe” in order to describe how something eternal and something temporal could be simultaneous even though they have two different modes of existence because in Einstein’s Special Relativity, simultaneity is determined through observation. Stump and Kretzmann are insistent that their doctrine of ET-Simultaneity follows in the same vein as SR, After stating that ET-Simultaneity is “existence or occurrence at one and the same ____” and that “what is temporal and what is eternal can co-exist,... but not within the same mode of existence and there is no single mode of existence that can be referred to in filling in the blank in such a definition of ET-Simultaneity,” Stump and Kretzmann turn to SR to provide an analogy of how entities cannot share the same reference frame and yet still be considered to be simultaneous.⁸⁵

The problem with this is that when used in the contexts of SR, the phrase “observed to be simultaneous with” simply means that two entities have been calculated using the clock

⁸⁵ Stump and Kretzmann, “Eternity,” p. 436.

synchronization method to be simultaneous. This cannot be transferred over to our case with God existing in eternity and everything else existing temporally, for God neither has clocks nor does mathematics. Absent any way in which one could describe how temporal beings and eternal beings observe each other to be simultaneous, it is difficult to maintain that the two actually are. For all that ET-Simultaneity boils down to is that Eternal beings are present at an eternal point, and temporal beings are present at a temporal point. One cannot say that the two are simultaneous because they both coexist at the same time, because that would thus either make God temporal or temporal beings eternal. Therefore, talking about God observing temporal beings to be present and temporal beings observing God to be present is useless.

There could be one more way to stipulate that God is able to interact with all temporal things while remaining timeless and yet the A-Theory of Time still being true on ET-Simultaneity. As a last resort, the proponent of Divine Timelessness could resort to metaphysical and ontological relativism, by stating that in the temporal world the A-Theory of Time is true and that only the present exists, but in the eternal world the B-Theory of Time is true and all times exist. Now, this is a rather extreme position that will need strong philosophical argumentation besides stating that since it is God, He can see all times that exist. For the Divine Timelessness theorist must now state why it is true that there is no ontological truth, at least when it comes to time. Also, they must defend how God could perceive temporal reality as tenseless and yet the creatures living in temporal reality perceive it as tensed. Lastly, it might be asked that if God is the ontological source for everything, then how could there be metaphysical relativism. For if to God reality is one way, then it simply must be that way since He is the ground for all of reality. How could reality exist as He perceives it and grounds it, and yet also

exists differently? Thus, while seemingly a good option at first, metaphysical relativism runs into some serious problems and will need strong arguments to be convincing.

4.1.3. Conclusion

If God is to act inside of a tensed world, as the Christian religion envisions him to do so, then God must be inside of time. What is meant by this is simply that God is temporally located and changes. He changed from going from a state of not creating to creating, and He changes from each moment of time as new events become present, and thus real, for He acts to sustain each new state of affairs. A change in action is a real change of God, and so by definition He must be considered temporal. He cannot perform one action at the beginning of time and be constantly performing the same action to uphold the universe, for not only would He have gone from a state of not performing that action to performing that action, but on a tensed view of time His action to sustain is directed at new entities and events at every moment of time, and thus is itself in a constant flux of change. An appeal to the doctrine of ET-Simultaneity is fruitless for no coherent version has been espoused where the eternal God and temporal entities share the same mode of existence and thus can come into interaction with each other. Also, it would seem to require either a tenseless theory of time, or metaphysical relativism, both of which appear to be untenable and unappealing philosophical theories. Therefore, from the belief that God acts in the world to sustain it and to perform miracles, as well as an adherence to the A-Theory of Time, God must be temporal.

4.2. Divine Omniscience and Tensed Facts

A second, equally powerful argument for Divine temporality is derived from the belief in God's Omniscience. If God is omniscient, then at the very least He knows all true facts that are capable of being known. His knowledge is perfect and is complete. He does not know or believe in anything that is false, and no part of reality is such that it is outside of His cognitive grasp. On

the tensed theory of time, there are tensed facts about the world, facts which are constantly changing as new events become present and old ones become past. The sentence “The year 1984 is in the past” is true right now and for all future times, but it was false during and before 1984. The truth value for the sentence changed from being false to being true, and so new facts came into existence, facts which God, by virtue of His omniscience, must know. But since the facts that exist are constantly changing, so must God’s knowledge of these facts and belief in them. This change in God’s belief states brings about an actual change in God, which constitutes Him being inside of time.

This argument finds its basis in one of Norman Kretzmann’s earlier works which was aimed at showing how God cannot be immutable given that there are tensed facts.⁸⁶ Kretzmann assumed that since God is perfect, He must have perfect knowledge of all propositions. Tensed facts such as “1984 is in the past” contain tensed propositions, the truth content of which changes as the present moment changes. God can know all facts about the timeline of the world, Kretzmann is willing to admit, but this does not therefore mean that God already knows all facts. For tensed facts are independent of this timeline of events. Kretzmann explains “I *am* writing these words just *now*, and on this view of omniscience an omniscient being is incapable of knowing that that is what I am now doing, and for all this omniscient being knows I might just as well be dead or as yet unborn.”⁸⁷ Knowing the states of affairs at each time is great, but it does not give God full propositional knowledge about the world, for He would still be ignorant of what is occurring in the *now*. Since tensed propositions are constantly changing, God would constantly know different propositional facts. Therefore, God, in virtue of His omniscience, must

⁸⁶ Norman Kretzmann, “Omniscience and Immutability,” *Journal of Philosophy* 63 (1966), pp. 409-421.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p. 414.

not be immutable. This argument can be extended to the case of timelessness, for it has been discussed how any being which undergoes change is temporal.

Fifteen years later Kretzmann realized the damage that his argument had on his belief in Divine timelessness and tried to undercut it by adopting a tenseless view of tensed indexicals.⁸⁸ Kretzmann's analysis of tensed indexicals in his later article reflects what is known as the token-reflexive theory of tensed indexicals propounded by adherents of the Old B-Theory of Language, most notably Hector-Neri Castañeda.⁸⁹ The theory states that tensed indexicals like "now" should be interpreted with reference to the time at which they are said. The term "now" is a temporal indexical which refers to the sentence token (the specific sentence that is spoken) which uses the term, and thus the only meaning that it has is to indicate that the speaker is referring to events that are simultaneous with his tokening (speaking) of the term "now". Kretzmann utilizes this analysis of tensed indexicals to say that any proposition which contains tensed terms like "now" only refers to events which are simultaneous with the tokening of "now". These events are always tenselessly occurring at the time of the tokening of the phrase, and so God would always have knowledge of those class of events. Therefore, God's knowledge does not change as people use the tensed indexicals at different times.

This analysis of tensed terms relies heavily on a B-theoretical description of reality, one which proponents of the A-Theory of Time will find extraordinarily dubious and unsatisfactory. Kretzmann attempts to render all tensed expressions into tenseless ones, which removes any need for tense within language in order to describe reality. With language devoid of tense, and yet assumed to have not lost any meaning, it could be believed that one never needed tense to describe states of affairs within reality. However, as has been argued for previously, tense does

⁸⁸ Stump and Kretzmann, "Eternity", pp. 456-457.

⁸⁹ Hector-Neri Castañeda, "Omniscience and Indexical Reference," *Journal of Philosophy* 64 (1967), pp. 203-210.

have an ontological basis, and so in order to describe reality properly, there must be tensed facts and propositions.⁹⁰ Hence, any attempt to reduce tensed expressions to tenseless ones in order to avoid this argument against Divine timelessness will not find any purchase. Rather, one must either construe a way in which God can know the ever changing tensed facts timelessly, or reject the belief that God is omniscient, which leads to the theologically unfavorable position of Open Theism.⁹¹

Brian Leftow has attempted to avoid the point of this argument by appealing to the Special Theory of Relativity. Leftow states that “the relativity of simultaneity entails the relativity of temporal presentness.”⁹² What Leftow means by this is that some item being present must mean that it is only present with respect to a certain reference frame and the time associated with that frame. He explains

... the predicable “ ____ is present now” has a token-reflexive aspect. Whatever else it may communicate, in normal circumstances the meaning of the assertion “A is present now” includes something like “A exists simultaneous with this time.” So if temporal simultaneity is frame-work relative, words such as “now” must in strict propriety be subscripted to indicate the framework of reference within which one is speaking.⁹³

Leftow goes on to use this insight to state that presentness is relative to a specific frame of reference, and thus these tensed indexicals are dependent upon the context in which they are

⁹⁰ See Walker, *God! It's About Time!*, ch. 2.

⁹¹ For discussion of the theology behind Omniscience, see Michael Pozzi, *Title of paper*. This is, however, a route that is taken by some adherents of Divine timelessness. Brian Leftow, for example, states that most medieval philosophers would hold to God's timelessness over God's omniscience due to timelessness being considered a greater perfection (see argument in chapter 5), and thus would stipulate that God either is not omniscient or omniscient entails that there are some facts that cannot be known. In order to defend this last claim, Leftow points towards certain limitations that have been placed upon omnipotence, such as the inability for God to sin or to breathe, that are generally accepted by theologians. In the same way that these limitations are accepted, so could one accept limitations on omniscience that would seem to preclude tensed facts. The merits of this argument will not be examined here, as this is not a volume over Divine omniscience. Rather, it will simply be assumed that omniscience is more preferable than timelessness, and that omniscience entails a knowledge of all facts.

⁹² Brian Leftow, *Time and Eternity*, Cornell Studies in the Philosophy of Religion (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 328.

⁹³ *Ibid*, pp. 328-329.

spoken. To God's reference frame, all events are considered to be present in the sense that they are readily apparent to Him, but to humans only certain events are considered present.

Not only does this response utilize parts of the already discussed ET-Simultaneity in stating that to God all events are present but to humans only certain ones are, but it also ultimately renders a B-theoretical outlook on time. For if presentness is relative to a reference frame, then, according to Minkowski Spacetime, all events must be considered present and thus existent, which leaves one with the B-Theory of Time. Therefore there is no objective "now" which God must have knowledge of, and so His knowledge of the entire timeline of events would not exclude any temporal knowledge. Also, by making tensed indexicals token-reflexive, one once again renders a B-theoretical interpretation of tense, which is unsatisfactory to the A-theorist. Leftow has efficiently argued that God has full temporal knowledge by simply removing tense from the equation, albeit in a rather elegant and scholarly fashion. Leftow's interpretation of SR and tensed indexicals is one that is unacceptable to A-theorist, and so the problem of God's omniscience and His timelessness is still unscathed.

Another attempt to unify God's timelessness with His knowledge of tensed facts has been given by Jonathan Kvanvig. Kvanvig wishes to show that God can be timeless and have knowledge of tensed facts through relating His grasping of tensed facts to how people are able to understand sentences involving first-person indexicals.⁹⁴ Kvanvig analyzes beliefs that are formed from indexical sentences in terms of a triadic relation between the intent of the sentence, the propositional content, and the way in which the person grasps this propositional content. When it comes to indexical sentences, Kvanvig believes that the indexical is not a part of the propositional content of the sentence. Rather, it is a way of expressing how the speaker grasps

⁹⁴ Jonathan Kvanvig, *The Possibility of an All-Knowing God* (New York: St. Martin's, 1986), pp. 66-70.

the content. First person indexicals used in sentences such as “I am going for a run” shows who the speaker is referring to (himself), what the propositional content is (that the person referred to is going for a run), and how the speaker has accessed that knowledge (directly). But the sentence “you are going for a run” said by an observer of the first speaker shows that the second speaker grasps that knowledge indirectly, having knowledge of the person and of what they are doing, but accessing the propositional content in a different way than the runner would. Therefore, the two sentences both mean the same thing, that the person referred to is going for a run, but the content is accessed differently.

Kvanvig wishes to extend this analysis of personal indexicals to the case of temporal indexicals to show how God can be omniscient and yet grasp propositions expressed by sentences involving tensed expressions. He states that tensed expressions simply refer to the essence of a time; therefore sentences like “It is now March 20, 2017” uses the indexical “now” to refer to the time. It expresses the way in which humans grasp temporal statements, i.e. directly. He states “all that the use of demonstratives shows is how we, as temporal beings, access the essence in question.”⁹⁵ The demonstrative “now” is not part of the propositional content, like how “I” is not, but rather only shows the way in which a person grasps the essence of the time. It would then be evident that God could grasp propositional knowledge of times indirectly, and thus with no need of the demonstrative “now”. Kvanvig makes just this claim, saying “God, from the standpoint of eternity, is acquainted with the essence of every moment of time; and thus, even though we are subject to temporal becoming... there might seem to be no good reason to think that this particular way of accessing the essences in question is necessary.”⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Ibid, p. 155.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

On Kvanvig's account, then, present tensed indexicals such as "now" express a grasping or an understanding or a temporal proposition directly. However, past or future tensed demonstratives express a grasping of temporal propositions indirectly. So sentences like "It is now March 20, 2017" spoken on March 20, 2017 and "Yesterday was March 20, 2017" spoken on March 21, 2017 mean the same thing, as they both refer to the same essence, namely March 20, 2017, but they are accessed differently. The first sentence is accessed directly, whereas the second sentence is accessed indirectly. Kvanvig thus believes that on such an account of understanding propositional content, God can have knowledge of all temporal facts without any recourse to present tensed indexicals, allowing him to avoid the point of the current argument.

The first problem with Kvanvig's argument is that it does not propose of method in which God can know tensed facts. Rather, it proposes a method to eliminate tense from propositions, making temporal propositional truths essentially tenseless, robbing the world of objective tense and temporal becoming. Craig notices this point and states "Kvanvig's analysis would not seem to be a defense of God's timeless knowledge of tensed facts, but the claim that tense in some way derives from the manner of accessing propositional content, which itself is tenseless."⁹⁷ Kvanvig attempts to render sentences like

1. It is now March 20, 2017

into tenseless constructs such as

- 1(A). The essence of the time picked out by the temporal indexical "now" in (1) is mutually expressed with the property of being March 20, 2017.

In doing so, he claims

⁹⁷ Craig, *God, Time, and Eternity*, p. 118.

... The apparent infection of propositions such as (1) by temporality is eliminated by noting that (1A) lacks this temporality and further contains all the same temporal elements as (1). If (1A) is not identical to (1), it is not because of some temporal dimension; it must be for some other reason.⁹⁸

Kvanvig thus means to remove tense altogether from propositions, and rather replace them with tenseless truth bearers. If any proposition is true that is expressed using tensed indexicals, it is not because of any truth about the tense that is part of the proposition, but rather it is because the tenseless truth bearers in the proposition are true. Therefore, tense becomes a linguistic tool that expresses nothing about reality, which would be appalling to the A-theorist.

The second problem with Kvanvig's analysis is that using different tenses to refer to a time simply does not communicate the same propositional truth. Speaking the sentence "It is now March 20, 2017" on that date and speaking "Yesterday was March 20, 2017" on March 21, 2017 have vastly different underlying propositional content. For as was stated in previous chapters, presentness (ascribed by the demonstrative "now") predicates temporal existence to some object. So stating that March 20, 2017 exists now does not, as Kvanvig wishes to say, express the way in which someone grasps the propositional content of the essence of the date March 20, 2017. The indexical "now", instead of showing the mode in which a person understands the proposition, is itself rooted in the propositional content of the sentence. For "now" predicates temporal existence to March 20, 2017, which has an ineliminable place in the content of the sentence "It is now March 20, 2017" due to its affirmation that March 20, 2017 exists. But the sentence "Yesterday was March 20, 2017" when said on March 21, 2017 does not convey the same affirmation that March 20, 2017 exists. Rather, it states the March 20, 2017 did exist, but no longer does, and so has fundamentally different propositional

⁹⁸ Kvanvig, *All-Knowing God*, p. 156.

content from the original sentence. Therefore the employment of different tenses does not show the way in which some being accesses the proposition, but has an irreducible place in the content of the sentence itself. Hence, God must know both of these two propositions when they become true, and since when one becomes true the other becomes false, God must change in his knowledge of true propositions, and thus be in time.

The other major attempts to reconcile God's timelessness with His knowledge of tensed facts either fail to include tensed facts in God's knowledge by rendering tensed statements into tenseless ones, or they do not offer an adequate account of how God could know tensed facts and be timeless through a faulty analysis of how beings access knowledge.⁹⁹ With tense playing an ineliminable part in reality, God must know all true facts about tense in virtue of His omniscience. But since the class of true tensed facts is constantly changing due to the reality of temporal becoming, God's knowledge is in a constant flux of change, and thus He is constantly changing. Barring the denial of God's omniscience, God must therefore be in time in order to know tensed facts.

⁹⁹ For further discussion of these other accounts, see Craig, *God, Time, and Eternity*, pp. 116-126.

Chapter 5: God and Time II: Divine Timelessness

Now that two of the major arguments for Divine temporality have been examined, it is only fair to examine the major arguments for Divine timelessness to see if the timeless position contains equal warrant as, more warrant, or less warrant than the temporal position. The purpose of this is to help definitively conclude which view of the Divine relation to time is true in the actual world, a world governed by Presentism. If the arguments for Divine timelessness have more warrant than the ones for Divine temporality, then one can assume that God is outside of time. If they have less warrant, then it is safe to say that God is inside of time. If the warrant for both positions are equal, a contention which is rather subjective, then one equipped with the present insights of philosophy cannot conclude which theory is correct, and the discussion is left open for more inquiry and debate. The argument for Divine timelessness that will be examined in this chapter is that being timeless is a superior mode of existing than being temporal, and thus God, as the maximally great being, would be greater if He were timeless than if He were temporal.

5.1. The Superiority of Timelessness

5.1.1. Existence and Immutability

It has been commonly held by Christian philosophers of the past that timelessness is superior to temporality. St. Augustine was one of the first Church Fathers to hold to this position, and Brian Leftow holds to it, explicating it in his book *Time and Eternity*.¹⁰⁰ First, Leftow goes through an exposition of Augustine's view that a being who is timeless is superior to a being who is temporal. Augustine's reasoning comes from the fact that anything that is temporal

¹⁰⁰ Leftow, *Time and Eternity*, ch. 5.

changes, and thus, due to the reality of temporal becoming, all beings are constantly losing and acquiring new properties. He states

That which is changed does not retain its own being, and that which can be changed, even if it is not actually changed, is able not to be that which it had been. For this reason, only that which not only is not changed, but also is unable to be changed in any way, is most truly said to be.¹⁰¹

He also states “Being is a name for immutability. For all things that are changed cease to be what they were, and begin to be what they were not... What does “I am who I am” mean but “I am eternal... I cannot be changed?”¹⁰² According to Augustine, true existence has no parts, and since temporal becoming entails that there would be parts to God’s life (past, present, and future), God must be outside of time in order to have true existence. Thus he states “God... truly exists because He is unchangeable.”¹⁰³

Now this is an odd view for Augustine to hold to. For if being unchangeable means that one truly exists, then do humans not truly exist? Do any temporal beings truly exist at all? All temporal beings change, but anything that changes, according to Augustine, does not truly exist. This is an extraordinarily unpalatable view. And why must one even hold to the belief that existing truly means existing immutably? For God, at each moment of time, is always being something, even if He is not exhibiting the same properties. While His properties change, His existence does not, for He always exists at each moment. His existence is immutable, even though His properties may not be. Since existence is a predicate, it is primitive, having to be exhibited before any properties can be exhibited. Thus any change in His properties would not cause a likewise change in His existence. Also, technically speaking, under Presentism God is fully Himself at each moment of time. He is fully unified, for whatever properties He did have,

¹⁰¹ Augustine, *The Trinity*, Bk. V, ii, 3.

¹⁰² Augustine, *Sermon 7*, 7.

¹⁰³ Augustine, *The Nature of Good*, 19.

He no longer has, and whatever properties He will have, He does not presently have. Since no other part of His life exists besides the present, God is defined by the properties which He presently has, and thus is complete at each moment in time. Just because one changes does not mean that it does not have “pure being” as Augustine seems to think. God’s being is primitive and thus does not change. In fact, it would seem to be even greater for a being to change than to not, for with every change in properties comes an expansion of *de se* (experiential) knowledge.

So, one may ask, why is it that God truly exists because He does not change? The answer for Augustine is that “what is always different does not exist, because it does not remain: not that it wholly does not exist, but it does not exist in the highest way.”¹⁰⁴ Augustine seems to believe that existence is degreed; that there are different levels to existence, the highest of which is immutable existence. Leftow comments

If “being is a name for immutability,” then ‘being’ *means* immutability, and to have maximal-degree or truest existence includes being maximally immutable, or unchangeable in all respects... So for Augustine, to exist truly *includes* existing immutably, which is existing and being unable to change with respect to existing, i.e., unable to cease to exist.¹⁰⁵

Now it seems as if Augustine has simply defined “being” as “immutability” without any prior argument to defend this claim. In fact, given the validity of the arguments for God being inside of time, it would appear that one would be disposed to reject the belief that “being is a name for immutability.” For one could agree with Leftow and Augustine in believing that God is the maximally great being, but without any defeater to the arguments for God being inside of time, there is a greater degree of warrant for the belief that God is temporal than for the belief that existence is degreed. Since existence being degreed, at least in the way in

¹⁰⁴ Augustine, *Commentary on Psalm 121*, 5, 6.

¹⁰⁵ Leftow, *Time and Eternity*, p. 74.

which Augustine conceives, would have immutable existence as the highest form of existence, the Divine temporalist would have to admit that God does not exhibit the maximal form of existence. If God is the maximally great being, then according to the Divine temporalist His omniscience and His acting inside the world would be incompatible with existence being degreed. With no argument being put forth for the degreed nature of existence, then the Divine temporalist has no reason to adhere to it, believing instead that God acting with His creation and being omniscient is greater than being immutable.¹⁰⁶

Furthermore, the Divine temporalist would still be able to hold to Divine immutability, at least how Leftow takes Augustine to be defining it. He claims that “Augustine states that “to exist truly is to exist immutably.” So for Augustine, to exist truly *includes* existing immutably, which is existing and being unable to change with respect to existing, i.e., unable to cease to exist.”¹⁰⁷ No theist denies that God ever ceases to exist, and if this is all that is meant when one says that God is immutable, then by Leftow’s and Augustine’s own admission Divine temporalists can hold to God have the greatest form of existence just as those who adhere to Divine timelessness can. One cannot extrapolate from the statement that God is immutable with regards to existence to the more extreme statement that God is completely immutable, which itself would be a necessary and sufficient condition for timelessness. One could, however, argue that a God in time does in fact have an end to its existence, due to the fact that the future does not exist, and so the present moment is the last

¹⁰⁶ This argument is lodged against existence being degreed in the sense that immutable beings are greater than changing beings. One could still hold, however, to the belief that there are different modes of existence, such as existence *a se* or contingent existence, which vary with regards to greatness. The Divine temporalist could still hold to the classic doctrine of Divine Aseity which states that God is the only self-sufficient entity, upon which all other entities find the basis for their existence, for stating that God is inside of time, at least on an accidental temporalist view (that God was outside of time before the universe began and inside of time once it did begin), does not affect His *a se* existence.

¹⁰⁷ Leftow, *Time and Eternity*, p. 74.

moment in which God can be said to exist. This objection has been taken up in chapter 3, and fails because the “cap” on God’s existence is only a relative one, and even if time were to end God would then go into a timeless state, making the fact that the present is the last moment of His existence a trivial one, for a timeless being does not exist at any moments.

Later, Augustine goes on to contradict his earlier belief about immutability, stating that “even if something lives forever, still, if it is changeable, it is not properly called eternal.”¹⁰⁸ This is because Augustine “holds that necessarily, if something is eternal, it exists immutably,”¹⁰⁹ and since immutability implies timelessness, an eternal entity must exist timelessly. But why is this so? Chapter 3 discussed different scriptural references about God’s eternity, and concluded that it simply means God never ceases to exist. Interestingly enough, Augustine accepts such an interpretation of Divine eternity.¹¹⁰ But the reason why Augustine concludes that God must therefore be immutably timeless is based off of a misunderstanding of temporality. Augustine wishes to hold to the fact that God’s existence has no endpoints, and since temporal entities come into and go out of being, God could not be temporal. Leftow, commenting on Augustine’s view, states “an eternal individual can cease to exist only if it can first be eternal, then become temporal, and *then* cease to exist.”¹¹¹ This means that to Augustine, if anything is temporal, it will cease to exist. Though temporal objects can cease to exist, this does not mean that temporality entails, or even requires that an entity ceases to exist. Rather, that is a question of the entities contingency or necessity. Therefore, there is no reason to believe that eternity requires timelessness or immutability.

¹⁰⁸ Augustine, *Eighty-Three Different Questions*, q. 19.

¹⁰⁹ Leftow, *Time and Eternity*, p. 75.

¹¹⁰ Augustine, *Civitas Dei*, bk. XI, chapter 11.

¹¹¹ Leftow, *Time and Eternity*, p. 75.

5.1.2. Genuineness of Existence

Leftow moves on from a discussion of immutability and how it relates to timelessness to a formulation of how existence could be degreed. He acknowledges that one of the major problems with talking about existence as a level of degrees is that logicians simply take existence as a yes-or-no question. They ask “do Fs exist” and the answer to that is either yes or no. It cannot be “somewhat” or “only a little” for if even only one F exists, the answer to the question is “yes”. Not only does Augustine believe that there is more to this yes-or-no question, but he also holds that timeless entities have a higher degree of existence than temporal entities. In order to make sense of this view, Leftow appeals to qualifying existential statements. He proposes “even if ‘is there at least one’ admits only a yes-or-no answer, one can nuance such an answer. One can reply ‘yes, but barely.’”¹¹² This allows Leftow to develop Augustine’s view into a more coherent and acceptable version, declaring “perhaps what writers like Augustine mean by allowing degrees of existence is not that one existing object has more existence than another or that one true assertion of existence is truer than another, but that one object has more intense, full, or genuine existence than another.”¹¹³ Hence, Leftow takes degrees of existence to be founded not in something existing more than another object, but rather in something having a more genuine presentness or unity than another object.

Leftow develops this idea of existence being degreed based off of genuineness by use of analogy to a colloquial phrase. He states:

We do use a degreed idea of *reality* in everyday contexts: for instance, we distinguish a “real man” from those less manly. In such cases, degrees of reality are degrees of genuineness. If we call John Wayne a real

¹¹² Ibid, p. 81.

¹¹³ Ibid.

man and say that Caspar Milquetoast is not much of a man, we say that both are men, but one is more truly, fully, or intensely masculine than the other.¹¹⁴

Calling someone more of a “real man” than someone else inherently has a degreed view of manhood, and as being masculine is part of the properties that someone possesses, it could be argued that certain people exist like more of a man than others. Leftow, interpreting Augustine, says

I therefore suggest that when Augustine says that timeless beings have higher-degree existence than temporal beings, his claim is that timeless existence is more genuinely existence than temporal, that timeless beings exist more genuinely than temporal ones, and that temporal ones only exist insofar as they exist like timeless ones.¹¹⁵

Just as John Wayne is considered more of a man than Caspar Milquetoast because he follows more closely what it means to be a “real man”, so are timeless beings considered to be more truly existent than temporal ones because they follow more closely to what it is to exist. Thus in order to understand Augustine’s belief that timeless beings are superior to temporal ones, we must understand how Augustine defines existence.

5.1.3. Character-Presence and Existential-Presence

Leftow moves to a description of Augustine’s concept of existence. Augustine is, like as has been argued in this paper, a presentist. He believes that the only temporal things that exist are presently existing things. Thus, temporal existence is synonymous with temporal presence.

Augustine then moves on to say that timeless beings are in some sense present, what one might call the eternal present, but do not have any past or future part of their life. Their life is wholly and fully present. Boethius agrees with this and goes so far as to say that temporal existence mirrors timeless existence in that temporal things try to be present just as timeless things are, but

¹¹⁴ Ibid

¹¹⁵ Ibid, p. 83.

yet falls short of timeless existence because of its lack of permanence. Augustine and Boethius therefore conclude that those beings that exist in timeless eternity are more genuinely present and thus more genuinely existent than temporal beings. Leftow claims “a timeless being exists in a present to which nothing is past or future, and within its duration nothing is past or future. If this is so, then arguably, timeless beings are more genuinely present than temporal beings: for they are present without taint of past or future.”¹¹⁶

Leftow could be interpreted as saying two different things: the first is that timeless beings are more genuinely present because they possess all of their life at once, and the second is that timeless beings are more genuinely present because they possess all of their properties at once. Now, these two options may seem like they are the same thing, but some clarification is needed. Possessing all of one’s life at once refers to the experiences that one has and the actions that one takes. This is separate from what composes an individual person. It is different with properties. Properties compose what a specific person is considered to be, and so by possessing all of their properties at once, a person is said to possess all of what it means to be him at once. This is obviously what Leftow is referring to when he says that timeless beings are more present than temporal ones. For timeless beings contain all of their properties at once, and thus their existence is not spread out across times, but is rather centralized in one eternal present.

Leftow admits as much when he says that

An unchanging being is fully present in that its entire character is manifest in its present existence—in fact, all that it ever is is fully present throughout its existence. A changing thing was or will be other than it now is. Hence its character is less than fully present at any moment—at no one moment does it have at once all the attributes it ever will have.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ Ibid, p. 84.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, p. 85.

This sort of presence Leftow characterizes as character-presence. A timeless being's existence is superior to a temporal being's because of the fact that the timeless being has the maximal degree of character presence, which a temporal being does not have. Thus, because timeless beings are more present in this sense, they are considered to have more existence. Of course, Leftow is erroneously equivocating the term being present, because being present has the double meaning of being existent in time and of possessing certain qualities in oneself, such as humanity's being present in Chris Henderson (debatably). We will, however, gloss over such a problem.

Before moving onto Leftow's second type of presence, it will be beneficial to analyze his doctrine of character-presence. First, Augustine and Boethius claim that time imitates eternity. Eternity is complete and permanent, whereas time is fleeting and changing. Time attempts to mimic eternity's mode of existence, yet falls short of doing so. Leftow claims that this failure to be like eternity entails that temporal existence is less of a mode of existence than eternal existence. However, how does failing to imitate eternity mean that time is less of a mode of existence? That itself would assume that eternity is more of a mode of existence than temporality, and thus would be question begging. But one may state that eternity exhibits more presentness than temporality, and thus eternal existence is a higher mode of existence than temporal existence. But this would not make sense either, for as has been shown, temporal existence is only present existence, and thus eternity cannot exhibit more presentness, for all that time is is the present. Furthermore, simply because something fails to imitate something else does not mean that it exists any less. Take a great war hero and his statue made in his honor. The statue fails to perfectly imitate its human counterpart in that it does not possess life. However, it cannot be said to exist any less than the war hero just

because it does not have life. For how could being alive make his mode of existence any greater than the statues'? It would give his existence more meaning, but that does not mean that his mode of existence is greater.

Neither of these are truly what Augustine and Boethius are getting at when they state that timelessness is a greater mode of existence, however. Leftow makes this explicit when he claims that "timeless beings are more genuinely present than temporal beings: for they are present without taint of past or future."¹¹⁸ What he is claiming is not that eternity exhibits more presentness than time, for what exists in time is, by fiat, present. Rather, he is claiming that eternal beings are more present because no part of them has faded into non-existence or no part of them has yet to come into existence. All that they are presently exists, and their existence is not spread out between past, present, and future times, only one of which actually exists. This is what Leftow meant when he stated that a timeless and immutable beings have all of their "character" at once. The properties that they possess are always present within them: they never change nor leave and are exchanged for other properties. This is Leftow's character-presence, and timeless beings exhibit the maximal amount of it.

What can be said about the concept of character-presence? While an intriguing and convincing concept, Leftow makes one fatal flaw his formulation of it, a flaw which, without it, the entire theory falls apart. This is that he tries to conflate perdurantism, a model of temporary intrinsics, with Presentism. The problem occurs because perdurantism is a theory of temporary intrinsics which is satisfactory for the B-Theory of Time, but is insufficient for the A-Theory, especially Presentism. Perdurantism attempts to solve the problem of change over time (called temporary intrinsics) by stipulating that objects are split into what are called

¹¹⁸ Ibid, p. 84.

temporal parts, and the conglomeration of all these temporal parts create the four-dimensional Spacetime object. Temporal parts are phases of an object's life where the object possesses certain properties. Each temporal part is a phase of the objects life where it contains some new property. Thus, perdurantism seeks to reconcile an object's identity over time despite change by saying that all the object is is a four-dimensional block whose life is divided into different parts, parts which describe the object at different times.

Perdurantism is great so long as one adheres to the B-Theory of time. For perdurantism requires that all temporal parts of an object exist, so that the four-dimensional block can truly exist and be said to be a conglomeration of all the object's temporal parts. However, on Presentism, the theory is a pile of rubbish. For the four-dimensional block could not consist of all temporal parts of some item, for only the present temporal part exists, and so the four-dimensional block would in fact not consist all temporal parts of the object, but rather only the present existing one. Perdurantism then becomes a remnant of what it initially was. This does, however, show what a theory of temporary intrinsics would be like on Presentism. It would be one that stipulates that all the object is are the object's present properties. It was or will be something else, but all that it is is described by its present properties. For it could not be what it was or will be, for neither of those times exist. This theory of temporary intrinsics is called endurantism.

So how is perdurantism squeaky wheel that needs greasing in Leftow's argument? First, perdurantism wishes to state that at each time an object is in existence, it only exists as part of itself, i.e. the object does not exhibit all the properties that go into the define what it is. What defines what the object is is the four-dimensional block conglomeration of all its temporal parts. Combine this with Presentism, and problems are sure to occur. For none of

the temporal parts to an object exist besides the present one, and thus only the object only possesses its present properties. But its four-dimensional block states that this is not what defines the object, but rather it is all of the temporal parts combined. But since only the present temporal part exists, all of the other temporal parts do not exist, and thus the object has a lesser degree of character presence at each moment of its existence. But as discussed briefly earlier, perdurantism is an inadequate theory of temporary intrinsics for presentists. Rather, presentists opt for endurantism, which stipulates that all an object is is its present existence. Endurantism defines an object's "character" as the properties that it presently has. This is because all the properties that it did have and that it will have do not exist, meaning that the only candidate left for describing the object is its present properties. Therefore, under endurantism on presentism, each object quite literally has maximal character presence due to the fact that its character and what it is described as being is the properties that it presently possesses. Nothing more, nothing less. Thus, the presentist is able to avoid Leftow's argument from character presence.

With Leftow's doctrine of character-presence squared away with, it is time to move onto his second theory of how existence could be degreed, what is called existential-presence. Leftow derives this sort of presence from "the thought that something that is gone as soon as it arrives is 'scarcely present at all.'"¹¹⁹ Thus the concept of existential presence is the idea that something is more genuinely present if it does not go out of existence. Augustine states that "we cannot say that what does not remain exists"¹²⁰ and therefore "greater permanence is a mark of greater presentness and so of more genuine existence."¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 85.

¹²⁰ Augustine, *Commentary on Psalm 38*, 7.

¹²¹ Leftow, *Time and Eternity*, p. 86.

Because “Augustine holds that presentness is degreed because he connects an entity’s presentness and the fixity of its existing,” Leftow creates the premise “(14a) what is present, to the extent that it is present, is present fixedly.”¹²² The less the object’s ability to stop existing, or the more “fixed” its existence is, the more present it is said to be, with maximal fixity being maximal presence. Moreover, Leftow equates maximal fixity with immutable existence, requiring God, if He is to have the maximal amount of existence, is to be immutable, and hence timeless.

In support of his assertion that maximal presentness is related to the fixedness of one’s existence, Leftow provides an analogy from dispositional properties. Suppose someone is to examine two people. At a single moment in time, he is unable to tell which of the two people are wiser than the other. However, by observing them over time and how their wisdom manifests in their actions, he could be able to conclude which of the two are wiser than the other. Since it is arguable that the degrees dispositional properties are exhibited over time, then a person with a more extended life would be more capable of being wise than a person who exists for only a few moments. Since actions are directly correlated to the degree of a dispositional property, those who have a higher degree of wisdom will show over time. Leftow wishes to use this analysis of time and dispositional properties to propose a way in which time and degrees of presentness could be related. For if presentness, and thus existence, acts as a dispositional property, then the degree to which it is inherent in a person can only be exposed as they endure through time.

Leftow’s argument from dispositional properties is shaky, at best. First, dispositional properties are such that they are not only inherent in a person, but are expressed in a person

¹²² Ibid, p. 87.

over time by their actions. So while a person may be knowledgeable and have good ideas, one cannot state how wise he is if he never acts upon his knowledge. Presentness, as well as existence, are not such properties. What would it mean to say that someone exhibits their existence through their actions or over time? It would seem that existence and presentness are simply inherent in an item and is primitive, unlike dispositional properties. Second, Leftow's argument requires one to believe that "evidence from times still later than t can provide a basis for determining the degree of presence a thing had at t ."¹²³ This assertion, however, makes little sense. Observing whether or not a thing exists later than t does not determine how much presentness that thing had at t , but rather whether it is present at times later than t . Observing the thing at t determines the presentness that the thing had at t : it could either be present (and thus existent) or not present (and thus non-existent). In fact, if one wishes to adhere to this position, then one must state that a person has less presentness than the statue made in his likeness, and hence less existence, because the statue outlasts the person. Third, Leftow would have to adopt the view that certain present facts, in order to be more present than other facts, must be more fixed than others. He states "if (14a) is true and some present facts are more fixed than others, it is not unnatural to infer that some present facts are more present than others."¹²⁴ The problem is that all present facts are equally fixed in the present, as none of them could go out of existence in the present, but rather can only go out of existence at later times. Since they can only go out of existence at later times, those facts fixity would be less than others at the time in which it stops existing, but not at the times in which it does exist. In fact, the presentness of facts that go out of existence would be less

¹²³ Ibid, p. 86.

¹²⁴ Ibid, p. 87.

than others not at the time at which they do exist and thus are fixed, but at the times that they don't exist and are not fixed, which is undeniable.

Rather than having existence degreed with regards to time, Leftow seems to be arguing for existence degreed with regards to modality. The fixity of existence that Leftow argues so extensively for seems to be modal necessity. However, Leftow insists that it is immutability. He recognizes that his discussion of the fixity of existence may appear to be a discussion of necessity and not immutability, and while he notices that there is a difference between the two concepts, the difference "is irrelevant."¹²⁵ The reason for this is that he believes that "to say that a thing's existence is maximally fixed is to say that its existence is maximally rooted in the actual history of the world, i.e., that it exists in all possible continuations of any past segment of the world's history."¹²⁶ How this means immutability is befuddling, but even more so is the argument that he gives to defend this position. In fact, the argument is so confounding that I am unable to render a coherent version of it, and so do not even know where to start on its critique.

In order to help Leftow out, an important dichotomy between properties and existence is in order. Existence is taken to be a predicate, and so not some sort of a property that an object has. Now, immutability is the property of being incapable of change. This change only occurs in one's properties, for going from existing to non-existing cannot be properly said to be a change, since there is no object of reference when an item stops existing. Necessity, however, is the incapability of ceasing to exist. Thus what Leftow truly wants is to say that God's existence is necessary, not immutable, and therefore timeless, existence, because

¹²⁵ Ibid, p. 88.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

immutability is the inability to change one's properties, but necessity is the inability to stop existing, which provides maximal fixity.

Leftow concludes this section by offering one last argument for God's immutability from fixity, by stipulating that "to exist immutably = to be such that in any possible variation of present or later circumstances over any period, one's passing out of existence during that period has a 0 probability."¹²⁷ This argument can be met by the conclusions of the preceding paragraph. Leftow wants to affirm not immutability, but necessity.

5.2. Conclusion

The following sections of Leftow's chapter on timelessness as superior to temporality argue for his position by appealing to the fact that timeless beings are more unified than temporal ones. Alas, this argument is just the character-presence argument in a new dress, and so falls prey to the same objections that have been lobbed against it. With his argument from character-presence failing to take into consideration a presentist's notion of temporary intrinsics, and his argument from existential-presence confusing immutability and modal necessity, Leftow has no means of arguing that timeless existence is more genuine than temporal, and thus that whatever does not change is more real and superior to the temporal. In fact, a counter-argument to this could be proposed, that temporality is greater than timelessness because as God changes, he experiences new properties and so increases in his *de re*, or experiential knowledge, whereas a timeless God would not increase in *de re* knowledge. An increase in knowledge and experiences certainly would *prima facie* appear to be superior to a fixed set of experiential knowledge, and thus temporality would be superior to timelessness.

¹²⁷ Ibid, p. 87.

Conclusion

From the preceding discussion, it has been concluded that only the present time exists, presentness is akin to temporal existence, time is a relation to change, and God is located inside of time. Given the paradoxes that lead from past and future times existing given the existence of the present, Presentism is the only coherent model of the A-Theory of time. From this arises the question of how long the present lasts. This question must be answered with regards to the present what. The present is not an entity in and of itself, but is with regards to some event, for example, the present stage of the universe's expansion. In order to give time any meaning, time must be a relation to change. Otherwise it would just be a substance whose existence would not affect reality. Since time is just a relation to change, what it means for something to be in time is for that object to change. This is the platform from which the discussion of God's eternity is launched from. Given the reality of tense, God must have ever changing knowledge and must always be changing in His relation as sustainer of the world, and thus must be inside of time. Leftow attempts to argue for the necessity of Divine timelessness in light of these arguments because of the superiority of timeless existence. His argument, however, fails, and thus God must be located inside of time.

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