

Philosophy Society Discussion Group - 18/09/2018

THE PHILOSOPHY OF TIME

1. What precisely does one mean when they say 'time'? If you were the only thing in existence, would there still be time? or is it always dependent on 'existent' things (e.g. as a relation between multiple entities and events)?
2. Time is sometimes thought of as a 'causal unity': the past is the cause of the present, and the present the cause of the future. What implications can you think of with this for, e.g. free will, and is it an exhaustive description of time?
3. Does the present have a duration? Can you measure how long the present is before it becomes the past? If not, then how can measurable time (1 minute, etc.) be comprised of units without any duration whatsoever?
4. Can there be a difference between qualitative and quantitative measurements of time? Further, is time essentially identical between moments, or can time hold qualitative differences? Is there any merit to the qualitative-quantitative distinction of time? Can we conceive of time without some quality or substance (what Bergson calls 'duration') occupying it?
5. A-Theorists believe that time is objective (think of how history records things: the year 1897 doesn't necessarily mean it is 'past' but is a point in time); B-Theorists believe that time is inherently 'tensed' (past, present, future), and therefore always relative to the present. Which of these views do you think is correct, and why? Is there any merit to this distinction?

Bonus question: Is time travel possible, paradoxical, or *both/neither*?