

Editorial

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Whether defined as a measurable object external to consciousness or a perceptual and experiential category, *time* has been the subject of intense scrutiny in academic fields as diverse as philosophy, literature, physics, psychology, and theology. At once too general and specific a subject, time has provoked a variety of questions that attempt to discover our conscious relation *within it* and what 'it' fundamentally *is*. For even if one may observe changes of time *through* objects, one cannot observe changes of time itself. Consequently, investigations into the nature of time over the centuries have provoked questions that include, but are not limited to: whether time exists, whether the past and future are 'real' like the present, whether duration is perceived as instantaneity or simultaneity, whether time is linear or circular, and whether the passage of time is ultimately an objective or subjective phenomenon.

The investigations of the philosopher of late antiquity, Augustine, such as in his *Confessions*, were among the first made in attempting to disentangle the conundrum of how to measure time, which he thought only existed as a present moment that had no duration. Demonstrating the longevity of time as a subject of philosophical inquiry, J.M.E. McTaggart's theory of the illusory nature of time perception, expounded in his 1908 paper, 'The Unreality of Time,' posited the existence of two interpretations of time, the 'A series' and 'B series'. The logic behind McTaggart's division of these interpretations into two series is predicated on the distinction between time as the series of points from the past through the present to the future ('A series'), and time as each point from the series in isolation ('B series'). From this distinction, McTaggart goes on to argue that the 'A series' is contradictory, since each moment in it is simultaneously past, present, and future. This, being an illogical situation, and the 'A series' being essential to time, means that time is therefore not real.

Yet, as numerous examples of time travel demonstrate, time has also been a subject of enduring interest in literature and popular culture. In the classic novella by H.G. Wells, *The Time Machine*, the 19th century Time Traveller, 'travelling with prodigious velocity,' is hurled some thirty million years into the future, only to discover that Earth is in its final stages of entropy. A 'sense of abominable desolation... hung over the world', where the insular gigantism evident on the beach is an ominous sign of humankind's extinction in the future. Taking as their cue Albert Einstein's theories of special and general relativity, which concede the possibility of time travel through velocity time dilation, films such as the recently released *Looper* transport their protagonists and viewers into past and future worlds, with surprising and alarming consequences for causality. Alternatively, Matt Groening's animated science fiction series, *Futurama*, set in the 31st century, playfully references both the *grandfather* and *bootstrap* paradoxes in the episode,

'Roswell That Ends Well'. Travelling back in time to 1947, Fry must protect his grandfather, Enos, from being killed, or else Fry will cease to exist in the future. Nevertheless, his mission to do so is foiled; Enos is killed, and Fry inadvertently sleeps with his grandmother, thereby becoming his own grandfather.

Following on from fiction's interaction with philosophical, cultural, and scientific investigations into time, the excursions and features of this issue of *Philament* are a testament to the continuing fascination this subject holds for us in our twenty-first century context. More importantly, such works prove how interdisciplinary research can produce new and exciting approaches to a concept that is, pardon the pun, as old as time itself.

In our first feature, Carolyn Burns offers a provocative comparison of the musical, *Sweeney Todd*, and the opera, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, to suggest that there is 'significant consistency in the way diegetic and non-diegetic music operates within different sub-genres of lyric theatre.' Consequently, Burns argues that music in these sub-genres functions to control narrative time in similar, rather than differing, ways. Bryce Christensen's feature involves a re-evaluation of the relationship between science and the literary arts in C.P. Snow's controversial 1959 text, *The Two Cultures*. Snow's text continues to incite debate over the political role scientists should play 'in improving the lot of the poor' and ensuring the wellbeing of future generations, as well as his indictment of literature in failing to aid the work of science. Shelagh M. Rowan-Legg's article, 'Deleuze and the Time-Image: A Cinema of the Virtual Mind,' is a fascinating exploration of the entanglements of virtuality, memory, temporality, and the real in Gilles Deleuze's theories of the time-image. Rowan-Legg interweaves her discussion of Deleuze's theories with analyses of two postmodern films, *Abre los ojos* and *Solaris*, which lend clarity and insight into the work of this notoriously difficult philosopher.

Kevin Spicer adroitly turns our attention to 'the interminable difference of opinion between Martin Heidegger and Jacques Derrida on the question of justice.' Focusing on Heidegger's essay, 'Anaximander's Saying,' Spicer's feature scrutinises the validity of Derrida's criticism of Heidegger: that he always and already was a logocentric metaphysician who privileged presence and *jointure* over their opposite. In drawing a line of influence that connects temporally and philosophically 'Anaximander's Saying' with the *oeuvre* of Friedrich Schelling, Spicer concludes that 'Derrida's reading of Heidegger is at best uncharitable' and overlooks the possibility that Heidegger, via the influence of Schelling, did indeed affirm *disjointure* and death in his work on justice. Our final feature, 'Merleau-Ponty's Bergson: Writing "Time" as the Intuition of Intuitions,' is another exploration into the centrality of time in continental philosophical thinking. Daniel Alipaz focuses on the performative quality of Henri Bergson's writing, drawing upon Maurice Merleau-Ponty's observation that Bergson articulates his own temporalisation. In other words, works such as *La Pensée et le mouvant* function both as a theoretical exposition of *durée* and 'a performance of his own philosophical experiment; it is Bergson, himself, knowingly "plunging" and "penetrating" into

the perception of himself through *the act of writing.*' Ultimately, this feature encapsulates a latent concern in all our submissions: whether it is possible to divorce one's experience *of* and *in* time, from the project of writing *about* time.

In Jason Wirtz's 'Distance Over Time,' a road trip to the Grand Canyon prompts both an objective measurement of the physical distance travelled by the persona, as well as a subjective reflection on the emotional distances individuals must traverse, in order to connect with their lovers in a singular temporal location. 'A Year,' a short poem by Jon Cotner, elegantly represents the passage of time through the changing of the seasons. David Adams' short story *The Love Letter* explores via the transience and permanence of the epistolary form the themes of aging, and the passing of once-revered traditions.

On behalf of the editorial team, I would like to thank our authors for their excellent contributions to this issue, as well as the readers who offered their generous feedback on our submissions.

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