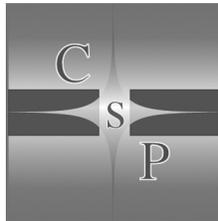


Being Amongst Others

Being Amongst Others
Phenomenological Reflections on the Life-world

Edited by

Eric Chelstrom



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INTRODUCTION

ERIC CHELSTROM

In the most basic terms, phenomenology is a philosophical project that involves descriptions of experience. Phenomenology begins from a descriptive analysis of our experiences of the world. It grants precedent to the first person perspective—how phenomena appear to consciousness. This involves a rejection of reduction to naturalistic descriptions of phenomena. That is, we experience things like tables and chairs, not things like atoms, quarks or electrons; nor are the firings of our neurons inherent to our *experiences* of the world. This is not to deny that it is important for another science to study the properties and behaviors of atoms or neurons, only that our experience of the world is of objects, events, states of affairs, not their physical substructures. This sentiment is succinctly made by Edmund Husserl's famous dictum: "*Zu den Sachen selbst!*", "To the things themselves!" This emphasis on description of what is experienced by consciousness and the structures of consciousness itself¹ leads to the methodological requirements formulated by Husserl to distinguish the phenomenology from other sciences. Martin Heidegger saw phenomenology as a methodology for precedent toward the pursuit of ontology. He describes it as such,

...Phenomenology is essentially distinct from the other names for sciences... in that it says *nothing about the material content* of the thematic object of this science, but speaks really only—and this emphatically—of the *how*, the way in which something is and has to be thematic in this research! Phenomenology is accordingly a '*methodological*' term, inasmuch as it is only used to designate the mode of

¹ Consciousness is manifest at the level of experience. We may also refer to states of consciousness as mental states, or states of mind. The claim is that states of consciousness are not the same sort of thing as brain states, a state of affairs in the physical brain. These two things, states of consciousness and brain states involve differing explanations, and the nature of their relation is not obvious. Defining the nature of that relation is itself problematic for philosophy and other sciences. However, phenomenology is concerned only with explanations and descriptions of matters on the level of consciousness, as descriptions of brain states (naturalistic explanations) are not representative of our *experiences* of the world.

experience, apprehension, and determination of that which is thematized in philosophy.²

This leads one to appreciate the central place of intentionality in phenomenology. In providing descriptions of phenomena, what we describe are the contents of consciousness (*noema*), the acts of consciousness (*noesis*), and their relation to one another and their objects (correlation). The final element of phenomenology, broadly speaking, is the search for a presuppositionless starting point for philosophy. While some of the later phenomenological thinkers deny the possibility of genuine presuppositionlessness, nonetheless, they seek to clarify the structures of prejudgments (prejudice) in order to better transcend mere subjective description.

Phenomenology as a distinct philosophical tradition expressly begins through the work of Husserl; specifically, *Logical Investigations* (1900) and *Ideas I* (1913). Generally, it is believed that phenomenology as a method begins simultaneous with the inception of the tradition. However, the likeness of the phenomenological methods to Aristotelian philosophy, and the heavy influence of the Austrian philosophers prior to and contemporary with Husserl—Franz Brentano, Johannes Daubert, Emil Lask, *et al.*—leads one to hesitate before making such a swift identification. While certain methodological, and even ideological, elements precede Husserl's contributions, it is hard to claim that there was a unified philosophical project under the name “phenomenology” prior to him. If anything, we should view the codification of a theory of phenomenology with sufficient clarity so as to originate a consequent tradition to be one of Husserl's principal achievements.³

The history of the phenomenological tradition is itself diverse. Husserl's early and latter writings are often seen as representing at least two distinguishable traditions, despite the efforts of exegetical scholars in trying to provide a more univocal Husserlian position. This tends to begin either through the attempt to illuminate the latent idealism lurking in Husserl's early writings, or to ardently affirm an unapologetic realism beneath the veneer of the later works' self-ascribed transcendental idealism. The specific branches of phenomenology owing their origin to Husserl are as yet greater in diversity: 1) realist phenomenology of the Austrian and Munich traditions, 2) idealist phenomenology (generally viewed as

² Heidegger, Martin. *History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena*. Theodore Kisiel, trans. Indiana University Press, 1985: 85.

³ The tradition-method distinction is made by David Woodruff Smith in a number of his writings. See, for example, his “Phenomenology” in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2005 edition) (<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2005/entries/phenomenology/>); or his and Amie L. Thomasson's introduction to the collection of essays they co-edited, *Phenomenology and Philosophy of Mind* (Oxford, 2006).

having been grounded in the texts of the middle Husserl), 3) genetic or constitutive phenomenology (represented through the texts of the late Husserl). And, 4) amongst the followers of Husserl, namely Heidegger, arose a hermeneutic phenomenology. Phenomenology has also been essential to the development of subsequent traditions: existentialism, deconstruction, and so on. But, to go beyond a partial enumeration of Husserl's influences is here not essential to our task.⁴

For present purposes, what will be important is to delineate those features common to specific instances of phenomenology, and attempt to avoid the quarrels and deeply divisive issues underlying the breaks between various schools of Husserl scholarship and phenomenological methods themselves. Compounding matters is that we have thus far only mentioned certain continental uses of 'phenomenology', the term is also utilized in a number of ways in the analytic philosophical tradition. In that context, the term generally signifies the qualities of sensory experience.⁵

The present work is intended as a first gesture toward bridging the division between the valuable insights of continental and analytic philosophical traditions. While what distinguishes these traditions is not always clear—at least to those not woefully ignorant of them both, and who are ill-content with reactionary sentiments and acerbic words exchanged by the entrenched of either tradition—it seems clear that they may be said to generally differ on at least two counts: canonically and stylistically. The texts read internal to either tradition differ, lending itself to typical treatment of differing problems relative to the emphases of the respectively canonized authors.⁶ While the analytical tradition favors a sense of argumentative rigor and strict clarifications of definitions, exploring the implications of those matters and writing in a style favoring those details over grandiose prose; the continental tradition favors a rigor of understanding, giving preference to the interplay of our concepts in a living, dynamic experiential context. The former emphasize clarity of definitions, logical and conceptual analysis; the latter a more global understanding, reveling in the variegated nuances which our concepts take on in the life-world. The essays herein represent a variety of strategies for crossing this divide, either through writing in a more "analytical" style about things in the continental canon or through comparing the issues common to authors in both traditions.

⁴ The material in this paragraph is partially indebted to Lester Embree's distinctions in "What is Phenomenology?" available on the website for the Center for Advanced Research in Phenomenology. <http://www.phenomenologycenter.org>

⁵ C.f. D.W. Smith's "Phenomenology" (see note 2 above)

⁶ A very abbreviated and incomplete list of the respective canonical authors: Analytic: Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell, Ludwig Wittgenstein, A.J. Ayer, *et al.*; Continental (Phenomenological): Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Emmanuel Levinas, Jean-Paul Sartre, *et al.*

This collection is divided into four sections: (I) Foundational Elements of Experience; (II) The Experiencing Subject: What is it to be a Subject?; (III) Amongst Others: The Social World; and (IV) Social Objects and Institutions. Each section represents a level of experience, from the most basic structures of experience, to the subject's experience of the world and objects in it, to experiences and interactions with others, ending at the results of the codifications of certain social practices and beliefs. The sections treat their respective topics principally, even if they share material with other essays. Our experiences of the life-world, the world of human *praxis*, contain a multiplicity of elements; the divisions of this work are meant to demarcate various types of phenomena, not to offer any definitive thesis regarding a hierarchy or structure of relations.

Summary of the work

Section I: Foundational Elements of Experience

Essays in the first section of the volume discuss topics related to time, intentionality and space. These species of phenomena are foundational to experiences in the following respects. Time is inherent in the structure of all experiences, all experiences take place in time.⁷ Any representational experience, the experience of any object, requires intentionality. As Husserl famously claimed, “consciousness is always consciousness-of.” Intentionality is the feature of consciousness that involves directedness towards objects, i.e. consciousness’ being about or directed at something.⁸ Finally, a fundamental element of our experience of our body and of objects taken to be “external” to one’s mind is that they have spatial characteristics. We experience things in the world as having extension, or at the very least being located in a spatial relation to other things, being near or far relative to how it is we constitute (make meaningful) space or a region of space.⁹

⁷ For sample discussions see: Edmund Husserl. *Phenomenology of Inner-Time Consciousness*. (John B. Brough, trans. Kluwer, 2004); Martin Heidegger. *Being and Time*. (John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, trans. Harper, 1962), *History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena*. (Theodore Kisiel, trans. Indiana University Press, 1985). Henri Bergson. *Time and Freewill*. (F.L. Pogson, trans. Dover, 2001); *Duration and Simultaneity*. (Leon Jacobson, trans. Clinamen Press, 2000)

⁸ For sample discussions see: John Searle. *Intentionality*. (Cambridge, 1983); Edmund Husserl. *Logical Investigations*. (J.N. Findlay, trans. Routledge, 2001); Franz Brentano. *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*. (Oskar Kraus Rancure and Linda L. McAlister, eds. Anto Rancurello, trans. Routledge, 1995); David Chalmers. *The Conscious Mind*. (Oxford, 1997)

⁹ For sample discussions see: Patrick Heelan. *Space-Perception and the Philosophy of Science*. (University of California, 1988) or “Interpretation and the Structure of Space in

Hans Pedersen examines the debate over tensed and tenseless theories of time, examining the possible contribution to that debate which might be had through Heidegger's thought. Pedersen argues that Heidegger's works present a tensed account of time that is superior to those commonly presented in the Analytic tradition. David Tostenson provides an introduction to the topic of intentionality; a topic which is of central importance to both the entire phenomenological tradition and analytic philosophy of mind. It is no exaggeration to claim that Franz Brentano's reintroduction of the notion of intentionality into philosophical discourse was perhaps one of the greatest philosophical contributions at the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁰ Finally, Daniel Price provides an analysis of the constitution of space in the works of psychoanalytic philosophers Jacques Lacan and Gilles Deleuze. He examines their respective uses of geometrical metaphors in description of the spaces of our world. In part, both Lacan and Deleuze may be seen as reacting to Edmund Husserl's "Origin of Geometry"¹¹ and Jacques Derrida's criticisms¹² of that work.

Section II: The Experiencing Subject: What is it to be a Subject?

The next section of the volume presents essays on topics pertaining to the human condition: what is it to be an agent in the world?¹³ While there is some overlap in subject matter with the third section, these essays are more directed at what it is to be a subject than what it is to be with other subjects.

Tim Connolly's essay opens this section with an examination of Heidegger's reading of Nietzsche's oft-maligned idea of the overman (*Übermensch*). Connolly argues against Michael Zimmerman's reading of Heidegger's overman as an elitist, Ernst Jünger inspired notion. He concludes through close examination of representative texts of Heidegger's from 1951-1953 that, to Heidegger, Nietzsche's

Scientific Theory and in Perception" in *Research in Phenomenology XVI*. (John Sallis, ed. Humanities Press, 1986: 187-199); Edmund Husserl. "The Origin of Geometry" (appendix in *Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*. David Carr, trans. Northwestern, 1970); Gaston Bachelard. *The Poetics of Space*. (Maria Jolas, trans. Beacon Press, 1994)

¹⁰ Brentano claimed to have found intentionality in the work of Aristotle. *C.f. De Anima. On Memory. On Dreams*.

¹¹ See note 7 above

¹² *Edmund Husserl's "Origin of Geometry", an Introduction*. (John P. Leavey, trans. University of Nebraska, 1989)

¹³ For more discussion see: Martin Heidegger. *Being and Time*. Jean Paul Sartre. *Being and Nothingness*. (Hazel E. Barnes, trans. Simon & Schuster, 1993), *The Transcendence of the Ego*. (Forrest Williams and Robert Kirkpatrick, trans. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1991); Maurice Merleau-Ponty. *Phenomenology of Perception*. (Colin Smith, trans. Routledge, 2002), *Sense and Nonsense*. (Patricia Allen Dreyfus, trans. Northwestern, 1992)

overman is more to be understood as a thesis regarding one's proper comportment towards being than an angst driven godlike figure. Nietzsche's emphasis is toward an accentuation of what is the highest possibility of humanity—akin to claims made in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*—and, thus represents a thesis as to human nature. Following this, Russell Pryba presents a refreshingly lucid account of Sartre's notion of bad faith. Pryba argues that one mode of bad faith requires the presence of others; even though bad faith is a phenomena immanent to an individual subject. While not addressed explicitly in the essay itself, Pryba's presentation of Sartre opens up the possibility for inquiry into how Sartre may present alternative conclusions than Levinas with respect to what originates for one from out of the experience of the other. The position results in a claim about the relation between bad faith and subjectivity. Jessie Dern's contribution addresses the relationship between the mind and body in relation to the work of Edmund Husserl. She argues that a deeper appreciation of Husserl's phenomenology of the lived-body is necessary toward the ultimate achievement of the Husserlian project of phenomenology. Dern holds that the unique position of the body, as both object (experienced) and subject (experiencing)¹⁴, is essential to the contextual background of one's knowledge. As such, recognition of the relation of consciousness as embodied is, to her, seen as requisite for a complete understanding of the ground of knowledge. The final essay in this section, that of Craig Greenman, offers a mediation of the ecstatic nature of love. Greenman's essay is written as to acknowledge the body of the author relative to the process of writing. Greenman explores the variety of phenomena we relate to the concept of love. Implicit in the writing may be operating a critique of the project of a conceptual analysis, plying at the inherent gaps between concepts (where taken as ideal or static objects), applications of concepts (which are very fluid and open to novel presentation), and the phenomena in the world to which the concept is meant to refer (reference not being an absolute, given the ambiguity related to concepts).

Section III: Amongst Others: The Social World

Features of the social world and elements of our interactions with others comprise the topics which make up section three. These works more expressly address our sociality, including descriptions of certain phenomena of and problems relative to their being a plurality of subjects existing together.¹⁵

¹⁴ There is a historical precedent for this distinction that is too often overlooked. The distinction is integral to Arthur Schopenhauer's project in *World as Will and Representation*. Volume 1 (E.F.J. Payne, trans. Dover, 1966)

¹⁵ For more discussion see: Alfred Schutz. *Phenomenology of the Social World*. (George Walsh & Frederick Lehnert, trans. Northwestern, 1967); Hannah Arendt. *The Human Condition*. (Chicago, 1998); Max Scheler. *On Feeling, Knowing, and Valuing*. (Harold

Leading this section is David's Leichter's essay identifying a Heideggerian account of friendship. The issue is an interesting one in that Heidegger hardly mentions friendship at all in any of his works. Nonetheless, Leichter builds upon the few fragments within Heidegger's work, and develops a position consistent with the broader philosophical positions of Heidegger. It succeeds on two counts: describing a consistent Heideggerian position, and offering an analysis of what friendship is. What should not come as too surprising to the knowledgeable reader is that the final account is similar to positions taken previously by Aristotle and later by Derrida.¹⁶ Following this is an essay by David Krueger. Krueger compares the functions of sympathy in David Hume's ethical writings with the hermeneutic structure of understanding in Hans-Georg Gadamer's writings. Krueger's position is that the structure of Humean sympathy is hermeneutic. What it means to understand more generally, as a dynamic interpretative practice involving judgments (prejudice), and revisions of judgments is intrinsic to sympathy in that sympathy appears to involve the continual revision and re-interpretation of our projections of sentiments. As we become better, more experienced, at understanding others, we develop a more refined faculty of sympathy, analogous to how one refines their aesthetic taste.¹⁷

The middle two essays both take up issues with respect to Hegel's ethics. Owen Ware and Justin Holt each share similar intuitions with respect to the status of Hegel's ethics in relation to his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, both taking the notion of forgiveness as a starting point. Ware argues that forgiveness reaffirms one's place in community with others, forming an intersubjective ground for ethics. Holt contends that forgiveness does not meet Hegel's criteria for knowledge, and that some modification must be made to Hegel's account in order for forgiveness to be applicable to social forms.

Final in this section are two essays dealing with how to understand intersubjectivity itself. Lee Braver compares the triangular holism of Donald Davidson with Heidegger, concluding that Heidegger's position is superior. Triangular holism is Davidson's way of describing the necessary and co-equal relation between subject, world and others. That is, all three must exist together. Eric Chelstrom's essay draws together the discussions of intersubjectivity (from the continental tradition) and collective intentionality (from the analytic tradition). His analysis draws together the writings of Husserl and John Searle. The paper defends Searle's position on collective intentions (intentions for collective action,

Bershady, ed. Chicago, 1992), *Die Formalismus in der ethik und die materiale Werkethik: Neuer Versucht der Grundlegung eines ethischen Personalismus*. (Francke, 1980); Maurice Natanson. *Phenomenology and the Social Sciences* V.1 (Northwestern, 1973)

¹⁶ C.f. Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*.; Jacques Derrida. *Politics of Friendship*. (George Collins, trans. Verso, 1997)

¹⁷ C.f. Hume's "Of a Standard of Taste"

or we-intentions), specifically Searle's claim as to the genus of collective intentions. Collective intentions, he argues, are non-summative and individualistic. That is to say that our collective behaviors are not simply the sum of a collection of persons beliefs or intents, but something distinct; and, that collective intentions exist only in individuals' minds, not in any form collective consciousness. Chelstrom's conclusion, articulating the content of one lacuna in Searle's account, is that collective intentions (intentions for action *with* others) are founded on, dependent on, intersubjective intentions (intentions *of* others).

Section IV: Social Objects and Institutions

The final set of essays deals with topics related to socially constituted objects and institutions, embodiments of collective intentions. Amongst the general human institutions addressed include art, science, religion and the political.

Two essays on topics related to art and aesthetics begin this section. Lorelle Lamascus' essay explores the role of *Gelassenheit* (releasement) in the work of art. Her principal focus centers around Heidegger's work. "*Gelassenheit*" is a concept taken from the tradition of Christian Mysticism. The discussion of its role relative to the work of art is motivated by the lack of such discussion in the prevalent literature—specifically the literature surrounding Heidegger's essay, "Origin of the Work of Art". Lamascus notes that this failure to attend to *Gelassenheit*'s working in the experience of the work of art is surprising, given what she takes to be the implied presence of *Gelassenheit* in other discussions of Heidegger's essay. Specifically, she shows how *Gelassenheit* plays a role in the letting-be of the happening of truth that is found in and through one's orienting oneself towards a work of art. Tragedy is the topic of Michael Thompson's essay. Thompson contends that tragedy is a sublime art form. In order to establish the conclusion he relies on three authors, Aristotle, Kant and Nietzsche. First, he begins by an examination of Aristotle's understanding of tragedy, as presented in *Poetics*. Second, he moves to Nietzsche, who also deals with the topic of tragedy. In *Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche introduces a distinction between the Apollinian and Dionysian. Thompson holds that tragedy breaks apart the Apollinian order of the world, springing forth a Dionysian ecstasy which suspends the unities and order of the Apollinian. He then turns to Kant, for his writings on the sublime. Thompson concludes that given tragedy's basic structure (per Aristotle) and *modus operandi* (per Nietzsche), tragedy is an art form inherently oriented to the sublime (per Kant). As such, it is a sublime form of art.

In the third essay of this section, Andrew Spear provides an analysis of the relationship between phenomenology and the philosophy of science. Focusing on the work of Edmund Husserl and T. S. Kuhn, Spear argues that phenomenology is committed to a view of science that sees it as more social, historical and contingent

than most traditional philosophers of science, including perhaps Husserl himself, would be willing to admit.

Jeffery Wattles then examines the topic of the phenomenology of religion. He lays out a groundwork, consistent with Husserl's writings, for proceeding forward with phenomenological inquiry into religious experience. Religion is a potentially difficult topic for phenomenological philosophy in that phenomenology should not, in principle, be able to address theological claims. However, if there is a unique set of experiences related to religion, phenomenologist may inquire into those. Wattles aim is to establish the phenomenological ground for religious experiences—something he sees as opening further possibilities for a critical theory of revelation. His essay draws to a close by pointing out that there is a pragmatic function that current phenomenology of religious experience can serve, to identify a common structure and common vocabulary to further inter-religious dialogue—something of renewed importance in our contemporary global political climate.

Last in the collection is Paul Ott's essay on matters political. Ott's concern is to preserve two distinct categories of political thought, what he terms "political subjectivity" and "political objectivity". In relation to the realm of the political, these terms refer to the sphere in which a subject acts, and the sphere in which subjects are acted upon respectively. Ott sees Hannah Arendt as offering a useful set of distinctions towards clarifying what he sees as a historical tendency in political philosophy to distort the relation between political subjects and objects. Specifically, he has in mind Thomas Hobbes and John Locke. He identifies a paradoxical result following from an overemphasis on the political subject, which leads to a loss of political action as much as an excessive focus on the political object would. He contends that Arendt's distinction allows one to better mediate the division between subject and object in the political domain, particularly if we seek to maintain a fertile ground for action.

Suggestions for Further Research:

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Center for Advanced Research in Phenomenology.

<http://www.phenomenologycenter.org>.

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Ridgeview, 1981

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SECTION I:
FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

APPROACHING THE DEBATE OVER TENSED AND TENSELESS THEORIES OF TIME FROM A HEIDEGGERIAN PERSPECTIVE

HANS PEDERSEN

Much of the discussion of time in current philosophy of science has revolved around the debate between the supporters of a tensed theory of time and those who support a tenseless theory of time. The aim of this paper is to attempt to relate Heidegger's conception of time to this debate and demonstrate that while there are important and fundamental differences between the debate over the nature of time in the Analytic tradition and the views of Heidegger, there is also some common ground, and that both Heideggerians and thinkers in the Analytic tradition could benefit from an attempt to reconcile the two approaches to thinking about time.

I. Tensed versus tenseless theories of time

The formal distinction between tensed and tenseless theories that appears so frequently in current discussion of the nature of time is generally acknowledged to have its foundation in J.M.E. McTaggart's influential 1908 article, "The Unreality of Time".¹⁸ Here McTaggart distinguishes between two different conceptions of time, which he calls the A and B series, respectively. The A series is the conception of time in which time is thought of as linearly stretching indefinitely far into the past and the future. This is the "moving now" view of time in which the present ("the now") moves along this line. In B series time, time is only the relations of 'earlier', 'at the same time as' or 'later' that hold between events. The A series accounts for our ability to meaningfully say that an event is past, present or future, while the B series accounts for our ability to meaningfully say that one event occurs before, after or at the same time as another event. It seems that both of these conceptions of time are necessary to provide a foundation for our everyday statements about events and our common intuitions about time.

The distinction between tensed and tenseless theories of time is roughly made along the same lines. McTaggart's A series is held to be fundamental in tensed theories and McTaggart's B series is what is fundamental for supporters of tenseless theories. Tensed theories of time are those that hold that tenses are not

¹⁸ J.M.E. McTaggart, "The Unreality of Time," *Mind* 17 (1908).

merely linguistics devices, but that tenses are incorporated into the ontological structure of time. The most common tensed theory would be the view that the present, or the “now”, has a privileged ontological status, i.e. events that are happening right now or things that are present now are somehow more real than events and things from the past or future. This view of time is based on our everyday experience of the passage of time and the importance of the present. Tenseless theories of time, on the other hand, maintain that tenses have no basis in the ontological structure of time, and hence statements that employ some expression of tense must be reduced to tenseless statements in order to remain meaningful in the strictest sense. Tenseless theories typically are based on the conception of time as spacetime provided by modern physics. If time is really something more like space, then the term ‘now’ should be thought of as a simple indexical term that is used in the same way as ‘here’. Craig Callender provides a useful analogy for thinking about the difference between tensed time and tenseless time.¹⁹ The paraphrased analogy is as follows. Think of all events in spacetime as having a light bulb attached to them. If the light bulb is turned on, the event exists. If the light bulb is turned off, the event does not exist. The tenseless view holds that all light bulbs are on all the time. The tensed view holds that only the light bulbs in the “now” are on.

A. The arguments for and against each side

Most supporters of tenseless theories begin by arguing that accepting the Special Theory of Relativity entails accepting the view that all events in spacetime are equally real. In other words, there can be no priority accorded to the “now”, or any other tense. All events that have happened, are happening, or will happen are already laid out in spacetime similar to the way we normally think of physical objects laid out in three-dimensional space. If this is the case, then there must be something wrong with our normal experience of the passage of time. Donald Williams strongly expresses this sentiment in one of the classic articles in support of the tenseless view entitled “The Myth of Passage” as he says:

I believe that the universe consists, without residue, of the spread of events in spacetime, and that if we thus accept realistically the four-dimensional fabric of juxtaposition of actualities we can dispense with all those dim non-factual categories that have bedevilled [sic] our race: the potential, the subsistential, and the influential, the noumenal, the nouminous, and the non-natural.²⁰

¹⁹Craig Callender, “Shedding Light on Time,” *Philosophy of Science* Vol. 67 Supplement Proceedings of the 1998 Biennial Meetings of the Philosophy of Science Association. Part II: Symposia Papers (Sep. 2000): S587-S588.

²⁰Donald C. Williams, “The Myth of Passage,” *Journal of Philosophy* 48 (1951): 458.

This objection by Williams does not represent much of an argument against a tensed view of time, but rather is an exhortation aimed at getting us to be more hard-minded and to get past this romantic conception of the “now” and the passage of time.

In a similar vein, Adolf Grünbaum argues that since the “now” does not play an explanatory role in physics and cannot be accounted for by physics, the “now” must be mind dependent. He sums up his position as follows:

What qualifies a physical event at time t as belonging to the present or as now is *not* some physical attribute of the event or some relation it sustains to other purely physical events; instead what is *necessary* to so qualify the event is that at the time t at least one human or other *mind-possessing* organism M is conceptually aware of experiencing the event at that time.²¹

There is no physical basis for our experience of the passing of time or our privileging of the “now”. Given the assumption that the knowledge provided by physics is more reliable than our everyday experience, the burden of proof rests on the supporters of tensed time to explain how our ordinary experience of time is possible.

In addition to these sorts of objections to the tensed theory of time, there are two main lines of argument that claim to demonstrate that any tensed account is contradictory or deficient inherently, regardless of whether or not it is supported by physics. The first of these arguments is initially given by McTaggart and appears in various modifications throughout the later decades of the debate. McTaggart argues that the A series implies a contradiction. We would normally say that an event is future, then that it is present and finally that it is past. Applying any two of these predicates to a single event at the same time results in a contradiction. In other words, McTaggart is able to generate the contradiction in the A series because he assumes that temporal statements such as ‘Event E is occurring now’ are either true or false and their truth value once assigned does not change. If E is taken to be World War II, then someone who said, “World War II is occurring now” in 1942 would have been saying something true. But if I were to say the same thing now, it would no longer be true. It is McTaggart’s feeling that there should be an objective fact of the matter in regards to whether World War II is past, present or future. The truth-value of temporal statements about events should not be linked to any particular perspective or position in time.

²¹Adolf Grünbaum, “Are Physical Events Themselves Transiently Past, Present and Future? A Reply to H. A. C. Dobbs,” *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* Vol. 20 No. 2 (August 1969): 147.

It is the initial move of tensed theorists to reject this presupposition by maintaining that there can be tensed statements whose truth-value changes over time. This version of the tensed theory avoids the contradiction McTaggart finds in the A series by allowing that the truth-value of a statement can change depending on when it is uttered, i.e. a statement can be true only when that state-of-affairs to which it refers exists. This simple version of the tensed theory is often called presentism because it holds that only the present exists, and hence only statements about the present can be true as they are the only ones that can have an existent state-of-affairs to which to refer. The following definition of presentism is given by Smith and Jolic in their introduction to the collection of essays *Time, Tense, and Reference*:

The minimalist version [of the tensed theory of time, i.e., presentism] implies that there are no past or future particulars; what exists are the particulars that can be mentioned in certain present-tensed sentences, such as ‘John is sleeping’.²²

The main objection to presentism is voiced by Callender, as he points out that presentism in this form cannot account for presumably true historical statements.²³ Statements about past events are no longer true if truth is determined on the basis of a statement’s correspondence to an existent state-of-affairs. Supporters of presentism then have traded McTaggart’s paradox for this seeming inability to account for true statements about the past.

There are, of course, ways of making the presentist account more sophisticated and thereby attempting to evade this problem. William Lane Craig makes such an attempt by denying that the referents of statements must necessarily be concrete objects. He instead advocates Plantinga’s view that, “proper names express individual essences, where an individual essence is a property that is essential to an object and essentially unique to that object.”²⁴ On this view, the “proper name ‘Socrates’ expresses an individual essence of Socrates rather than denotes nonconnotatively the actual object Socrates and so does not require Socrates to exist in order to refer.”²⁵ According to Craig, this eliminates the worry about being able to refer to entities that do not currently exist, but either did exist in the past or will exist in the future. Craig proceeds to re-affirm the presentist’s ability to handle truth claims about entities that do not currently exist on the basis of the presentist’s ability to successfully refer to these entities. He states: “The presentist may

²² Aleksander Jolic and Quentin Smith, *Time, Tense, Reference* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003): 18.

²³ Callender (2000).

²⁴ William Lane Craig, “In Defense of Presentism,” *Time, Tense, and Reference*, Aleksander Jolic and Quentin Smith, eds. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press (2003): 395.

²⁵ Craig (2003), 395.

plausibly claim that a view of truth as correspondence requires only that the entities referred to in a past- or future-tense proposition either did or will exist at the indicated times.²⁶ In other words, if we can successfully refer to Socrates, then (assuming that he did exist) we can make statements about him that are true on the presentist view.

The other main alternative to the simple presentist view of time is the maximalist view proposed by Quentin Smith. The maximalist view is a tensed theory that tries to utilize some aspects of B series time while still according primacy to the A series. It differs from the simple version of the presentist theory in that past and future events can be said to exist to some extent, even though they do not exist as fully as present events do. Smith explains his notion of degrees of existence as follows: “The degree to which an item exists is proportional to its temporal distance from the present; the present, which has zero temporal distance from the present, has the highest (logically) possible degree of existence.”²⁷ Furthermore, Smith claims that, “these *degrees of existence* are immediately given in our phenomenological experience,”²⁸ although he does not give any examples of this experience of degrees of existence. The continued existence of past events and the pre-present existence of future events allow us to easily form true statements about these non-present events because they still have some degree of existence.

After considering these arguments against a tensed view of time and the responses given, it may be asked what argument supporters of the tensed theory can produce against the tenseless theory. Of the utmost importance is finding a way to maintain a tensed theory in the face of the support of physics for the tenseless view. Craig does this by maintaining that the view of spacetime implied by Special Relativity is based on a positivistic view of reality. As positivism rejects the whole of metaphysics, supporters of tenseless theories refuse to admit that the conception of time given to us by physics might be not be the real, fundamental nature of time, i.e. they refuse to recognize a possible difference between metaphysical time and physical time.²⁹ Craig argues that the unquestioned assumption that physical time is the way time really is must be discarded since it is founded on a positivistic epistemology that is now universally recognized as being untenable, or in his words, “SR’s [Special Relativity’s] elimination of absolute time is a miscarriage, resting as it does on defective epistemological foundations.”³⁰

The following can be said to superficially summarize this dispute. The supporters of tenseless theories maintain they are in the right because of the

²⁶ Craig (2003), 396.

²⁷ Quentin Smith, “Reference to the Past and Future,” *Time, Tense, and Reference*, Aleksander Jokic and Quentin Smith, eds. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press (2003): 381.

²⁸ Smith, 382.

²⁹ William Lane Craig, *The Tenseless Theory of Time* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2000): 54-104.

³⁰ Craig (2000), 103.

implications of modern physics, especially the Special Theory of Relativity, and the alleged inconsistencies in tensed theories. The main point in favor of tensed theories is that they are in accord with our experience, while tenseless theories seem completely at odds with our experience.

II. Connecting Heidegger's thoughts on time with this debate

Naturally, Heidegger's name is very rarely mentioned in the mainstream philosophy of science literature, and there is virtually no serious consideration of his thought. My contention is that Heidegger's thought on time can in fact be fruitfully applied to this debate. I will limit myself in this paper to the consideration of the conception of time Heidegger gives in *Being and Time* and *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*.

To begin with, it is important to first clarify the context in which Heidegger discusses time in this period of his thought. We must remember that the aim of the overall project of *Being and Time* is to "raise anew *the question of the meaning of Being*."³¹ Heidegger goes on to say:

Our aim in the following treatise is to work out the question of the meaning of *Being* and to do so concretely. Our provisional aim is the Interpretation of *time* as the possible horizon for any understanding whatsoever of Being.³²

Heidegger immediately connects time with the possibility of understanding Being. He is asking how it is possible that we are able to understand anything that exists. The term 'meaning' then can be thought of in this context as the condition for the possibility of any understanding whatsoever and Heidegger's claim is that time is this condition. Time is what allows something to be understood as something.

A. Sketch of Heidegger's conception of time

Heidegger proposes a conception of time that is tensed. His conception of time, however, is very different from the tensed theories considered above. By saying that he offers a tensed conception of time I am saying that Heidegger views time as being fundamentally tensed. He most certainly does not accept McTaggart's A series as the model of tensed time and he does not give ontological priority to the present as most tensed theorists do. Heidegger does share the view of tensed theorists that priority should be given to our phenomenological experience and

³¹Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962): MR 19 (English translation pagination)/H 1 (German pagination).

³²Heidegger (1962), MR 19/ H 1.

Craig's belief that the account of time given by physics does not necessarily provide us with the "metaphysical" structure of time.

Heidegger's conception of time actually involves four different times or perhaps four different levels of time. They are as follows, listed in an increasing order ontological priority:

- (1) Clock time, in which time is constituted by hours, minutes, days, etc.,
- (2) World time, in which time is thought of in terms of our practical activities, i.e. time to do something or a time when something happens,
- (3) Originary temporality (*Zeitlichkeit*), and
- (4) Temporality (*Temporalität*).

Heidegger claims that each one is founded upon the one below, or in other words, clock time is based on world time, world time is based on originary temporality, and originary temporality is based on Temporality.

He begins by analyzing world time. In our everyday activities, we primarily encounter time as world time. We calculate whether or not we have enough time to get a paper done before class or whether or not we can get enough reading in order to be able to go out. As Heidegger says:

When we look at the clock and say "now" we are not directed toward the now as such but toward that wherefore and whereto there is still time now; we are directed toward what occupies us, what presses hard upon us, what it is time for, what we want to have time for.³³

In our everyday existence, the "now" is understood as the time to do certain things, time to accomplish some task. Time here is still thought of as a sequence of "nows" or as a "now" moving along the path of time, very much like the A series as defined by McTaggart. It is from this initial encountering of time as time to do something that we derive clock time. Clock time is a precise measuring of time. More precise measurements provide a more efficient way of reckoning with time and deciding how much time we have to do a certain task. In Heidegger's words, "I make inquiry of the clock with the aim of determining how much time I still have *to do this or that*."³⁴ The more we view time as being fundamentally clock time, the further we get from really understanding time.

The transition from understanding time as world time to understanding time as originary temporality is a movement towards grasping the fundamental nature of time. When we consider the "now" of world time, we see that it cannot be an

³³Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1982): 259.

³⁴ Heidegger (1982), 258.

isolated, atomistic instant in time, which when added to an infinity of other atomistic instants forms time as a whole. We can see this by considering time as the condition for the possibility of understanding anything. In order to understand anything we encounter in the present, we must simultaneously have a grounding in the past and a projection into the future. For anything in the “now” to make sense we must have a pre-given background context from which to understand it as well as future directed projects. All of our projects can in turn only be understood on the basis of pre-given context of meaning in which we find ourselves. To give a more concrete example, consider an eighteen year-old young man visiting an Army recruitment office. We will call him Larry. Larry has the intention of becoming a soldier. This is the futural projection of a specific possibility of being. The possibility of being a soldier exists only on the basis of the background context in which Larry lives. The conception of being a soldier carries with it all sorts of traditional ideas of what it is to be courageous or what it means to serve one’s country. Additionally, the make-up of the culture in general is such that being a soldier is an available option for Larry. In wanting to be a soldier, Larry is taking this pre-existent possibility and projecting into the future and his projection in way comes back to this already given possibility. It is Larry’s projection on the basis of this pre-given possibility that allows the present visit to the recruitment office to be understood.

The structure of originary temporality is not linear; rather it is more of a circular movement. Heidegger states:

[S]ince the Dasein always comports itself more or less explicitly toward a specific capacity-to-be of its own self, since the Dasein always comes-toward-itself from out of a possibility of itself, it therewith also always *comes-back-to* what it has been.³⁵

Dasein primarily exists as a projection of itself into the future, but this projection into the future necessarily needs some basis from which to be projected. Hence, every projection into the future carries forward some pre-existent possibility from the past. It is this circular movement from future to past to future again that makes the present intelligible.

It is somewhat unclear how Temporality fits into this picture. Heidegger views the working out of originary temporality in *Being and Time* as a preliminary task that must be completed before moving on to Temporality in the unpublished, perhaps non-existent, third division. He makes a similar sort of promise in the *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, but again never gets around to clarifying exactly how originary temporality is grounded in Temporality. He does, however, imply that while these first three forms of time are dependent on Dasein, Temporality is not.

³⁵ Heidegger (1982), 266.

B. Applying the standard arguments against tensed theories to Heidegger's conception of time

It would seem that based on the considerations in part I of this paper, the first objection that Heidegger's view of time would face is that it is incompatible with the implications of Special Relativity. To this objection, Heidegger would provide an answer similar to that given by Craig. While he most likely would not employ Craig's language of "metaphysical" and "physical" time, he would presumably argue along similar lines. Although Heidegger does not explicitly give this argument (at least as far as I am aware), an argument against the view that spacetime is the fundamental nature of time can be given along Heideggerian lines. He characterizes the common understanding of time in the following way:

The time that is known as the now and as a manifold and succession of nows is an *extant sequence*. The nows appear to be intratemporal. They come and go like beings; like extant entities they perish, becoming no longer extant... Time becomes the intrinsically free-floating runoff of a sequence of nows. For the common conception of time *this process is extant, just as space is*.³⁶ (My italics)

In this passage, Heidegger discusses the traditional A series conception of time as a sequence of "nows" moving along the line of time. In our everyday understanding of time, we objectify this inherently dynamic process of temporalizing into a sequence of "nows" that we understand in the same way we understand any other existing thing in the world. Our understanding in this manner is exactly the sort of understanding of Being that Heidegger is constantly criticizing, namely, making Being into an object. The move from viewing time as a sequence of "nows" to viewing it as spacetime is the final step in the process of the complete objectification of Being, and hence for Heidegger, the form of understanding furthest removed from grasping the fundamental nature of time. Heidegger would maintain that physicists have failed to recognize the derivative nature of the objectification of time and are thus completely mistaken in asserting that this is how time fundamentally is.

If Heidegger would dismiss the demands of the physicists to explain his view of time in light of Special Relativity, how then would he answer Grünbaum's claims that the "now" is somehow mind dependent and is in need of explanation? Heidegger would be perfectly willing to admit that without Dasein there would be no time, although the term 'Dasein' is not equivalent to mind. We must remember that Dasein is the openness or clearing in which beings can appear as intelligible. Heidegger's project is primarily to work out structure of this clearing that makes intelligibility possible. His conclusion is that this structure just is temporality. To

³⁶ Heidegger (1982), 272.

say, therefore, that time is dependent on Dasein would not be quite correct. It is not as if Dasein exists first and then somehow imagines time into existence, rather, as he bluntly puts in the 1924 lecture “The Concept of Time”, “Dasein is time.”³⁷ So to say that time would not exist without Dasein is to say that time would not exist without time. There is, of course, the ambiguous status of Temporality to consider. While Heidegger suggests Temporality is independent of Dasein, he does not provide many clues about its nature.

Moving down the line of standard objections to tensed views, we must now consider whether or not McTaggart’s Paradox effects Heidegger’s conception of time. Michael Dummett points out that in order for McTaggart’s Paradox to work we must presuppose that “[t]he description of what is really there, as it really is, must be independent of any particular point of view.”³⁸ If this is the case, McTaggart’s argument will not trouble Heidegger. McTaggart’s argument gains its power from the idea that if you say some event is happening in the present, and that statement is true, then it should stay true, regardless of the temporal point of view from which it is considered. For Heidegger, all truth is temporal and all descriptions of reality are dependent on some particular point of view. He would have no problem admitting that certain statements become true and then could conceivably become false or have no truth-value at all. As he infamously claims in *Being and Time*, “Before Newton’s laws were discovered, they were not ‘true’.”³⁹

Additionally, given Heidegger’s reformulation of the “now”, it seems that he would not be averse to claiming that something is past, present and future. For Heidegger the past and the future are inextricably bound up with the present, meaning that Dasein is always simultaneously its past, present and future. He states that Dasein “*is ahead of itself*...I come from this possibility toward that which I myself am,”⁴⁰ and that Dasein “*is precisely in fact what it was*.”⁴¹ The tenses used here indicate the fundamental unity Heidegger sees in the past, present and future. Each of us in some sense carries our past with us and we are equally constituted by our projection of possibilities into the future. Maintaining a strict separation between the three tenses would make the “now” unintelligible. The problem of accounting for true statements about past events could be handled in the same way. The intelligibility of present events is only possible because we have a certain understanding of past events.

³⁷ Martin Heidegger, *The Concept of Time*, trans. William McNeill (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992): 20.

³⁸Michael Dummett, “A Defense of McTaggart’s Proof of the Unreality of Time,” *The Philosophical Review* Vol. 69 No. 4 (October 1960): 503.

³⁹ Heidegger (1962), MR 269/ H 226

⁴⁰ Heidegger (1982), 265.

⁴¹ Heidegger (1982), 265.

III. Conclusion

It seems then that Heidegger's conception of time allows for responses to all the common objections to tensed theories of time. Of course, this does not entail that all the responses are ultimately satisfactory, especially when considered from the viewpoint of mainstream philosophy of science. Heidegger's conception of time must be understood within the context of his overall project of asking the question of the meaning of Being, which leads him to hold a form of temporal idealism. If one disapproves of this project, one is unlikely to find anything Heidegger says about time to be compelling. Furthermore, Heidegger's very curt dismissal of the conception of time we get from physics should be considered more thoroughly. Additionally, there is the worry that even if one accepts Heidegger's initial starting point and overall project, there are problems internal to Heidegger's position that make it untenable. William Blattner, in his book *Heidegger's Temporal Idealism*⁴², rigorously and persuasively argues that Heidegger's attempt to ground our common understanding of time as a sequence of "nows" in the richer notion of world time is inherently flawed, and that in turn, his attempt to ground world time in temporality is flawed. Unfortunately, I do not have the time or space to give Blattner's arguments the consideration they deserve. In conclusion, I submit that Heidegger's conception of time is a richer and fuller account of tensed time than those encountered within the Analytic tradition and is due at least as much consideration as those efforts, but serious questions (posed by those within Heidegger's camp and by those without) remain to be dealt with.

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⁴²William Blattner, *Heidegger's Temporal Idealism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).