

Time and Propinquity

Edited by Michael Sauve & David Mathew

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We advanced no further in clearing up the neurosis of his childhood, on which his later illness was based, and it was obvious that the patient found his present position highly comfortable and had no wish to take any step forward which would bring him nearer to the end of his treatment. It was a case of the treatment inhibiting itself: it was in danger of failing as a result of – partial – success. In this predicament I resorted to the heroic measure of fixing a time-limit for the analysis. At the beginning of a year's work I informed the patient that the coming year was to be the last one of his treatment, no matter what he achieved in the time still left to him. At first he did not believe me, but once he was convinced that I was in deadly earnest, the desired change set in. His resistances shrank up, and in these last months of his treatment he was able to reproduce all the memories and to discover all the connections which seemed necessary for understanding his early neurosis and mastering his present one.

Sigmund Freud, 'Analysis Terminable and Interminable'

Being is not a thing, thus nothing temporal, and yet it is determined by time as presence. Time is not a thing, thus nothing which is, and yet it remains constant in its passing away without being something temporal like the beings in time. Being and time determine each other reciprocally, but in such a manner that neither can the former—Being—be addressed as something temporal nor can the latter—time—be addressed as a being. As we give thought to all this, we find ourselves adrift in contradictory statements.

Martin Heidegger, 'On Time and Being'

Nature's security has its source in the fact that time has no significance at all for nature. Only with the moment does history begin. By sin, man's sensuousness is posited as sinfulness and is therefore lower than that of the beast, and yet this is because it is here that the higher begins, for at this point spirit begins.

The moment is that ambiguity in which time and eternity touch each other, and with this the concept of *temporality* is posited, whereby time constantly intersects eternity and eternity constantly pervades time. As a result, the above-mentioned division acquires its significance: the present time, the past time, the future time.

By this division, attention is immediately drawn to the fact that the future in a certain sense signifies more than the present and the past, because in a certain sense the future is the whole of which the past is a part, and the future can in a certain sense signify the whole. This is because the eternal first signifies the future or because the future is the incognito in which the eternal, even though it is incommensurable with time, nevertheless preserves its association with time. Linguistic usage at times also takes the future as identical with the eternal (the future life – the eternal life). In a deeper sense, the Greeks did not have the concept of the eternal; so neither did they have the concept of the future. Therefore Greek life cannot be reproached for being lost in the moment, or more correctly, it cannot even be

said that it was lost, for temporality was conceived by the Greeks just as naively as sensuousness, because they lacked the category of spirit.

Søren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety*

This willingness to engage with the passage of time from something like the inside gives the music part of this special character. Classical music allows us to grasp passing time as if it were an object or even a body. Time, which is mutability dissolves the solidity of our lives and beings into abstraction and memory becomes a source of tangible persisted pleasure and meaning.

Lawrence Kramer, *Why Classical Music Still Matters*

May it resound with the right note here where I am placing it, between the before and the after, even if it demonstrates that the after was kept waiting so that the before could assume its own place.

Jacques Lacan, 'Logical Time and the Assertion of Anticipated Certainty'

[...] what occurs in time never begins or ceases to be, or to be itself, and since, again, if there is to be change it must be change of what occurs in time (for the timeless never changes), I submit that only one alternative remains. Changes must happen to the events of such a nature that the occurrence of these changes does not hinder the events from being events, and the same events, both before and after the change.

John McTaggart, *The Unreality of Time*

Too far did I fly into the future: a horror seized upon me.

And when I looked around me, lo, there time was my sole contemporary!

Then did I fly backwards, homewards – and always faster. Thus did I come unto you, ye present-day men, and into the land of culture.

For the first time brought I an eye to see you, and good desire; verily, with loning in my heart did I come.

But how did it turn out with me? Although so alarmed – I had yet to laugh! Never did mine eye see anything so motley-coloured!

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*

We can, then, regard the world and the things in it as from a vantage point which is in effect outside time. We can see how things are interrelated to each other temporally, one earlier, one later, and we can do this without regarding some events as having disappeared irrevocably into the past and others as not yet in existence. We can regard all events, past, present and future, as all present in some tenseless now. In place of the ever-diminishing thinness of the perceived or experienced present, the scientific world view gives us a temporally thick world in which past, present and future are but aspects of the perspective from which an observer inside the world perceives or describes events earlier, contemporaneous and later relative to his position in the manifold. Thus, the Battle of Hastings is (tenselessly) at Hastings at 1066, Beethoven is (tenselessly) in various parts of

Europe from 1770 to 1827, what I call next year's Derby is (tenselessly) at Epsom at June 1984 while I am (tenselessly) writing this in Ham at 19 April 1983, and this fact determines whether these other things are in my past, present or future as I write.

Anthony O'Hear, *What Philosophy Is*

Time becomes human time to the extent that it is organised after the manner of a narrative; narrative, in turn, is meaningful to the extent that it portrays the features of temporal experience.

Paul Ricoeur, 'Time and Narrative: Volume 1'

Succession in eternity entails not only maintaining the distinction between events, as found in relativity, but maintaining a unique causal order between all events, and for a given event P this is found only within the lightcone of events surrounding P. Eternity also entails a unique orientation between causally ordered events, whereas in spacetime there are two possible orderings among causal events. Finally succession in eternity is coupled with incorruption. This is similar to the equivalent ontological status of all events in spacetime. If, therefore, we want to speak theologically about eternity as the source and completion of time as understood by relativity theory, then eternity gives to all events a complete causal ordering and a unique direction (Alpha to Omega), both of which are lacking in nature at least at the physical level, according to relativity.

Bertrand Russell, 'Is Nature Creation?'

The question that film-makers must ask themselves is, what distinguishes cinema from other arts? To me cinema is unique in its dimension of time. This doesn't mean it develops in time—so do music, theatre and ballet. I mean time in the literal sense. What is a frame, the interval between 'Action' and 'Cut'? Film fixes reality in a sense of time—it's a way of conserving time. No other art form can fix and stop time like this. Film is a mosaic made up of time.

Andrei Tarkovsky