

The Privileged Present: Defending an “A-Theory” of time

By Dean Zimmerman

Torian Pope

Introduction

- ❖ J.M.E Mc Taggart
- ❖ Believed time is unreal
- ❖ Created the A-Series and B-Series



A & B Theories

- ❖ The properties *being past*, *being present*, and *being future* are called A-properties.
- ❖ The relations of *being earlier than*, *being later than*, and *being simultaneous with* are B-relations.
- ❖ People who regard A-properties as fundamental, and B-relations as derivative are labeled A-theorist.
- ❖ A-properties as derivative, and B-relations as fundamental = B-theorist.

Definitions

- ❖ A-Theorist- Believe in some sort of objective distinction between what is present and what is past, and what is future.
- ❖ B-Theorist- Denies the objectivity of our talk about past, present, and future.

Main Question Raised

- ❖ Are there objective differences between what is past, present, and future?
- ❖ Are present events and things somehow more “real” than those wholly in the past or future?

A-Theories

- ❖ Presentism
- ❖ Moving Spotlight
- ❖ Growing block



Presentism

- ❖ The thought of just the present existing.
- ❖ Popular phrase “Moment of time”
- ❖ The past and the future do not exist.



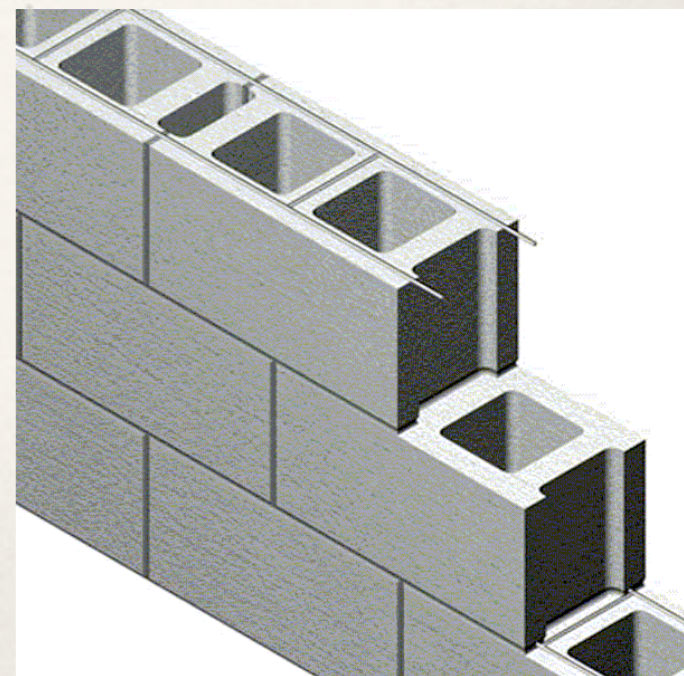
Moving Spotlight

- ❖ Believes that past, present, and future all exist.
- ❖ There is a four dimensional array.
- ❖ Reality is a moving spotlight playing over a 4-D universe.



Growing block

- ❖ Accepts the existence of past and present events, things and times.
- ❖ Denies the future, believe we live in the cutting edge.
- ❖ Similar to a thin spotlight's view



Main Claim

- ❖ Zimmerman is for Presentist.
- ❖ Reason being that both moving-spotlight and growing-block can not explain why we care so much about whether things are present or past.
- ❖ “If a pain is just as intrinsically painful when it has the spotlight upon it, or when it is on the cutting edge, why should the passage of spotlight or the adding of slices change our attitude towards it?”

Discussion Question 1

- ❖ Zimmerman claims that being a *presentist* is most plausible, do you feel his claim best represents reality and if you had a chance to choose a side which one will you pick?

Discussion Question 2

- ❖ Physic powers and premonitions are sources that allows the future to be seen, so is it wrong to say that the future is already planned or 4-D?

Discussion Question 3

- ❖ In Inception, when the cast goes into dream state, time speed between stages was altered. So, do you think time is just a figment of the external world?

Answered Question

- ❖ *Are there objective differences between what is past, present, and future?*
- ❖ *Are present events and things somehow more “real” than those wholly in the past or future?*
- ❖ **“It is a simply part of commonsense that the past and future are less real than the present....Everybody knows that when events and things recede into the past, they are very different from the way they are when present; and that the future is just a realm of mere possibilities, not realities.”**

Results

- ❖ Circle=Presentism
- ❖ Square= Moving Flashlight
- ❖ Triangle=Growing Block