

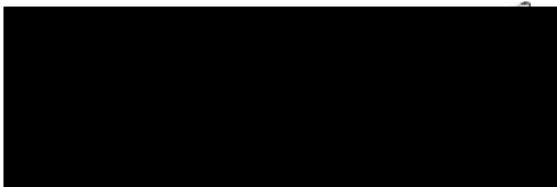
This coursework dissertation is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for a Master of Arts in Philosophy at the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics, College of Humanities University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg Campus

Conceptions of Time: A look at the A-theory

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Introduction

The aim of this project is to investigate the nature of time. In his seminal paper *The Unreality of Time* (1908) J.M.E. McTaggart distinguished between two ways in which time appears to be ordered. First in terms of the properties *Past*, *Present*, and *Future*, second in terms of the relations *earlier than*, *simultaneous with*, and *later than*. The former properties he called the A-properties which formed an ordering he called the A-series, while the latter relations he called the B-relations which formed an ordering he called the B-series. This distinction has framed the debate on the nature of time since, with those who believe that the nature of time is exhausted by the B-series defending what is known as the B-theory, while those who believe that an A-series is essential to time defending what is known as the A-theory.

In this project I aim to first investigate how the A-theory appears to have important advantages over the B-theory in that the B-theory fails to adequately account for certain features that appear central to how we conceive of time. I then move on to look at some objections that have been raised against the A-theory itself, in particular that there is an incoherence in the A-theory. While these objections have some force, I then turn to what appears to be a more troubling problem for the A-theory, namely, that the A-theory simply fails to meet the explanatory task of adequately accounting for our experience of time. I end by offering an alternate account of time, which I call the E-theory, which I believe is better suited to explaining our experience of time.

In the Section 1 I attempt to define the A and B-theory of time, to clearly demarcate where the theories of time come apart. The A-theory of time holds that time is dynamic or in other words flows, and this flow is made possible by A-properties (*past*, *present*, and *future*) that instances of time possess successively. The A-theory is premised on experience (change in times) and language (tense). The B-theory on the other hand is the temporal theory that conceives of time as non-dynamic and instances of time are ordered in terms of B-relations (*earlier than*, *simultaneous with*, and *later than*). I will first show how the B-theory is unable to account genuine for change which is central to our conception of time. I then turn to the A-theory which appears better suited to account for such change in terms of the A-properties it posits. I will explain how McTaggart argues however that these A-properties that are supposed to account for change lead to incoherence, as the theory entails that instances of time seem to possess the mutually exclusive A-properties at once. I will then look at some responses put forward to

McTaggart's objection and evaluate these, arguing that that even in light of these responses there remains some, though not conclusive, reason to worry.

In the Section 2 I turn to what looks to be a further, more troubling worry for the A-theory, that is, that the A-theory itself is unable to adequately account for our experience of time. I argue that a theory of time must account for the facts of the common experience of time, which is a continuous and yet fragmented experience. At the very least the account of time provided cannot undermine or go against our experience of time. I will look to and develop arguments that aim to show that the A-theory is unable to account for how time flows, which appears central to our experience of time.

In the final section I aim to provide an alternate theory of the nature of time inspired by the work by Emmanuel Chukuwe Eze. I will look closer at experience, time and change, arguing that what is required to adequately account for the common facts of the experience of time are temporal properties that can be inclusively possessed by an instant of time. This means that the properties in question can perform the double function of being distinct and yet inseparable, and thus can account for and facilitate the experience of time as continuous yet fragmented. I develop what I call the E-theory of time, positing what I call the E-properties that I argue are capable of capturing and accounting for time as we experience it.

1. The A- and B-Series, and the A- and B-theory

In this section I seek to provide an elucidation of a McTaggart (1908) inspired argument on the conceptions of time. Originally in "The Unreality of Time" (1908), McTaggart argues against the reality of time by claiming that the two ways in which we conceive of time each lead to a kind of inconsistency. I will explore this discussion by focussing on the main reasons why time, in its current conceptions—what McTaggart names the A- and B-series—are not coherent conceptions of time. The Unreality of Time (1908) is one of the most controversial arguments in the metaphysics of time. Even though the idea of time not being a genuine feature of reality has been present prior to McTaggart and although the conclusion he came to has been highly disputed, the contributions the paper has had in the philosophy of time, and metaphysics in general, have been tremendous. McTaggart's proof for the unreality of time has thus been recognised not for its conclusion, but for the two essential ways in which we understand "time";

namely in terms of the temporary A-series and the permanent B-series (McTaggart 1908 p. 458), which then map on to the A- and B-theories of time and the tensed and tenseless conceptions in language respectively (we'll return to the issue of language in section 1.2: *The Argument from Language*). McTaggart believed that both the series are essential to time, as the B-series secures the objective ordering of time and the A-series secures the change in time (McTaggart 1908, p. 458-459).

For McTaggart, at the most rudimentary level, the distinction between the two series is the existence of an objective¹ present, which features in the A-series but is absent from the B-series. In both the A- and B-series every position in time or instant is present relative to itself, these however differ in that in the A-series there is also an instant that is non-relative (absolute or objective) i.e., the privileged present. The B-series, according to McTaggart is an ordering of instances (times, objects, events, or propositions), in terms of the two-place relations of *earlier than*, *simultaneous with*, and *later than*. This results in a fixed temporal ordering of events, maintaining the objective order instances have. The A-series is the second way in which we perceive time. McTaggart argues it can be understood in terms of the dynamic properties *Past*, *Present*, and *Future* (McTaggart, 1908, p.458). In other words, in this kind of series instants first possess the properties of futurity, then presentness, and lastly pastness, capturing the transitory nature time seemingly has.

The B-theory, then, is the temporal theory that conceives of time as a non-dynamic B-series. Those who believe that time is exhausted by the B-series and are proponents of this kind of temporal theory are called B-theorists. The A-theory subsequently is a theory of time that holds that time is arranged and behaves like that represented by the A-series, in other words according to A-theorists, there are genuine A-properties and that are successively possessed by instances, to create a flow of time (Carroll and Markosian 2010, p.163). According to the B-theorist, 2020 is later than 2019 and earlier than 2021, and each of these is present relative to themselves. And according to the B-theorist, that is all there is to time. The A-theorist on the other hand would add that 2022 is objectively present, that 2021 was present, and that 2023 will be present

¹ Objective present – I use the term “objective present” in a sense similar to Deasy’s (2014, p.23), “absolutely present” (2018, p.270) “absolute, non-relatively present”, Smith’s (2010, p.233) “special about now”, and Ross (2017, p.71) “objectively privileged present time (the present)”, see *Permanents: In Defence of the Moving Spotlight Theory*, “Philosophical Arguments Against The A-Theory” of *Pacific Philosophy Quarterly*, “Inconsistencies in the A-Theory” of *Philosophical Studies* and *The Moving Spotlight: An essay on Time and Ontology*, respectively. An understanding of the term “objective present” that is general to all the authors is one which is non-relatively concurrent to the now.

(alternatively, that there is a privileged present that 2022 has, that 2021 had, and that 2023 will have)². To make the difference even clearer, the B-theory is often seen to be analogous to how we treat space, where there is no fundamental distinction between what is regarded as here and there. What is here or there is relative to the spatial location from which one makes the distinction. If the analogy succeeds, according to B-theory, there is no absolute present, but rather what moment in time is present is relative to the position in time the identification is made from, or, an event is present relative to itself (Deasy 2014, p.46-47). The A-theory on the other hand is understood to be analogous to the modal theory actualism, that holds that there exists an absolute distinction between what is merely possible and that which is actual, and therefore there is qualitative difference between that which is actual and that which is merely possible. Both the A-theory and B-theory however, as argued by McTaggart and others, possess inconsistencies that will be discussed in the next section.

1.1. Time and Change

Time according to the B-theory is static, where all that was, is, and will be the case, is merely relative to the temporal instant in time, which means that all instances in time coexist and are in a sense equally present. In other words, the present, as an objective feature of reality that only one instant possesses at a time, does not exist. This, however, creates an unintuitive picture of time and has consequences for our understanding of concepts that relate to time, such as that of change.

According to McTaggart, the B-theory of time is problematic as it cannot account for change. How to define change is controversial, however, the general idea throughout the literature is that change is that which was the case absolutely no longer being the case, and that which was not the case absolutely becoming the case now (Prior 1962, p.13). McTaggart provides an example of a fire poker to illustrate his point that the B-series cannot account for change. Consider that a fire poker is placed in the fire on a Monday. Prior to it being placed in the fire, on Sunday, it was cold. Can it be said that on the B-series genuine change has occurred? McTaggart argues that it can't.

² Strictly speaking it is instants of time, rather than whole years, that instantiate these A-properties.

The B-theorist (because of the permanent nature of the B-series) can only define change as instances (events, objects, and/or beings) having different properties at different times (Dainton 2010, p.27). However, this does not seem sufficient, as it does not capture what McTaggart refers to as genuine or real change as defined by Prior (1963). Change as defined by Prior seems to be a change in time or temporal change (the facts that compose time) rather than a mere difference in things or difference over time (the properties that make up things). Therefore, in the B-series, the poker has the property of being hot at an instant on Monday and the property of not being hot on Sunday. Both the fire poker being cold and hot are events that exist in time permanently, as such the fire poker is always (tenselessly) cold on Sunday and always (tenselessly) hot on Monday and that's all there is to say about the fire poker, and thus it is hard to say that change in temporal facts has occurred. For McTaggart this is because "hot and cold" are not temporal properties, or in other words, properties of time itself, rather are properties of the events or contents in time, thus their difference cannot capture real or genuine change of time. Temporal properties for McTaggart are in a sense supposed to explain why an instant of time no longer holds a set of properties it once did, however, B-relations, given their permanence, cannot do that. Thus, for genuine/real change to have occurred in the case of the fire poker, the property of being cold on Sunday (now) has to cease being the case, and what was not the case has to now become the case, i.e., the fire poker now possessing the property of being hot, and this is can only happen if instants move from being future, to being present, to then being past. The reason why the B-theorist cannot account for temporal change is that "[i]f N, is ever earlier, than O and later than M, it will always be, and has always been, earlier than O and later and M," (McTaggart 1908, p.495), or in other words, because of the permanent B-relations between instances in the B-series, M, N, and O, the facts that make up time, still remain present (relative to themselves) and thus there has not been change in time.

To further illustrate this point, consider the analogy drawn by Carroll and Markosian (2010, p. 162). According to Carroll and Markosian the relation between instances in the B-series can be analogous to the spatial relation that exist between the panels of wood of a picket fence, where the panels of wood are white on one end and red on the other. The fence is supposed to mimic B-series and the panels are supposed to mimic instances in the B-series. And just as we wouldn't say that the fence changes by having white panels on one end and red panels on the other, so too there is no change in the B-series by different properties merely being instantiated at different times. Instead, in the B-series, as in the fence, there is merely a distribution across the series, and such a distribution of properties does not amount to genuine change in time. In

sum, while each instant in the B-series is different from the other, it is always true that the earlier and later instances are the case and thus no genuine change occurs. As with the poker, it is always true that the fire poker is cold on Sunday and hot on Monday, as nothing stops being the case, or nothing that was not the case is now the case. Instances in the B-series never cease to be the case as every instance is present relative to itself and thus *is* always the case. The B-theorist therefore cannot capture real change because all instances in the B-series exist permanently. Instances that *have happened*, *are happening*, and *are yet to happen* exist in time at the same time, as all instances are present relative to themselves. And since a difference in properties does not amount to genuine change, as the fence analogy illustrated, all the facts of time remain and there is no change to time which occurs.

The B-theorist, however, could argue that in fact there is no real/genuine change, that instances of time co-exist in time, and therefore are always the case relative to themselves. However, this would be counter intuitive to our experience of time. How we experience instances that have happened, instances that are happening and instances that are yet to happened is not the same. For example, we can directly affect the current instant of time, whilst we cannot do this with instances before and after. We can also prepare for instances after but cannot prepare for current instances and instances before and we can recall and remember instances before but cannot recall the current instances and instances after. Thus, even if the B-theorist denies that there is real/genuine change all together, she still has to provide an account for how and why we experience these differences in how we relate to times before and times after the current instant, to which the B-theory metaphysic permits. The B-theorist however cannot account for how and why we relate differently to times before, simultaneous with and times after because this would require her to buy into the idea of change, i.e., that the instances before are no longer the case hence we do not have direct access to them, but can recall them, and how times after will be the case hence we can prepare for them even though we do not have direct access to them. The B-theorist thus cannot deny there being change, as implicit to B-relations is a commitment to there being a change in time hence the difference in how we relate to times before, simultaneous with, and after. The B-theorist, however, cannot account for this change because of the permanency of the B-series. To capture genuine change (as opposed to a mere difference across time like we have with the B-series) is a change in time itself (i.e., a change in the properties possessed by instants in time), whereby instants change from *being future*, to *being present*, to *be past* or in other words, temporal passage (where this is a change in objective/absolute facts about time).

1.2. Arguments for Temporal Passage

McTaggart believes the A-series is the more fundamental of the two series as it secures what the B-series could not – genuine change (McTaggart 1908, p.458). The A-theorists thus believes A-properties to be genuine features of reality, and that it is these properties that underpin the dynamic nature of time. The properties are possessed by instances in time, objectively distinguishing that which is prior, concurrent and that which is subsequent to the objective present. The distinction is made possible by the privileged present continuously moving towards the future, allowing for genuine change. This is called temporal passage (Carroll and Markosian 2010, p.163).

The argument in support of such a temporal flow or passage of time is commonly expressed in two ways. The first is based in our experience (which we'll call the Argument from Experience) and the second is based in how we speak about time (which we will call the Argument from Language). These two arguments are closely intertwined and sometimes difficult to distinguish, however these remain separate arguments for the passage of time. Let's now look at each one individually.

The Argument from Experience

There are a number of reasons presented as to why the experience of reality suggests that time passes or flows. Like McTaggart, Barry Dainton in *Time and Space (second edition)* (Dainton 2010, p.28) argues that the passage of time is a phenomenon that is directly available to be observed. The reason that time is perceived to pass is that there generally is a good recall of what happened just moments before the current moment in time (e.g., I can recall thinking of how to correctly convey the point I am about to make), I am almost certain of what is happening at the current moment (e.g., I am attempting to articulate a point), and I can anticipate what will be happening in the next couple of moments (e.g., I would have articulated my point) (Dainton 2010, p.104). In other words, we perceive that there is a passing of time because we have a memory of the past, we are currently experiencing the present, and have an idea of what the future holds. Dainton refers to this as the Common-Sense or Natural View for the passage of time (Dainton 2010, p.28). According to this view, because there seems to be knowledge of the past and direct access to the present, deliberation and decisions are made towards a time

later than now (the future), this gives us good reason to believe that there exists an objective “moving now” and therefore, the passage of time (ibid).

An entailment of the Common-Sense View for the passage of time, or what Bradford Skow refers to as “the argument from the content of experience” (Skow 2011, p.361-368), is that only the present is real. The reason being that when events are still a part of the future, they cannot be observed, they can only be observed when they become the present or when they form part of the past (Mellor, 1998:15). However, the past has already happened and is observed by memory and not by experience or sensation. The past is therefore fixed and unchangeable. The future however is open and undeterminable. Therefore, since we only have direct access to the present, we can only perceive or observe the present. Thus, for Dainton, it seems one only has consciousness and experiences sensation in the present, thus determining only the present is objectively the case

For D.H Mellor (1998), a B-theorist, the argument from experience and its entailment raises a problem for the A-theorist, one that potentially shows that temporal passage and genuine change to be an illusion and does so by bringing into question the presentness of the present. Mellor argues that the idea that what we perceive is present is what causes us to “confuse what we observe with the experience of observing it” (Mellor 1998, p16). The possible confusion is brought about by there being a distinction between the objective presentness of an instant and the content of the experience— i.e., sensation. Mellor uses the example of observing a star that is light years away. From just perceiving the star, the A-theorist believes she is observing the star in the present, while this may not necessarily be the case as the star could have disintegrated centuries ago and still the A-theorist would think they are experiencing it presently. The problem with this is that if the A-theorist holds that time is objective, then she cannot interpret “past” instances as present instances as this would be a contradiction and brings into question the objectivity of the present. Moreover, if the objectivity of A-properties can be denied, then the A-series like the B-series cannot account for temporal passage and genuine change.

However, according to Dainton (1998), the passage theorist has a response. He argues that while we can concede to Mellor that we can perceive events that are no longer present as being present (as a result of the subjectivities of the perceiver), the experience of the perception itself is present. In other words, the temporal moment or instant in which the sensation is experienced is objectively present. The passage theorist can thereby say that events occur when it is that

they occur, and it is this “when they occur” (the present) that is continuously advancing to the future thereby facilitating temporal passage and genuine change.

As per Mellor’s argument from experience however, the mere perception of an instant and its content cannot secure whether it has any of the A-properties, specifically objective A-properties. Moreover, Mellor argues the reason for thinking that time passes is that perceptions and memories accumulate in such a way that gives the illusion that there is temporal flow. For example, suppose our memory, because of a memory brain disorder, did not accumulate and as a result we almost immediately forgot everything we observed of reality (Mellor, 1998, p.17). In this case we do not have any accumulation of memories, in other words, we are stuck in the present, with absolutely no memory of the past and therefore no anticipation of the future. Can we say time has passed (since temporal passage is an objective feature of reality)? Mellor would argue not, the A-theorist cannot claim temporal passage outside of her own experience, and the memories of these experiences. As experiences are subjective, it seems that the objectivity of the present, and temporal passage, cannot be captured from a subjective experience of reality, and therefore the validity of the Common-Sense View can be questioned. It can therefore be asked what about the subjective experience of time and its passing suggests that there exist an objective present, and therefore an objective passage of time?

Dainton however, could argue that the passage theorist can say that even with a brain disorder causing amnesia of the previous instant, and therefore there being no accumulated memories stored in the brain, by observing the instant at hand necessitates an instant prior, even if the instant prior is the lack of a sensation. For example, when we wake up in the morning, we have no memory of the events that occurred when we were unconscious, and while we are comforted by knowing that we were asleep and thus cannot have memories, in the first instance of being awake, we are confronted by having to account for change, or how is it that what was not the case, (being awake) now is the case. Similarly, if our memories did not accumulate and stored in the brain in the ordering of this accumulation, every time we experienced sensation, we would be confronted by change. This means memory, is not fundamental to change and thus temporal passage as Mellor suggests. It seems that sensation (that occurs in the present) and its passing is outside of the brain and not an illusion. Change, temporal passage, and the A-properties, particularly the present are therefore not subjective, but rather objective features of time and account for an intuitive and observable story of time.

The Argument from Language

The fundamental idea behind the argument from Language is that the tense that can be observed in language is a reflection of the way time behaves in reality. Specifically, change occurs, and time passes, and this is reflected in how we speak about time, in particular in the tense in language. Markosian (1993) argues that a reason we have for believing that time differs from space is based in the fact that we do not speak of time and space in the same way. We ordinarily make claims like “Time flies” that seem to imply the flow of time, while we do not make such claims about space. To best capture and understand this idea, we can distinguish the tensed from the tenseless view of propositions (Markosian 1993, p.03). The tensed view of propositions can be understood as the claim that propositions expressed by token claims have truth values *at times*, thereby the most fundamental semantic claims take the form “P is v at t,” whereby propositions (P) has truth values (v) relative to time (t). In other words, propositions change from ‘will be,’ to ‘is,’ to ‘was’ relative to the time at which the proposition is being uttered. For example, the proposition expressed by the token claim “it is raining” seeks to capture that it is currently raining, however at a later time (when it is not raining), the proposition should read “it was raining,” as the instant when “it is raining” is no longer the case. At an instant before it started raining, the proposition would be “it will rain.” The tensed view then holds that tense (whether “past,” “present,” or “future”) cannot be removed from token sentences of language. This is called the ineliminability of tense thesis (Markosian 1993, p.04). For example, the truth value of the token claim “it is raining outside” holds true when it is indeed raining outside, however, at a later time when the token claim “it was raining outside” is true, the truth value of the token claim “it is raining” becomes false. And lastly, the truth value of the token claim “it will be raining outside” holds true at a time before it starts raining. However, the token claims, “it is raining” and “it was raining outside” are false. This feature of language is supposed to reflect objective change and temporal flow.

The tenseless view of propositions on the other hand, is the view that propositions expressed by token claims possess truth values simpliciter, thereby the most fundamental semantic claims take the form “P is v,” whereby proposition (P) has truth value (v) simpliciter. In other words, propositions are true or false not relative to a particular moment(s) in time like in the case of the tensed view of propositions but possess the same truth values always. For example, the proposition expressed by the token claim “it is raining” when uttered on 27.07.2020, expresses the proposition ‘it is raining on the 27.07.2020’ which is true (if true) simpliciter, rather than relative to times. The tenseless view however allows for oppositional propositions to be true

simpliciter, in other words, in the tenseless view of propositions, the token claims, “it is raining on the 27.07.2020” and “it is not raining on the 28.07.2020” are true simpliciter. This fact of the tenseless view however fails to capture or reflect the change and temporal passage that is intuitive of time and thus falls short in comparison the tensed view of propositions.

The tensed view of propositions is supposed to mirror the metaphysics of the A-theory. The tense (is, was, will be) in language is made possible by the temporary A-properties (past, present, and future). Therefore, if one believes that language is ineliminably tensed, this gives us reason to believe that there must be such corresponding A-properties, i.e., reason to believe that there exist the properties of pastness, presentness, and futurity. According to the A-theorist, if the world really did not contain A-properties, then we should be able to accurately describe the world without use of tense, but as we are not able to eliminate tense from our accurate description of the world, we have good reason to believe that the world contains A-properties. A-properties, therefore, cannot be reduced to the B-relations of earlier than, simultaneous to, and later than without there being an aspect of reality not being accounted for, i.e., temporal passage and change. Tense, according to the proponents of both the Tensed view of propositions and of the A-properties of the A-theory, hold that both these thesis capture reality as it is, while the reduction of tensed language into tenseless language, and A-properties into B-relations does not adequately capture a genuine/real change. Thus, if tensed claims cannot be reduced into untensed claims without leaving an aspect of reality unaccounted for, then A-properties are ineliminable properties of time, in other words the ineliminability of tense from language then serves as evidence to the existence of A-properties in reality.

1.3. McTaggart’s arguments against the A-Theory

As we have seen, a genuine account for “temporal change” seems to require passage of time as argued for by the experience and language arguments above. The A-theorist argues that what is required for a passage of time is a series of dynamic A-properties, otherwise, an element of reality is left out from the account of time. Likewise, the A-series according to McTaggart is the most essential series for an intuitive concept of time, as it can account for “real” change to which McTaggart claimed is an integral part of time (McTaggart 1908 p.459). Change for McTaggart, must be the kind of change that happens to an event, though does not denature the event to an extent where it ceases to be the event it was before the change occurs (McTaggart

1908, p.460). In other words, the kind of change McTaggart refers to is the acquisition and loss of A-properties. This acquisition and loss of A-properties however, according to McTaggart, can be shown to be problematic for the legitimacy of the A-series and A-theory.

McTaggart's main objection against the A-theory is that past, present, and future are objectively distinct properties according to the A-theorist, therefore, the acquisition of these A-properties would lead to events in the A-series possessing incompatible properties (pastness, presentness, and futurity), resulting in the A-series being paradoxical in nature.³ McTaggart argues that if there was an A-series (or dynamic A-properties) required for a passage of time, then any event would paradoxically be past, present, *and* future. To see how the argument is supposed to work, imagine an event occurs at 12h00. At 11h00 the event is future. At 12h00 the event is present. And at 13h00 the event is past. The very same event, McTaggart argues, is thereby past, present, and future (i.e., the same event has the properties *is past*, *is present*, and *is future*). As nothing can be past, present, and future (as these are incompatible properties), we must thereby deny the existence of the A-properties (in turn, the existence of A-series).

A possible reply, anticipated by McTaggart, is that this argument rests on the mistake that events in time possess A-properties simultaneously, rather than successively.

“...the answer will run, that M *is* present, past and future. It *is* present, will be the past, and has been future. Or it is past, and has been future and present, or again is future and will be present and past. The characteristics are only incompatible when they are simultaneous, and there is no contradiction to this in the fact that each term has all of them successively.” (McTaggart 1908, p.468).

In other words, an event is first future, then stops being the future, and is then present, then ceases to be the present and becomes past. An event is thereby not future, present, and past all at once but one after the other. Therefore, it is never the case that the A-properties are instantiated simultaneously, the incompatibility of the A-properties does not raise an objection to the A-series. McTaggart, however, argues that this kind of response is problematic for two reasons: it is circular, and it leads to a vicious regress. Let us look at each of these in turn.

³ Unless time were circular in nature (Cameron 2017, p.53), as then if one travelled all the way around the circle of time and returned to the point at which they started, the point of departure would possess all three of the A-properties, without paradox.

McTaggart's Circularity Objection

McTaggart argues that the appeal to succession as an explanation towards the possession of incompatible properties by instances in the A-series is circular, in that proponents of the A-series presuppose the legitimacy of the A-theory to legitimize the explanation for the behaviour of the A-properties in the A-series. In other words, A-theorists explain the A-series using the A-series itself, in that claiming that A-properties are had in succession simply presupposes the existence of A-properties (McTaggart 1908, p.468). They are thereby using that which needs to be explained in the explanation itself, resulting in a circular argument.

Some philosophers, however, argue that the seeming circularity of the explanation for A-properties in the A-series is not problematic to the A-theory. Defending a version of the A-theory, Ross Cameron in his *The Moving Spotlight* (2017) argues the claim made above—that the A-series presuppose the existence of A-properties to provide a legitimate account of the A-properties is not “dialectically inappropriate” in the discourse between A-theorists and the sceptic (Cameron 2017, p.54).

For Cameron, the circularity objection is not a problem for the A-theory as the explanation given by the A-theorist is not “dialectically inappropriate” (Cameron 2017, p.54). That is, the appeal to succession according to Cameron is in line with the existing rhetoric of the A-theory and thus such an appeal although circular is appropriate.

Cameron (2017, p.54) illustrates this point by drawing an analogy to Kripke's Wittgenstein inspired sceptical argument against the existence of meaning in facts about reality and the way Kripke objects to a possible response. The original paradox by Wittgenstein states that actions cannot be determined by rules as the actions displayed may not be in accord with the rule. The paradox arises since a rule is a principle that provides a guide to a course of action, and if the course of action may not be guided, then the rule itself seems not to be performing its function. The original Wittgenstein paradox, however, is not to say there are no such things as rules, nor is it the position that there cannot exist extended meaning, but rather that there exists an epistemic gap between the rule and the course of action. In other words, we may never know if the course of action being displayed is in accord with the rule. Kripke furthers the paradox by arguing there is no meaning, as there is no definite way to determine which of the infinite number of candidate meanings is correct (Cameron 2017, p.54). In Kripke's famous example, both plus and quus are mathematical functions, where plus is meant to be understood as meaning the sum of the numbers related, and quus is introduced and defined to behave similarly

to the plus function if numbers it relates are smaller, however it deviates (in both definition and thus behaviour) when the numbers it relates are larger (i.e., quus operates like addition unless one of the numbers it is operating on is 57 or higher, in which case it always yields 5). Thus, the question is, what is meant when the symbol + is used, is it quus or plus? Kripke argues that if we cannot provide principled grounds for picking one of the hypotheses over the other, then we are stuck with the non-factivity of meaning. Kripke's scepticism poses the question: What about the concept of addition shows that we mean plus when we make use of the symbol + and not anything else? If we are to claim there is facticity in meaning, then we should be able to account for why we mean plus and not quus when we make reference to the concept of addition, which Kripke argues we cannot do. In other words, for Kripke there are no conditions which could make attributions to what is true or false and thus certainty about what is meant, even when one chooses to express a "fact" of the world. A response that Kripke considers only to reject, is if one appeals to simplicity as a plausible determiner of correctness out of the infinite number of hypotheses. Thus, the simplest hypothesis would be the most correct of the hypotheses in question. However, he argues, simplicity as a determiner is not sufficient to adequately determine which of the hypotheses is correct as there are no such competing hypotheses to choose between—"as any such hypothesis about the meaning of a term is literally countless" (Cameron 2017, p.55). In other words, one cannot even begin to choose the most simple hypothesis, as there are an infinite number of meanings that can be assigned to a hypothesis.

Cameron argues however that Kripke's objection to employing simplicity to settle the matter is unfounded, as Kripke at this point of the dialectic simply assumes his conclusion—i.e., there exists no facticity of meaning—as a central part of his response to the appeal to simplicity, before having proven it to be the case. The possible answer, Kripke argues, cannot establish the correct interpretation of the symbol + as the rival hypotheses lack the content for simplicity to decide between. Therefore, simplicity is not a viable determiner of correctness and thus we are stuck with the conclusion that there is not facticity in meaning. But Cameron objects that at this point in the dialectic Kripke is not entitled to appeal to the lack of content for simplicity to decide between, as this is precisely what he still needs to establish, and which the appeal to simplicity precisely aims to show that he fails to do. In the same way, Cameron (2017, p.58), argues that McTaggart's objection against the appeal to how A-properties function (successively) to discount the supposed inconsistency in the A-series is dialectically inappropriate at this point, as this inconsistency is something that still needs to be shown to be

the case, and which appeal to succession precisely aims to show that he fails to do. Thus, Cameron believes the charge of circularity is unconvincing.

The Objection by Infinite Regress

The second objection McTaggart has to the A-theorist's appeal to succession is that it leads to a vicious regress. The acquisition of the A-properties successively, which is supposed to remove the original inconsistency, means that an event has been future, is the present, and will become past. McTaggart however argues that when we say an event has been the case, we are making the claim that the event in question is the case in the past, if we are to say that an event is the case, then we are making the claim that the event is the case at a moment of present time and lastly, if we say an event will be the case, we are making the claim that the event is the case at a time in the future. Thus, an event is present in the present, past at a future time and future in the past. (Dainton 2010, p.16). This then lays the grounds for an inconsistency arising at the next level.

To see how the objection works, consider that the first order A-properties as mentioned are future, present, and past. The A-properties according to McTaggart (as we have seen above), lead to an inconsistency. The A-theorist's response is that A-properties behave in succession, in other words, the past was, the present is, and the future will be, thereby explaining away the alleged inconsistency found in the first set of A-properties. The problem however becomes that the inconsistency arises again in the second set of A-properties, and this can be illustrated as follows.

Consider an event E that happened at 12h00. This can now be represented as:

at 14h00	at 12h00	at 10h00
E was present	E is now present	E will be present
E is now past	E was future	E is now future
E was future	E will be past	E will be past

The argument then goes that as ‘is now’ is representative of ‘present,’ ‘was’ of the ‘past,’ and ‘will be’ of the ‘future,’ we can then make these second-order properties explicit as follows:

at 14h00	at 12h00	at 10h00
E is past present	E is present present*	E is future present
E is present past*	E is past future	E is present future*
E is past future	E is future past	E is past past

But now, McTaggart argues, we see that an inconsistency re-arises, as the sentences with the asterisks are incompatible. The response from the A-theorist may then be that yet again these second order A-properties are also possessed successively, and so again removing the inconsistency. But McTaggart points out that the same problem will just arise at the next level, and the level after that, and so on at every level up that succession is appealed to, leading to the infinite regress. The A-theorists has thus not succeeded in completely ridding the A-series of the incompatible possession of A-properties. According to McTaggart, the A-properties, and their successive behaviour lead to an infinite regress since the succession explanation above does not eradicate the paradox of the A-series, instead it regenerates the inconsistency at every order of A-properties thereafter, thus, becoming a vicious infinite series (McTaggart 1908, p.469).

Cameron however argues that the regress is not problematic for the A-Theory, as it is a benign regress rather than a vicious regress as McTaggart claims. The distinction between a benign and vicious regress is in the success of an answer to a question, where the successful answer provided must be at the level of explanation that the question is posed (Cameron 2017, p.60). A benign regress then becomes the kind of regress whereby an answer or solution to the problem is provided successfully at each level the question is posed, regardless of whether the answer gives rise to another question. In contrast, a vicious regress is the kind of regress where the success of the answer provided to a question on a level of inquiry depends on the success of the answer given in the next level. For Cameron, a benign regress is not problematic as the question posed at each level of enquiry is answered successfully. For the vicious regress, however, the opposite is the case in that the answer offered on every level of inquiry is contingent on the success of the solution of the question on the next level of inquiry. Therefore,

none of the questions that are posed are ever successfully answered, as the answer is “postponed” to the next level and thus a problem for the series or the theory (Cameron 2017, p.61). Cameron argues that in the case of McTaggart and the A-theory, the A-theory is involved in a benign regress, whereby the successive transitory behaviour of A-properties in the first order is explained by means of the second order A-properties. This means that because of the elucidation of second order properties we find that the paradox found at the first order is explained away. In the same way, second order A-properties are explained away in virtue of third order A-properties, and so on infinitely. While in each order a new paradox arises, it is successfully explained away by the next order of A-properties. At every order, the paradox is explained away, and the answer—succession—is not contingent on the success of the next order's ability to avert the paradox.

To assess Cameron’s response, we need to ask whether the answer provided by the A-theorist (i.e., succession) is indeed successful at answering the question posed to the A-theorist and if the A-theorist provides an answer that successfully explains away the paradox. In particular, is it really is a new paradox that arises at every ordering of A-properties, or is it the same paradox at every level? If it is the same paradox, can it be said that the answer that A-properties are possessed successively rather than simultaneously successfully explains away the paradox at every level of A-properties as Cameron suggests?

The question “answered” at every level of A-properties in the A-series seems to be the same question posed at every level, furthermore, the answer given as the solution at every level seems to be the same as well. This suggests that the question (of how time passes) is not really solved by the explanation provided (A-properties). Or even further, that there is a fundamental feature of A-properties functioning that causes the paradox to regenerate itself in the same way. Cameron, however, seems to think that it is a different question at every level and different answer is successfully provided (Cameron 2017, p. 63)

“Of course, *saying* that the first-order A-properties are had successively introduces a new question, for in saying that M has *is present* now but merely *had* the property *is future* we make salient the second-order A-properties is now now, is past future, etc. And the same question can be now asked of these properties. But this is simply a *new* question about a completely *different* set of properties” (ibid).

However, this does not seem correct. The second-order A-properties seem to be the same kinds of properties as the first-order properties, thus if M has the property *past*, *present*, and *future*

then it can be expressed as “was,” “is” and “will be.” While the next order of A-properties is a new order of properties, the next order of A-properties is not different in kind from the properties being assigned to the A-properties in the previous order to account for the succession. In other words, the property *is present*, of the second order, is not categorically distinct in kind from the property *is now present*, as *now* is the same property *present*, just that in this instance it is a property of a property instead of a property of an instant of time. It is thus the same kind of property being assigned at every order and thus the same inconsistency that occurs at every level of the regress. And it seems then that the success of the explanation of how the A-properties of the previous order function without inconsistency is entirely dependent on the next order of the A-properties. Thus, the solution to the puzzle is in fact always postponed to the next order of A-properties, thereby is a regress that is vicious.

Consider the regress for composite objects in Brzozowski’s *On Locating Composite Objects* (2008). The regress arises for those who want to allow the possibility of located composite objects whose every proper part has proper parts—i.e., located gunk objects—yet maintain that the location of composite objects is derived from the location of their proper parts (Brzozowski 2008, p.193).

The argument is as follows: If composite objects derive their location from their proper parts, then they are located where their proper parts are. If the proper parts of the composite object in question are composite parts themselves, then their location too is derived from their proper parts. But, if it is true that the location of the composite object is derived from its proper parts and that the composite object is to be located, then on threat of regress there must exist proper parts whose location is not derived. This means that for composite objects to be located they must have proper parts that do not themselves have proper parts, i.e., simple objects. Therefore, all located composite objects must have simple objects as parts (Brzozowski 2008, p.196). If the location of composite objects is derived from their proper parts, then on pain of regress we must deny the possibility of located gunk objects

Like Cameron above, a proponent of gunk objects can here object that the regress generated is benign and not vicious since the location of each composite object in question is derived from its proper part, and thus not problematic. As the regress is benign, the location of composite objects being derived from the location of their proper parts is compatible with the existence of located gunk objects. While Brzozowski acknowledges that not all regresses are vicious, he argues that regresses of derivation, such as that which arises for the possibility of gunk objects

above, are vicious (Brzozowski 2008, p.200). A regress of derivation according to Brzozowski is when the “facts about each element of an infinite series obtain wholly *in virtue* of facts about further elements of the series.” (ibid), in other words, the levels in a regress of derivations rely not on the merit of the argument for that particular level, but rather on the merits of the next level in the series. It seems that arguments that generate these kinds of regresses are not sufficient to secure the conclusion they are claiming.

To show that such regresses of derivation are vicious, Brzozowski asks us to suppose that one is a royal only in virtue of their mother being royal, and never in virtue of anything else. If such were the case, then being royal is derived from having a mother that is royal. Now consider a finite series of individuals related by motherhood. In such a series, no one would be royal, as the first mother would not have a mother from whom to derive royalty, as such none of her children would derive being royal either. And the same would be the case even if the series is infinite, as nothing in the world would make it the case that someone is royal (as opposed to no one being royal), that is nothing in the world would distinguish such an infinite series from a qualitatively identical one where no one is royal. And therein lies the viciousness of regresses of derivation.

I would argue that the case for A-properties, and how it is they function, generates a regress of derivation and thereby is a vicious regress. Where facts about A-properties (pastness, presentness, and futurity) being possessed successively and not simultaneously, obtain wholly in virtue of facts about further elements of the series, *was* past, *is* present, and *will* be future. Similar to the Royals’ example above, the, “was,” “is” and “will be” effectively do not say anything about how A-properties can in fact be had successively, as the “was, is and will be” rely on the merit of next order of A-properties to secure their validity. Thus, it does not seem that A-properties are being had successively, or not had without ineliminable inconsistency.

While, I think there is good reason to think that the regress of the orders of A-properties is vicious, my case against the A-theory does not rest upon this being true, in that I think the A-theory faces an even more serious worry, to which the viciousness of the regress that it creates is merely a symptom of, one that is more fundamental to worries about the regress, which will be discussed in the next section.

2. What is fundamentally problematic with the A-theory?

2.1. Fine's Frozen Spotlight

The definitive difference between the A- and B-theory of time is the A-theory's capacity to account for real and genuine change, and thus temporal passage. However, Fine thinks that on closer scrutiny the A-theory cannot show that it can account for real and genuine change. (Deasy 2016, p.40). To see the worry, assume that the A-theory metaphysic is coherent and at this moment compare it to an almost identical view whose objective/privileged present (or temporal spotlight) is frozen at this exact time. Fine thus poses a question to the A-theorist, asking: in light of the tenseless metaphysic of the B-theory and the addition of the A-theory's privileged present, what differentiates her metaphysic from that of a Frozen A-theory metaphysic? In other words, what about the A-theory can capture real/genuine change and the dynamism of time? (ibid). What about the A-theory metaphysic shows how time moves from one instant to the other (i.e., how time flows)? According to Fine, the A-theorist cannot distinguish herself from the Frozen view as both the A-theory metaphysic and frozen spotlight view are the same with regards to simply having a B-series and a privileged present (Cameron 2017, p.95) which is supposed to capture real change and the dynamism of time. According to Fine, even given the A-theories metaphysics, it is then not clear how, and if, time does in fact move.

The A-theorist however has the following response available. They can distinguish their view from a 'frozen' view in that in addition to a privileged present, there are facts about what *was present* and what *will be present*. Fine anticipates such a response, but argues that the response offered by the A-theorist fails to meet the challenge. The metaphysical facts about what was the case are just facts about what is the case at a time earlier than the present, and facts about what will be the case are just facts about what is the case at a time later than the present (Fine 2005, p.287). These facts, he argues, are then still consistent with the frozen present view, therefore the worry still persists.

Deasy (2016, p.281) points out that Fine's response here is based on him attributing the following two principles to the A-theorist:

The F-principle: It will be the case that x iff at some point t later than the present instant,
 x

The P-principle: It was the case that x , iff at some instant t earlier than the present instant, x .

And then arguing that if the A-theorist accepts the two principles, they must show how the facts that there are instants that were the case and instants that will be the case are sufficient to capture the flow of time if these are “analysed in terms of the permanent relations to the present instant” (Deasy: 2016: 282) as in the F- and P-principles. Deasy, while accepting that the A-theorist holds the two principles⁴ however, denies that the A-theorist needs to show anything more. He objects to Fine’s challenge by comparing Fine’s argument to that of Kripke’s Humphrey objection against David Lewis’ modal counterpart theory. According to Lewis, some x is a possible F is no more than x has a counterpart that is F , where a counterpart of x is similar to x in relevant ways and is located at some other possible world (Deasy 2018, p.284). Kripke objects, arguing that Hubert Humphreys, when wondering whether he could win the election, does not care about whether there is an object relevantly similar to him that is located at some possible world that will win the presidential election (ibid). Humphreys cares about whether *he* in the actual world will win the election. Deasy proposes the following possible interpretation of the Humphrey objection: that x having a counterpart that is F (as per the counterpart analysis of x is a possible F) is consistent with x not being a possible F . But, Deasy argues, the right response then to such an objection would be to point out that if you have the counterpart theoretic analysis of ‘possibly F ’, then the fact that x has a counterpart that is F entails that x is possibly F . And, he argues, the same then holds true in response to Fine’s objection about the A-theoretic analyses of ‘will be present’ and ‘was present’. Namely, given this A-theoretic analysis, if something G is earlier than the present, then G was present, and if something G is later than the present, the G will be present. Therefore, for Deasy, according to the A-theoretic analysis the fact that there are earlier and later times relative to the present, must mean that the earlier times were present, and the later times will be present, securing the transitory nature of the present that Fine has brought into question.

The worry is that even with appealing to facts about what was present and what will be present, the underlying metaphysics for the dynamic and frozen views remains the same. And it is unclear that Deasy's response gets to the heart of the worry as it seems Deasy's response is merely a re-iteration of Lewis's view. The response seems to only provide a semantic that lets

⁴ Note that Deasy’s F and P principles will be denied by A-theorist who hold a propositional view of instances, as they hold that it is a consistent proposition that instances are constituents of time that were, are and will be, and this is an unanalysable and fundamental fact (Deasy 2016, p.282).

the A-theorist *say* that other times were or will be present, this doesn't metaphysically distinguish their view from the frozen view (Cameron 2017, p.94). Moreover, even if Lewis's counterpart theory is correct, it is unclear how the theory is supposed to overcome Kripke's objection as it does not address the central worry, whether Humphrey will be president in the actual world as already stated. Similarly, it is unclear how F and P-principles are supposed to overcome Fine's worry that the A-theory metaphysic cannot distinguish itself from the frozen spotlight view, as Deasy's F and P principles much like Lewis's counterpart theory do not address the central worry raised by Fine. F and P-principles like the response to Kripke's objection merely re-iterate the A-properties and thus do not provide much explanation towards how the privileged present advances towards the future, and thus distinguish itself from the frozen spotlight metaphysic.

The challenge then is that the A-theorist must distinguish their view from a frozen metaphysics without a fancy semantics. Otherwise, while the A-theorist is able to capture claims about what was the case and what will be the case, F and P principles are merely just ways of describing an underlying static reality, thereby failing to account for the dynamism of time that is supposed to distinguish the A-theory from the B-theory and capture a genuine temporal flow.

While the argument against the successive possession of A-properties and Fine's argument above does not make explicit what fundamentally is the problem with the A-theory, it serves as direction to understanding where the problem lies i.e. the account for temporal passage, or as per Fine, the lack of an adequate account for the passage of time. In the next section, I aim to investigate what is at the root of the problem for the A-theory of time

2.2. A Category Mistake

It seems to me that fundamentally the A-theorist commits a category mistake. A category mistake, a term first introduced by Gilbert Ryle, is when one "ascribes, to a certain entity, a property, or properties which that entity could not have" (Matolino 2014, p.142). An example of this kind of mistake would be if one visited the lecture halls, the libraries, the college offices and sports fields and then one remarks that they cannot wait to see the university. This person mistakenly allocates the university to the same class as that of college offices, libraries and lecture halls (Ryle 1973, p.18). Another example of a category mistake is that of the child who

sees battalions, squadrons, and batteries march past but asks when the division is going to appear. Like the university guest above, the child is mistaken to think that the division is a counterpart to the squadrons and battalions. A final example is that of the person who mistakes the team spirit of a cricket team with the bowling, catching and batting of the cricket players, by asking who is responsible for the team spirit. Team spirit is not the same thing as the roles the cricket players have on the field, as any one of the players can exhibit team spirit, since it is the keenness with which the players perform their roles, and not another one of their roles (*ibid*).

There are then two ways a category mistake can be made. The first is when one attempts to classify an entity into a category that it does not belong, and the second is when one attempts to put two entities in the same category when in fact they do not belong in the same category.

Inspired by Bernard Matolino's critique of the radical communitarian conception of personhood, in *Personhood in African philosophy* (2014) I suspect that the A-theorist commits a category mistake. In the personhood debate in African philosophy, there are generally two prevalent perspectives, i.e., the radical communitarian and the limited/moderate communitarian view. The radical communitarian is of the view that the community is the metaphysical basis of personhood (Matolino 2014, p.71), in other words, radical communitarians believe that the individuals are made of the communities from which they come, in a way that their individuality comes second to the community. "The clan is not only the physical reality but the ontological reality that constitutes the notion of personhood" (Matolino 2014, p.46). The limited communitarian however, insists on separating the personal and the social or community (2014, p.186), as distinct individuals are ones who make up the community (2014, p.183). While individuals are born into and inherit ways of being from an already existing community, the limited communitarian believes the individual's ontological reality is prior to that of the community (Matolino 2014, p.184).

One of the critiques Matolino launches against the radical communitarian is that she does not talk of persons in the right way, rather she is talking about how persons ought to act as moral agents (2014, p.142). Therefore, the radical communitarian conflates two questions about persons, i.e. "What is a person?" and "What do persons do?", which Matolino argues is a category mistake (2014, p.143). The questions according to Matolino are of different categories: the *what* category and the *how* category. The fundamental distinction between the categories is that the first category is strictly preoccupied with the task of identifying and

naming features of an entity, and the second category seeks to describe how the named feature(s) operate in the way that they do (*ibid*). The first category tells us what characteristics a person has and the second tells us why a person does what she does (Matolino 2014, p.144). However, when the radical communitarian is asked “What is a person?”, the answer she provides is that, based on the fact that a person finds herself in a community implies that a person is communal in nature. A person is an individual that observes, obeys, and maintains communal norms over and above the rights of the individual. Therefore, the community takes precedence over the individual. The answer provided by the radical communitarian however is mistaken, as their definition of what a person is seems to have to do with the relations the individual has with the community. In other words, the answer provided appeals to things and dynamics that are outside of the person, rather than what is of the person in and of herself. It then seems that the radical communitarian mistakenly presents the doings of a person, or how a person can operate, as the answer to the question what a person is. Thus, according to Matolino, the radical communitarian makes a category mistake by thinking that the answer to the second question (‘how does a person operate?’) suffices in answering the first question (‘what is a person?’). In Matolino’s (*ibid*) words: “[i]t is a category mistake in that it attributes descriptive features of sociality to strict issues of identity.” Matolino therefore emphasises that it is important that we pay attention to these questions as separate, so we do not burden the first question with that which comes with answering the second, and not come to conclusions that we are yet to show.

However, is it always problematic when *what* questions are answered by how answers as Matolino argues? Is it really mistaking categories when this happens? Let us consider functional definitions. Functional definitions, provide explanation of what something is in terms of the function it performs. These kinds of definitions are useful when the phenomenon in question is a system, and it is difficult to separate one part of the system from the other. For example, when we ask the question ‘what is a gene?’ A possible answer would be, a gene is a unit or system that stores and transmits hereditary information from one generation to the next (Chalmers 1995, p.203). Another example is that of the phenomena of life, it can be defined as a system that can adapt to its environment, metabolize, reproduce etc., (*ibid*). Can it be said that the definition for gene or life commit a category mistake? And if not, what does this mean for Matolino’s categorical distinctions? Can it still be said that the radical communitarian and the A-theory have committed a category mistake for confusing and conflating the *what* and *how* categories? I would argue that functional definitions are not instances of a category

mistake, and therefore, functional definitions do not affect Matolino's distinctions. Thus, Matolino's critique against the radical communitarian and the critique I am attempting to mount against the A-theory still seems to stand. In both the example of the gene and life, the answer to the question "what is phenomena X?" the answer is "phenomena X performs Y function, or phenomena X does Y." In other words, the answer phrased in terms of what function or role the phenomena performs or what the phenomena does. Such an answer, however, is not an answer to a *how* question, it is an answer to the question, "what function does phenomena X do?" which would not be problematic, or a mistake in categories, as the question is a *what* question, which still pertains to the attributes of the thing in question.

Further, Functional definitions are not an instance of a category mistake, because while the definition provided for what the thing is lies in what the thing does, the claim being made when provides a functional solution to a question is not that the thing or phenomena in question is the function it performs. For example, again, the gene stores and transmits heredity information from one generation to the next, this way of defining a phenomenon does not replace this unit, or thing with attributes and feature that performs the function, it is merely that it is defined by its the function, or *what* the unit does. As already mentioned, functional definitions are answers to the questions what function does the phenomena or thing perform, thus they do not denounce the *what* category, it thus still makes sense to ask: 'what is the mechanism that then plays the functional role'? This still maintains the distinction between the *what* and *how* categories drawn by Matolino, and it can still be said that the radical communitarian and the A-theory have committed a category mistake. The radical communitarian however makes the claim that a person is the relations, functions, and roles she has and plays in her community. This is different from the case of functional definitions, as this at the very least does not acknowledge that there is a unit, thing, or phenomena performing these functions, that cannot be replaced by these functions.

The critique of committing a category mistake between the *what* and *how* category of questions and answers can be made against the A-theorist, however in reverse. Instead of confusing the *how* category of questions and answers for the *what* category of questions and answers (like the radical communitarian), the A-theorist confuses the *what* category of questions and answers for the *how* category of questions and answers. The A-theorist's attempt at providing the A-theory metaphysic—i.e., B-relations (earlier than, simultaneous with, and later than) and the privileged present—as an adequate account for the dynamism of time (or how time flows) is a confusion and thus a conflation of what the characteristics or attributes of time are supposed to

be with how time operates. While the difference between the categories can be elusive, it is there. For instance, if someone asked “how does water move in and out of a cell or any other permeable membrane?” the answer would be along the lines of explaining the process of osmosis (or a special kind of diffusion where the net flow of a substance, in this case water, moves from a region of high concentration to a region of low concentration), instead of saying it is H₂O. The latter would clearly be an answer to a different question, the answer to the question “what is water?”

McTaggartian theories of time, specifically the A-theory, is an attempt at answering questions of the former category, i.e., what is time, and thus, can only provide the characteristics and attributes of time, i.e., A-properties. However, when Fine above poses the question of how time flows, the A-theorist says that by virtue of the transitory nature of the privileged present, there are then facts about what was present and what will be present (which as we’ve seen above, can be formulated in terms of the F- and P-principles), which are supposed to account for how time flows or how time animates. However, as discussed above, it is not clear that a privileged present together with the F- and P-principles secure how time flows. What is required by Fine from the A-theorist is an account of how the present moves from one instant to another, instead of the properties an instant possesses when such movement has occurred. In other words, the A-theorist needs to explain what has happened for the current instant to be present, the previous instant to be past, and the next instant to be future. However, the F- and P-principles seem to only provide a descriptive explanation to the A-theory metaphysic, thus committing a category mistake when providing them as answers to a *how* question. F- and P-principles seem to be a mere elaboration of the relation that exists between A-properties, rather than an explanation of how it comes to be that an instant possesses either of the A-properties. F- and P-principles seem to be reiterations of the privileged present and A-properties and do not seem to do any additional explanatory work as to how the A-theorist can account for how time flows.

The confusion between the *what* and *how* questions happens because we see questions and answers of the *how* category as a continuation with those of the *what* category, and therefore, answering the *how* questions in ways that seek to satisfy the *what* questions. These however, are distinct (Matolino 2014, p.144). So while, the A-theorist is not incorrect to posit the dynamism or flow as a characteristic or feature of time, she is making a category mistake by arguing that the mere positing of privileged present is enough to account for how the occurrence of temporal passage comes to be. A-properties, being characteristics of the A-theory, only answer the question *what* is time, and thus provide a limited perspective of the story of time.

Therefore, to argue that answers to a *what* question can continue into answering questions of the *how* category, is to commit a category mistake, leading the A-theorist to presuppose that she has established the dynamism or flow of time. This is because she conflates the characteristic she has attributed to time, with actually showing how time flows (as I have tried to argue in the regress and Fine arguments above). Simply, the A-theorist confuses the characteristic of the dynamism of time (i.e., the privileged present), with the actual motion of time, and therefore mistakenly assumes that A-properties can actually account for the flow of time when this is not the case. As a result, the issue of the attributes of time are separate from the issue of how time flows.

With that being said, I am not convinced that the A- theory, (B-relations + privileged present) even provide an accurate answer to the question “what is time?”. I say this because the A-properties (pastness, presentness, and futurity) are mutually exclusive to one another, and this seem counterintuitive to idea of the flow of time. To bring out this worry, I now turn to some ideas raised in Kwasi Wiredu’s *Truth as opinion*.

2.3. A problem of primary judgements

It then becomes relevant to rehearse, as clearly as possible, the common facts in question and to indicate their relation to the speculative ideas to which they give rise (Wiredu 1980, p.112).

Wiredu separates out facts of common experience from the theoretical analysis of these facts. The theoretical analysis includes both philosophical abstractions as well as what is normally thought of as common sense. Wiredu stresses however that the difference between the philosophical conceptions and those of common sense “lies in the greater elaboration and technical sophistication of the former” (Wiredu 1980, p. 112). That is, that the distinction between the more philosophical conceptions and those of common sense is a matter of degree, in that the conceptions of common sense are themselves theoretical. Wiredu then argues that theoretical analysis is supposed to illuminate the facts of common experience and if such theoretical analysis (whether common sense or more technical) conflicts with the facts of common experience, this is grounds to reject the theoretical analysis in question. In other words, it is important to note that what seems to be taken as common sense theory is still loaded with theoretical (and often quite abstract) concepts, and thus if it conflicts with the facts of

common experience then it is not paradoxical to deny the theory “to attain in thought greater harmony with common experience” (Wiredu 1980, p. 112).

Wiredu goes on to discuss the phenomenon of visual illusion. Visual illusion is a common fact of experience whereby through perception we incorrectly attribute certain properties to objects that they do not in fact have. From this, Wiredu argues, many have then drawn what’s taken to be the common sense (though theoretical and abstract) distinction between Appearance and Reality, that is between how things are subjectively to the perceiver and how things are in of themselves. But, he argues, while numerous philosophical theories have then been built upon this distinction, the distinction itself conflicts with the facts about the experience with which we began: that sometimes through perception we incorrectly attribute certain properties to objects that they do not in fact have. This fact about experience implies that we can sometimes know how things are, but the distinction allows us only access to how things are subjectively perceived, never to how things are in themselves. As the distinction contradicts the facts of common experience, Wiredu argues that this seemingly common sense (though theoretical) distinction must be given up.

Similarly, Wiredu points to the fact about experience that “we sometimes know some propositions to be true while at other times make mistakes as to the truth” (Wiredu 1980, 114), from which he argues many have drawn the common sense (though theoretical) conclusion that opinion is categorically distinct from truth, where the former but not the latter is advanced from a specific standpoint. But as above, the distinction, once scrutinised, shows itself to be in conflict with this fact about experience, in that truth (as categorically distinct from opinion) is unknowable. As before, we must thereby give up the seemingly common sense distinction. Instead, we should maintain that “[t]ruth, then, is necessarily joined to a point of view, or better, truth is a view from some point; and there are as many truths as there are points of view” (Wiredu 1980, p.115), and so all a matter of opinion.

It is important however to understand that the kind of opinion Wiredu speaks of when he makes the claim that truth is opinion. What Wiredu means by opinion is justified or considered opinion, which is a belief with reasons supporting it. For one to say they believe in a “truth” or that a proposition is true, they need to have used rationality to come to the truth in question, as opposed to just the will to believe. Therefore, one cannot hold the belief that a proposition is true if all relevant evidence available points against it, or one cannot hold the belief that a proposition is false if all the available relevant evidence points it to be true.

Wiredu then goes on to argue that it is a common mistake to think that the goal of rational investigation is to determine whether a statement is true or not, rather he argues it is to “solve a problem or determine an issue on way or another” (Wiredu 1980, p. 119). Let us consider the predicament of trying to solve who murder, to which after investigation we come to the firm opinion that Anele committed the murder. According to Wiredu, ordinarily, that would be the end of the investigation. We do not have to then go on to investigate whether it is true or false that Anele committed the murder. And while it may seem tempting to think that the judgement “Anele committed the murder” is logically equivalent to “It is true that Anele committed the murder”, this according to Wiredu is not the case. Wiredu calls the former a primary judgment and the latter a comparative judgement. Primary judgment can be distinguished from comparative judgements in that the kind of inquiry undergone to come to the latter judgement presuppose an antecedent judgment (i.e., some judgment P of which we then predicate truth or falsity), while the kind of inquiry undergone to come to the former requires no such antecedent judgement/statement. The primary judgment is a response to solving a problem based in the observation of a certain phenomenon, while the comparative judgment presupposes a prior judgment which it then compares with other assertions (those that either contradict or agree with the prior assertion) and as such yields a “judgement on a judgement” (Wiredu 1980, p.121). For example, in the murder case above, the predicament is to solve who committed the murder. Thus, a primary judgement would be an answer pertaining to the question ‘who committed murder?’, while a comparative judgment would be an answer to whether this judgment is then true. An inquiry that terminates in a primary judgement would then be a primary inquiry, while one that terminates in a comparative judgment would be a comparative inquiry. For Wiredu, the concept of truth then belongs to the domain of the latter inquiry. However, once a primary judgement has been made, the corresponding comparative judgement follows automatically. For example, if the proposition "p" is true, automatically the proposition "p is true" is true. In this example the proposition "p" is the primary judgement and "p is true" is the automatic secondary judgement.

What we can draw from this discussion of Wiredu is that a primary inquiry is an inquiry from a particular point of view that ends in a primary judgment. Primary judgements are an attempt at illuminating the facts of common experience and should not conflict with such facts. If they do conflict with the facts of experience, then they should be given up. However, a possible concern raised by the sceptic is "inaccurate" experiences warranting certain primary judgements be given up. Such a worry, however, is mistaken, as it is premised on the

presupposition that one could have an accurate experience. As argued for earlier in the section, all perspective is from a particular standpoint, therefore, all experience is "tainted" by the particularities of that standpoint. This means that if a primary judgement undermines experience and thus renders the primary judgment in question to be given up, then this is valid, because relative to the standpoint from which the experience is had, it is reasonable to give up the primary judgement in question. However, as Wiredu also states, if there is relevant evidence that becomes available, which then renders the same primary judgment not to be given up, then that too is valid, as relative to the new standpoint it would be reasonable. Wiredu's view is dynamic in nature, thus the rendering of primary judgments to be kept or given up should not worry the sceptic.

Returning then to the question of time. If we are to engage in a primary inquiry into the nature of time, the judgement we come to must then illuminate the facts of our common experience of time. And it seems that a fact about the common experience of time is that while we can distinguish the current instant of time from that which is not now (i.e., instances that are before this and times that may be after this), such instances flow seamlessly into one another. In other words, we have continuous experience of time whilst still being able to identify changes of the times. Therefore, the judgement yielded at the end of primary inquiry must be one that illuminates this experience of time, and not one that conflicts with it. The primary judgement must be one that accounts for how time is both continuous and fragmented.

The A-theory however, upon closer scrutiny, appears to conflict with, rather than illuminate, these facts about the experience of time. As we've seen, A-properties (grounded in a privileged present together with B-relations) are mutually exclusive properties, therefore, what is past cannot be present and cannot be future, what is present cannot be past and future, and what is future cannot be present and past. That these A-properties exclude one another stands in the way of meeting the adequacy constraint of what is required for an answer to the question of time. That is, the A-theory, by positing A-properties (grounded in a privileged present together with B-relations) that exclude one another, conflicts with the facts of experience of time that each instant of time flows seamlessly into the next.

If we are to engage in a primary investigation into the nature of time, one that terminates in a judgement that illuminates the facts of the experience of time, we need to look elsewhere. What is required are a set of properties that are grounded in experience and capture the seamless flow

from the instance before through to instances after. In developing such a theory, I turn now to the work of Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze.

3. An Ezean Approach to Time: A solution to the problems of time

3.1. Eze's Basic Concepts

The experience of time.

I wish to examine the relationships between language and time from a postcolonial standpoint (Eze 2008, p.25)

In an attempt to revisit and hold accountable the traditional theories of colonialism and to make explicit the elucidation of the vernacular, Eze makes use of what can be said to be the African experience (Eze 2008, p.183-185) found in postcolonial art, or modern African artistry particularly, African literature (Eze 2008, p.25). A core element the African experience (which can be understood to be the sum of the pre-colonial experience, the colonial experience, and African experience post-independence) as depicted in African literature is the historical break, which can be defined by the experience of colonialism and the break it caused in African history, traditions, and language. This historical break found in the African experience (however not exclusive to the African experience) maps onto art and language, when literary writers attempt to capture this experience, and it is in this language in postcolonial writings that we can extract an account of the nature of time. Eze finds that change is an essential feature of time. Eze's conception of time is grounded in experience and the accumulation thereof, i.e., what he labels as history. However, while the change of a language according to Eze is created by the particularities of the context from which the language emerges (like in the case of African postcolonial writings, where the languages emerge from context that have experienced a severe break in its "virtual continuity of experience" (Eze 2008, p.30) by the colonial interruption), it seems the one particularity which all contexts possess and therefore all languages fall subject to is experience.

Thus, for Eze (2008), we come to understand time and any other concept from experience and history. Experience, according to Eze, "is an early form of thought: it is bringing to view a

world-in-time” (Eze 2008, p.188), and history is thus the accumulation of this experience early form of thought. In other words, experience is the initial interaction we have with nature, in this case the nature of time, and it is through experience that we see the happenings of time. How we perceive time, what we think time is, and how it operates is derived from how we experience time. Therefore, how we think of time, and the metaphysics we develop from those thoughts, should be closely linked to our experience of time. The natural question then is how do we experience time? But before we answer that question, let us first consider what we are experiencing when we say we are experiencing time, or in other words, what is happening during this experience.

What Eze seems to think is happening during our experience of time is that we are experiencing a break down and a mutation from which the new emerges. This movement from one break down and mutation from which the new emerges to the next is thus how we experience time. For instance, returning to Dainton’s piano example, when you hear the keys C, D, and E being played on a piano, we first observe the C key, this means our initial experience of silence breaks down and transforms into something new relative to our initial experience which is hearing the C key. We then observe the D key being played, this again means that our experience of hearing the C key breaks down, transforms and a new experience has emerged, namely hearing the D key. Again, when we hear the last key, E, being played, the previous experience i.e., hearing the D key being played by the pianist has broken down, and transformed into the new one, the E key. This process of deconstruction, transformation and renewal accumulates and forms a general scale, i.e., the historical level, where we observe the movement between each experience, or in this case the movement from each key the pianist plays to the next, so much so that we can enjoy the entire song that she is playing. Much like the particular changes in the keys of a piano accumulate to form a song, experiences accumulate to form history. The relation between experience and history is analogous to the relation between change and time, in that change is what happens when we experience time, and the accumulation of change forms the movement of time. Experience and change are thus the particulars of history and time respectively. Thus, according to Eze change can be defined as a process of deconstruction, transformation and renewal of experience and time is the movement from one phase of change to the other.

Language of time.

I want to explore in what ways it could be true to say that postcolonial African writing, as an artistic tradition, is an embodiment in thought of time-in-motion (Eze 2008: 25).

Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, in his *Language and Time in Postcolonial Experience* (2008), attempts to provide an account of time. Through examining language, Eze's analysis traces the change and motion of time through the career or the trajectory of language and not the particularities of the language such as the content of a language under analysis, for example, the grammar (tense). Eze argues that it is in the change in language where change or the temporality of time can be captured (Eze 2008, p.25). Eze believes that language, particularly but not exclusively to the African experience has transformative capacities that capture temporal change. For Eze, a definitive feature found in all postcolonial writing is the historical break brought on by the experience of the Atlantic slave trade and colonialization and their ramifications, and thus, why both Anglophone and Francophone African writers describe African languages as broken. The emerging languages from both the French and English imposition, for example, Pigeon English of Nigeria, are understood by Eze as re-enactments, or attempts to provide re-accounts or to again make sense of this historical break caused by the colonial interruption through many other means including language. The emerging languages can be read as large-scale representations of the process of reconciliation that a perceiver experiences when faced with a new experience. Thus, the languages found in modern African literature, for Eze, exemplify change. They are attempts to coherently mend or make sense of not only what was the case with what is now the case (and possibly anticipate what will be the case) but also, how what was the case has become the case, and how what is the case can become what will be the case. They are illustrations of time in motion. The mark of writing itself is a moment of "deconstruction, transformation and renewal" (Eze 2008, p.26) as the writer is inspired by her history affected by her current experience and creates new stories.

Eze generalizes ideas of construction and/or deconstruction to all postcolonial literature, or at least the literature he uses as his case study. For Eze, as already mentioned, time and the experiences of postcolonial Africa can be traced in postcolonial African literary works. Eze chooses modern African literary works because he believes the problem of a broken history cannot be separated from language, particularly the language in which history is represented. For Eze, "it is not conceptually possible to separate the problem of postcolonial history from the question of language, especially the language of history" (Eze 2008, p.25). If understanding comes of experience and the accumulation of experience is history then everything is historical or in other words, everything has a history, as shown in the piano example above. What is historical therefore cannot be separated from language both in the abstract sense and concretely. Language cannot be separated from history in the abstract sense as language tells us what is, it

is the names and meanings we assign to things to make sense of experience and the accumulation thereof, i.e., history. Language cannot be divorced from history in the concrete sense, as the particular language used in that particular environment is as a result of concrete reasons, thus if we agree that language is a means to represent experience, and history is an accumulation of experiences, then language itself is an accumulation of attempts to capture and represent experience and is thus not only analogous to history but is inseparable from history.

However, if language is inseparable from history and is used to depict history, and thus derive meanings and truth, can it be said that the words or language and meaning we assign to an environment adequately capture the environment? Moreover, if the language and the meanings we derive from it emerges from a particular environment that is shaped by the experience and over time the accumulated experiences of that particular environment, how can we hope or expect to derive a general account for the nature of time? In more philosophical terms, there exists an epistemological gap between language in general and the natural world, and this gap can be furthered in certain cases. For instance, colonizers on their quest to conquer foreign lands may have perceived their interaction with those they colonized differently (civilizing vs oppressing), and thus framed the language to represent the interaction in vastly different ways than what the colonized perceived the interaction to be. Thus, the language (both the content (the words the language is constituted by) and the the contents (the ideas and meaning(s) the words are supposed to carry)) that is used to represent a history, can be quite particular to the culture from which the perceiver comes. It then seems the particularities that accompany language are not very helpful in “tracking” and providing for an “objective” time.

For Eze, even the scientific historian (i.e., she who studies and writes about facts of events of the past and is regarded as an authority on it) falls subject to these subjectivities (Eze 2008, p.26). What can be understood to be history, or the past can only be understood as such when the historian herself commits what Eze terms the “*original act of exclusion*” (Eze 2008, p.27 my emphasis).

“an original act of exclusion: it marks a separation between current time and past time ... Once this act of division and separation has been committed—and it must be committed if the science of history, the act of writing history, will at all start—the historian begins the work of objectivation. Thus, the work of writing an objective history derives its objectivity from precisely that initial act -the labour- to objectify the past” (Eze 2008, p.27).

It is only after this act (i.e., the historian’s distinguishing the past from the present) that history or the past can be so. Without it, no “facts” can be said of history or the past. Thus, for Eze,

even the account given by the scientific historian is not one that captures all of history or time. In fact, for Eze this objective separation of the past from the present, made possible by our historian, has yet to show how it was established. For if it were, the historian would have had to forfeit her own experience of time and ascend to the heavens and see all of time with the Gods, but this does not seem possible for the historian, for even the language and the methods of analysis she finds useful are embedded in time. “In this though, we can see quite clearly in what ways this same objectivity has been dearly purchased” (Eze 2008, p.27). This, however, is not to say that objective or universal categories cannot be attained. I think the point Eze is trying to make is more nuanced than that. I think the point here is that the historian does not take her earthbound positionality as primary, and thus makes claim to positionalities that are outside her earthbound position. This is not only presumptuous but dishonest, as it is without the account of *how* she has attained these objective or universal categories. By analysing what is general of all languages— regardless of its accuracy to capture the environment from which it emerges, or the particularities of the environment and thus the language, what holds general of all languages is experience or in other words, change.

Thus, what reflects the nature of time in language is not entirely the particulars of the language, for instance tense in grammar, which is intentionally used to mark change between times. For example, the terms “yesterday, today and tomorrow” or “past, present and future,” in fact do not capture the nature of time. Terms like past, present and future, and yesterday, today and tomorrow, only capture or mark phases of this change, while it is not clear how each phase of the change is achieved. Rather, the similarity in these different languages is experience and thus history. Without the change in experience and the accumulation thereof, history, the change in language cannot be. It is through the experience of the historical event of colonialization that the languages like Pigeon English of Nigeria come to be. Indicators like grammar in language on the other hand, is an attempt at accounting for the change in time we experience in the particular, however falls short of being an adequate attempt, as it merely provides an account of a difference of times, as the terms yesterday, today and tomorrow, or past, present and future do not show how they have been achieved as already mentioned. The change that is supposed to be illustrated by these terms is not fundamental, and thus does not provide a primary account of change in time, as it is yet to be shown how this supposed change obtains and can only obtain relative to other facts of time. The change in a language, however, is indicative of change in the general sense, and is thus analogous to the motion of time. The change in language does not require further accounts and thus is more primary.

The temporal movement, or what Eze refers to as historical process, is captured intuitively when change is understood in terms of “deconstruction, transformation and renewal” (Eze, 2008:26) instead of ‘what was the case is no longer the case’ and ‘what is the case was once not the case’. To think of change as a representation of temporal passage, specifically brought about by the movement from the future to the past through the objective present constantly advancing towards the future, gets the temporal A-theorist into the problem of having to “fill the void” (Eze: 2008:27), i.e., of having to still answer the ‘how’ question. In other words, to view time as comprising of objectively distinct characteristics requires the A-theorist to now account for how a position in time that was the future, is the present and will be the past. The A-theorist has to account for the “becoming,” how future became present and how present became past, all the while being incompatible characteristics. Instead, what she should do is take a view of time which posits that it is a constant inseparable process of “deconstruction, transformation and renewal,” which not only captures the same kind of phases of change, but also encompasses in definition that movement from one phase to the next, moreover, each phase cannot be separated from the previous and the next phase. The term deconstruct, in the general sense, means to break down a thing into its constituents, this breaking down implies by necessity that what was the case (the thing in its initial state) has transformed into now a renewed thing (a thing distinct but not separate from the initial thing). Time is therefore an accumulation of the simulated movements or a series of constructs the perceiver experiences when attempting to interact with her natural environment (Eze, 2008:30) resulting in a fragmented yet virtually mended continuous thread to which when the perceiver attempts to communicate is engraved and thus reflected in language. Time thus is the motion created by the deconstruction, transformation, and renewal of change.

3.2. An Ezean Metaphysic of Time

The Ezean theory of time

In the previous section we established that we come to know of time through change in our experiences. According to Eze, time is motion. Time is the motion of the changing sensations of the experience one is having. This view would then entail that a world without anything that has experience is a world that does not have time. For example, if we made a duplicate of our world but removed everything that has experience, would that world lack time? The worry is

that there may be some conflation with how we know about time, or in other words, how we form the concept of time and what time is. Such a worry, however, would be misguided as the claim being made is misunderstood. The claim is that it is only through experience that we come to form ideas about what features and attributes constitute a thing, in this case time, and thus how this thing functions. In a world that is devoid of consciousness time could exist if change occurred, if in the world void of all consciousness trees grew taller, the sun rose and set, and the waves crashed on the shore, and thus change occurred then time too exists. However, the claim that change and time exists in such a world cannot be made, as we come to know that change occurs through experience. Moreover, we only know that change is indicative of temporal passage and time through the experience in the world where consciousness exists. Experience thus is the only medium through which we can come to form the concept time, experience thus is not conflated with how we know about time, experience is intertwined with the concept of time.

Time is how it comes to be that what was the case is no longer case, and what is the case once was not the case, time is what accounts for the change we experience. The Ezean theory or what I will call the E-theory⁵ of time thus encompasses change, and therefore it is a dynamic temporal theory. The natural question is how then does a proponent of this view account for this dynamism? The process that allows for this dynamism in time is that of deconstruction, transformation, and renewal, i.e., E-properties⁶ of time. While the E-series⁷ can be seen to be similar to both the A-series and the B-series, it however differs from each in significant ways. The E-theory thus is a dynamic temporal theory, which represents the temporal series where the instances that make up our experiences of time possess the properties of deconstruction, transform and renew.

The similarity between the B and E-series is that neither conception of time makes use of a privileged present to account for the passage of time, therefore all instances in time in both series always have the same ontological status. Much like the B-theorist the E-theorist puts equal significance on all instances of time, as according to the E-theory, without the preceding

⁵ What I am calling the E-theory, is the temporal theory that holds that time is motion, or dynamic, to which this motion/dynamism is made possible by E-properties.

⁶ What I am calling E-properties, are the fundamental features of the instances that make up our experience of reality.

⁷ What I am calling the E-series, can be understood to be a dynamic temporal series where the instances that make up our experiences successively possess the properties, deconstruction, transformation and renewal.

instant we cannot come to appreciate the next. Without the deconstruction, there cannot come a transformation and a renewal. The difference however is that the B-series cannot account for change and temporal passage, while the E-theory can. This difference subsequently is the similarity between the A and E-series of time, as both series are dynamic in nature and are supposed to account for real/genuine change and temporal passage. However, the difference between the A and E-series is how they account for change and temporal passage. The properties that are said to account for the dynamic series (i.e., A and E-properties) are different in kind. The main difference between the properties is how each property stands in relation to the other, in that where A-properties are exclusionary from each other E-properties are not. This difference thus allows the E-theorist to capture our experience of time, where instances flow into each other and thus account for how instances move from having one property to the next without contradiction. These significant difference between McTaggartian theories of time and an Ezean theory of time is what I believe to be what allows the Ezean concept of time to be able to transcend both the A and B-theories of time and the problems each theory contends with.

Over the next two sections I will look closer at how this is the case, focusing first on the B-theory and then the A-theory.

The B-theory and the E-theory

According to the B-theorist, instances exist permanently in the B-series. All instances that have happened, the instance that is happening, and those that will happen coexist in the B-series and thus temporal instances are merely past, present, and future relative to the instance in question. However, this metaphysic cannot account for real/genuine change. We illustrated this inability to account for real/genuine through the fire poker example where both the instances where the poker is cold (before it is put into the fire) and hot (after it has been put into the fire) coexist in time permanently. And just as we would not say that a fence that is red on the one end and white on the other changes by having white panels on one end and red panels on the other, so too there is no change in the B-series by different properties merely being instantiated at different times. The E-theorist, like the B-theorist appreciates all instances in time, in other words, there is no privileged instance in both the B and E-series as for the E-theorist it is from the previous instance that the next can be appreciated. It thus seems that there is some significance in the ordering of before, simultaneous with, and after. To follow the picket fence analogy, it is through the colour of the fence being red on one end that we come to appreciate

that it is white on the other. There thus seems to be a necessary relation between instances before and after each other, as already mentioned, without the previous instance, we cannot appreciate the next instance of time, in other words there is significance in there being a mere difference in properties as the differing of properties is a part of what constitutes change. Thus, it is through the mere difference of properties in the order of before, simultaneous with, and after that we even begin to perceive change. This however is not the entirety of change, as it seems something about the initial perception has to no longer be what it was, and something new has to emerge for there to be genuine change and not just a difference in properties at different times, but the B-theory has no means of capturing this additional element to change as the initial perception still is, and nothing new emerges as it always was and will be.

The E-theorist is able to appreciate and take seriously this inescapable order whilst still being able to account for this additional part of change thereby transcending the B-theory. However, the concern still seems to persist, as if all instances have the same ontological status, then the instant that deconstructs and the renewed instant all exist equally in reality. How does the instant that has broken down exist in the same way as the instant that emerges? A response from the E-theorist could be that it is by necessity that it is through that which is before that we can even come to appreciate that which is after. In the E-series all instances of time possess the properties of deconstruction, transformation, and renewal, in other words, all instances in the E-series deconstruct, transform and renew. E-properties can be possessed by instances both simultaneously and successively, therefore an instant that is deconstructed is transforming and renewing and thus cannot become less real of an instance than the previous instances or instances after.

To better illustrate the point let us consider the discussion on minor and major languages⁸ we briefly had earlier. In the article *Language and Time in Postcolonial Experience* (2008), Eze speaks of the great African writer Ngugi wa Thiong'o who expresses his critique towards the choice of postcolonial writer's use of Afro-European or European linguistic praxis rather than their indigenous languages (Eze, 2008:36). It is important to note that Ngugi's critique is not against the capacity and ability of postcolonial writers to write and illustrate the African's story

⁸ Minor and major language- I understand Eze to mean the minor language to be the language, which is derived from another, at least in an isolated analysis of two or more related languages. For example, in the analysis of Pigeon English, British English, and indigenous Nigerian languages, the minor, or derivative language would be Pigeon English. The major language on the other hand the language from which another language is derived (in an isolated analysis of languages), in the example above, the indigenous languages of Nigeria and British English would be considered the major languages.

through literature, rather the critique is directed at the writers' choice to be twice colonised by writing in the language of the oppressor. However, for Eze language is a like a conveyor belt that on which ideas move spatially and/or temporally from one place or instant to another, therefore any language can serve this function to any writer (Eze, 2008:41). According to Eze, Ngugi mistakenly interprets the significance of a particular language used to create and convey stories of the African with the significance of not only the stories themselves, but most importantly with the means through which these stories can be told, that is, through language (language in the general sense). As we have seen in discussions earlier, language much like time is transitory in nature. What was indigenous isiZulu, Sotho, Tswana, Afrikaans, and others major languages, deconstructed, transformed, and renewed into Tsotsi-Taal. Indigenous languages of Nigeria and English (majors), deconstructed, transformed, and renewed into Pigeon English. Kafka's fluent knowledge of Yiddish, Hebrew, Czech, and his mother tongue, German, deconstructed, transformed and renewed into his writings that encompassed the influence of all these languages, but specifically the influence of his mother tongue. These changes in language did in fact occur, but IsiZulu and all the languages that constitute Tsotsi-Taal still exist in the same way as Tsoti-Taal as Pigeon English exist in the same way as the indigenous languages of Nigeria and English, as Yiddish, Hebrew, Czech and German exist in the same way as Kafka's German influence when he writes in the fore mentioned languages. While there is a distinction between the major and the minor language, in other words, we can readily identify the pre-existing and the new language that emerges, we cannot separate the major from the minor, as what can be identified as the major now, was once the minor relative to the preceding language from which it emerged as a result of human experience and change. Instances in the E-series are like the relation between the "major" and "minor" languages, in that we can distinctly identify the renewed from the deconstructed instant of time while simultaneously inseparable as the "minor" cannot be without the "major" and thus exist in the same way. What was once identified as the minor can deconstruct to transform into another minor, making it the major language in that relation because of change, change such as postcolonial writer or any other writer choosing to do write in their colonial language. Instances in the E-series by necessity have equal ontological status in order to identify and appreciate the next instance and therefore all instances in the series, thus account for the motion of time. The B-series, however, does not have this kind of kind of transformative abilities, and thus cannot account for real/genuine change, and thus the dynamism of time.

The A-theory and the E-theory

The A-theorist recognises and appreciates the transformative element of change, as according to her, instances cease possessing the property futurity when the current instance becomes the case, and thus possesses the property presentness, the instance will then possess the property pastness when the instant that was current, ceases being the case. In other words, change according to the A-theorist is captured by the instances possessing different temporal properties. The A-theorist however cannot show how an instance in one moment possess one of the temporal properties and ceases to in the next. Let us consider this concern in the context of the discussion of the tensed and tenseless views of propositions to clearly illustrate it. The tensed view as already discussed, is the view where propositions have truth values at times, in other words, the truth value of a proposition moves from ‘it will be’, to ‘it is’, to ‘it was’, depending on the instant the proposition is uttered. The tenseless view on the other hand, is where the truth value of a proposition is the case simpliciter, therefore propositions are true or false always and not relative to times. Thus, according to the former view, tense is an inseparable or ineliminable part of language, while in the latter view, language can go without tense. As already mentioned, the tensed view is the more intuitive of the views as it can capture real/genuine change. Tense in language is thus supposed to serve as evidence for not only a dynamic nature of time, but also the validity of A-properties, as A-properties can account for a proposition being true at one time, and not at an earlier or later time and thus genuine change. However, the A-theorist does not account for how a proposition is true at one time and is not at another.

Tensed language is supposed to be an attempt at capturing our experience in time, for instance the proposition “it is raining,” is supposed to capture that there is water falling from the sky, at this current moment and A-properties are supposed to account for these facts of our experience. The problem arises for the A-theorist as per Fine (2005) above when change occurs, when the instance when it was raining has since passed and thus stopped raining, and the A-theorist must now provide an account for how this has happened, in other words, how at one instant it is raining and at another instant it is not (experientially, linguistically, and temporally). The A-theorist simply has to say time has passed, and the instant when it was true that it was raining is no longer the case and is now past and the instant when it is not raining now is the case and is now present. This seems like a fair response, however, it still seems incomplete, as the answer provided does not account for how at one instant the proposition “it is raining” is present and in the next instant it is past. How did this seemingly sudden change occur? Changes in the A-

theory seem sudden because it allows for the events (water falling from the sky) to be happening and not happening without explanation, it allows for the propositions to be true and not true without explanation, and lastly allows instances of time to possess mutually exclusive presentness and pastness without account. It all just will be, is and was the case.

While this may not be a problem in the same way it is for the B-theory (where opposing propositions existing simultaneously in time, thus being unable to represent real change), it is still a problem as the A-theorist cannot show how the sudden and huge leaps between the proposition “it is raining” being true and then false occurs, and present and then past occurs. A-properties thus seem counter-intuitive to our experience of time, particularly the mutually exclusive definitions of the A-properties create for choppy, and sudden picture of time and that does not seem like the kind of experience of time we have. Time seems to be a seamless transition from one instant to the next. The most intuitive way to get the transition from raining and not, true and false, and present and past is to have tension between the two instances, that simultaneously hold together while separating the two instances.

To clearly illustrate the tension required to account for how change occurs, let us consider the relation between philosophy, morality, and politics. According to Eze, there exist a distinct but inseparable relation that exists between philosophy, morality, and politics where philosophy and politics are at the extremities and morality is the median at which philosophy and politics meet (Eze 2008, p.227-228). Eze makes use of the dichotomies that exist within South African individuals and South African society found in Njabulo Ndebele’s novel *The Cry of Winnie Mandela* to show how morality has a reconciliatory function that makes it possible to hold together dichotomous concepts. A character in Ndebele’s novel finds herself in a moral conflict. She says, “I am, hell and heaven,” “beauty and ugliness,” “pride and shame.” The same moral conundrum is present in the society at large: “South African have an intriguing capacity to be disarmingly kind hospitable at the same time as being capable of the most horrifying brutality and cruelty,” (Eze 2008, p.228). While passions are a natural occurrence, what causes such oscillation from one extreme to the other in individuals and societies as whole? Also, how does one make sense of reconcile such Manicheanism? According to Eze, what causes this dialectic of oppositions is an interruption in experience to which the failure to reorder the individual self and society to the environment causes a mere reflecting of the environment, as opposed to making sense of the environment and thus transcending the environment (Eze 2008, p.229). How then does one make sense or reconcile these dialectics of oppositions? For many African

philosophers Ubuntu⁹ is a viable moral remedy to this Manicheanism. However, for Eze Ubuntu is not a successful solution to escape the radical dialectics, as Ubuntu is simultaneously too much and not enough. Ubuntu is too much because it relies too much on the natural goodness of persons to be successful and Ubuntu is not enough because it fails to support or supplement its reliance on the natural goodness of persons (Eze 2008, p.230). In other words, Ubuntu relies on the chance or the “good luck” that persons will favour honour, heroism, and knowledge, whilst not providing any other independent support or justification as to why persons will favour the “good.” This is problematic because dialectics of opposition are indicative of the individual and society’s capacity to oscillate to the opposite extreme. Ubuntu is not able to successfully merge “hell and heaven,” “beauty and ugliness,” “pride and shame” because Ubuntu too is a reflection of the same oscillation between two extremities, in other words, Ubuntu is of the same category as the dialectics of oppositions it is supposed to merge. Ubuntu does not transcend the nature of passions and thus will not reorder the individual or society to its environment.

According to Eze morality however, functions as a skilful negotiation of the passions of experience of both the individual and the collective (Eze 2008, p.231). Morality therefore humanises and socialises nature, and thus is a more viable solution to reconciling dialectics of oppositions. Morality unlike Ubuntu does not rely on the goodness of persons, morality instead recognises that persons have the capacity to be both good and bad and thus provides support for a suitable outcome. Morality thus has the capacity to transcend the oscillation between good and bad and allows the individual and the collective to re-align themselves to the environment, i.e., develop a better understating of the conditions of the environment and develop a route to reach the desired outcome. The relation between politics and philosophy is much like the relation that exists between the dialectics of opposite mentioned above in that philosophy and politics are distinct concepts that however cannot be separated. The main distinction between philosophy and politics is reason, where philosophy is in defence of reason and thus subject to it, while politics on the other is not. Philosophy and politics much like “hell and heaven,” “beauty and ugliness,” “pride and shame,” cannot be without the other. There is no reason without that which is reasonless, and philosophy cannot defend reason if there is none which is less than reasonable to defend it from. Morality works as a skilful negotiation between

⁹ Ubuntu (Eze 2008, p. 291) directly translates to “humanity”. It is an ethical imperative that is the basis of many African belief systems and cultures, that stipulates that “one is a person because of other persons” therefore one must treat others and oneself with absolute humanity.

philosophy and politics, it functions as a rational mean as it transcends that which is reasonable and that which is less than reasonable, by supplementing and providing justification for the less than reasonable and the application of reason to it, to successfully merge Philosophy and politics.

Returning to the question of accounting for how at one instant the proposition “it is raining” is true at one instance and false at another because it was present at the first instant and in the next instant has become past. The A-properties much like Ubuntu appeal too much on the legitimacy of the privileged present whilst simultaneously providing little support or justification for why it is a legitimate concept. In other words, the A-theorist argues that the privileged is transitory in nature, however, does not explain how the privileged present preforms this transitioning to the future. The privileged present thus cannot and does not skilfully negotiate the mutually exclusive nature of the A-properties and thus merely reflects and recreates this oppositional nature of the A-properties, hence generates a viciousness Brzozowski regresses of derivation we discussed in Section 1.3 *The Objection by Infinite Regress* above. Therefore, the privileged present cannot and will not transcend and thus bring together the oppositional A-properties, which in turn will not allow the A-properties to successfully account for change and temporal passage and secure the claim to a dynamic temporal series.

A-properties do not have such tension between each other as they are mutually exclusive by definition. There thus is no logical cord that exist between each of the properties, besides the fact that it has been said to go together as temporal properties. The property presentness seems like an attempt at creating such a tension, however it fails, as it too is mutually exclusive to pastness and futurity, in other words, what is past cannot be present and what is present cannot possibly be future and thus the tension between past and present, and present and future is not created. It then becomes difficult for instances to seamlessly possess each property without requirement of an explanation of how it ceased to be present and became past or was future and became present. However, what prevents the E-theory from being susceptible to the same kind of critique? In other words, can it not be said that E-properties create similar kind of picture of time, where the deconstruction stops suddenly and the transformation begins, and where the transformation stops suddenly again and the renewal begins? While that is a valid concern, I do not think it holds much water against the E-theory, as each E-property entails both of the other properties. When we think of anything deconstructing, we think of it undergoing a transformation as well, and a renewal of some kind coming out of that transformation. In other

words, there exists a distinction and yet logical connection between each of the properties and thus each of the properties seamlessly flows into the next. This brings us to how E-properties account for at one instant the proposition “it is raining” is true at one instance and false at another because it was present at the first instant, and in the next instant has become past. E-properties perform a similar function to morality, in that on the one hand they foster a dynamism of time, and on the other hand take seriously the previous experience and the experience one is currently having. The tension or the relation that exists between each of the E-properties of transformation can strike such a balance. The relation between E-properties performs the same function as morality does in matters of dialectics of opposition discussion above. The tension or the relation between the E-properties skilfully negotiates instances before the current instant and instances after. Like with morality, where the capacity of persons being good and/or bad is baked into the concept, and can thus take account for both extremities, thereby transcending the extremities, the property of transformation encompasses both deconstruction and renewal, as a transformation cannot be without a deconstruction and a renewal cannot come to be without a transformation. Therefore, each property by necessity flows into each other, as each E-property is necessitated by the other. This then allows for each of the E-properties to account for how it is true that it is raining at one instant and false at another, as each E-property automatically secures the other two or cannot be without the other E-properties.

Perhaps how the E-properties come apart would be more difficult to show. In other words, given the seamless flow of E-properties, how can we know that the deconstruction has occurred and ended, and that the transformation has occurred for a renewal to emerge? The E-theorist might argue that this is precisely the point, that in the facts of our experience of time, we are unable to categorically separate one instant from the other, however we know that there are distinct instances because of the experience of change. In other words, we come to recognise and appreciate the current instant because of the experience and perception of an instant before, and without the instant before, the recognition and appreciation of the current instant cannot come to be. This feature of the nature of the E-properties secures the intuitive experience of distinct instances of time. The E-theorist thus provides properties that not only accounts for how a truth value of a proposition at one time is true and at another time is false, the E-theory also provides an account for how diametrical opposed experiences can be mended in time. E-properties, therefore, create for a temporal series that is distinct while simultaneously

inseparable thus resulting in the ability for E-theorists to account for how these sudden changes experientially, propositionally and temporally occur, and thus transcending the A-theories.

A potential worry raised by a sceptic of the E-theory is that it may not be clear that E-properties are as fundamental as I argue they are. In other words what makes the E-properties express temporal flow as they are not properties of time, or they do not provide information on time, like the A- properties and B-relations do. Moreover, what makes E-properties seem like they are expressing the flow of time is that relative to the property transformation, the property deconstruction happens earlier in the past and the property renewal happens after, or in the future. Thus, one could argue that E-properties are "satisfiers" of the A-properties and the B-relations and thus, can be substituted for A-properties and B-relations and many other items that constitute a series, for example, thesis, antithesis and synthesis, (T-series) or denial, anger and acceptance (D-series) – either of which can be interpreted as ways in which we experience the flow of time. It is therefore difficult to tell in what sense E-properties are fundamental or even more fundamental than the A-properties and B-relations. E-properties do not tell us more about time than T-properties and D-properties.

E-properties are not supposed to be claims to the nature of time, rather they make claim to the experience of the motions of change found in our perceptions. As I have argued, everything is perceived from the standpoint of experience. It is thus through the standpoint of experience that we come to perceive change, and time. Therefore, experiencing a change is constituted by the particularities of that standpoint and not through direct access to a temporal plain. In other words, change and time are animated by the sensations of our experiences. Take for example, the traffic robot turning from red to green, we know that there is change because the perception of the traffic robot being red flows without interruption into a new perception of the traffic being green. Thus, the properties that would help us account for the perceived change of the traffic robot turning from red to green are properties that describe the experience and, the claim to anything beyond experience is inaccessible. The privileged present and B relations or A-properties are not genuine properties of change and time, because they cannot account for how change and time occur. This because the privileged present and B relations or A-properties make claim to what is beyond experience, and in turn undermine our experience of change and time, and thus failing to account for the motion of time or how change occurs, i.e., how the instances that make up our experiences move from future to past to present to past or how instances relative to particular point are past, simultaneous, with and after. E-properties are

therefore more fundamental properties to account for change and its motion time as they can account for how the experience of change and time occurs.

Because T- and D-properties take a similar format as A-properties and B-relations they fall subject to the same concern. While I cannot argue that T-and D-properties are mutually exclusive properties, T- and D- properties like in the case of the A-properties and B-relation, there is a lack in account for how the instances that make up our experience change from possessing the properties thesis/denial, to possessing the properties antithesis/anger, or change from possessing the properties antithesis/anger to possessing the synthesis/acceptance. This is because like the A-properties and B-relations, T- and D- properties are not properties of experience and thus cannot account how the experience of change and time occurs. While they are different from A-properties and B-relations, T- and D- properties do not possess necessary logical tension for one property to lead into the next and thus capture our experience of change time like E-properties do, and why T- and D-properties cannot be substituted in the place of E-properties.

The E-theory thus is a theory of time that represents a temporal series that is both permanent and dynamic. In other words, instances stand in relations of before, simultaneous with, and after while still being capable of change by appealing to E-properties of deconstruction, transformation and renewal. E-properties strike the balance between the fragmentation and connectivity of temporal instances we experience, by creating a relation or tension between instances that cannot be mistaken for the previous or next instants but necessitates both the previous and next. This balance allows the E-theorist to provide an account of time that is coherent phenomenologically and theoretically.

Conclusion

In this project I first investigated how the A-theory appears to have important advantages over the B-theory in that the B-theory fails to adequately account for certain features that appear central to how we conceive of time. I then moved on to look at some objections that have been raised against the A-theory itself, in particular that there is an incoherence in the A-theory. While I maintain that these objections have some force even in light of some responses proposed, I then turned to what appears to be a more troubling problem for the A-theory, namely, that the A-theory simply fails to meet the explanatory task of adequately accounting

for our experience of time. I ended by offering an alternate account of time, which I call the E-theory, which I believe is better suited to explaining our experience of time.

The E-theory proposed properties that are as related as they are distinct, in that without the one we cannot have the other. Such E-properties are then suited to account for the common facts of the experience as they can be inclusively possessed by instances of time that make up our experiences. This allows for instances to be in an intermediate state of transition that accounts for how an instant that was future is now present and will be past. E-properties in question can perform the double function of being distinct and yet inseparable, thereby can account for and facilitate our continuous and yet fragmented experience of time.

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