Temporal Language and Temporal Reality

Heather Dyke
University of Otago

This is a preprint of an article whose final and definitive form is published in The Philosophical Quarterly [Vol. 53 (2003): 380-391]. The Philosophical Quarterly is available online at <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1467-9213>

Abstract

In response to a recent challenge that the New B-theory of Time argues invalidly from the claim that tensed sentences have tenseless truth conditions to the conclusion that temporal reality is tenseless, I argue that while early B-theorists may have relied on some such inference, New B-theorists do not. Giving tenseless truth conditions for tensed sentences is not intended to prove that temporal reality is tenseless. Rather, it is intended to undermine the A-theorist’s move from claims about the irreducibility of tensed language to the conclusion that temporal reality must be tensed. I then examine how A-theorists have used facts about language in attempting to establish their conclusions about the nature of temporal reality. I take the recent work of William Lane Craig and argue that he implicitly and illicitly moves from facts about temporal language to his conclusion that temporal reality is tensed.

Introduction

Debate in the philosophy of time is primarily between the A-theorists who think that there is an ontological distinction between past, present and future, and that time is dynamic in some sense, and the B-theorists who deny both of these claims. For B-theorists temporal reality is constituted by the temporal relations (‘earlier than’, ‘later than’, and ‘simultaneous
with’) in which events stand to each other. Furthermore, all the events and times that exist in this temporal manifold are equally real. Since the 1960s (and, to some degree, even before that) debate in the philosophy of time has, either implicitly or explicitly, concentrated on the nature of temporal language,¹ and on what, if anything, this can tell us about the nature of time itself. For example, A-theorists argue that ordinary language makes use of tensed expressions, and that, in the absence of strong reasons against doing so, we ought to treat that usage as veridical. After all, we accept that our everyday discourse about physical objects refers to real physical objects, so we should also accept that our talk of events being past, present or future really ascribes those tenses to them. B-theorists, on the other hand, appeal to the fact that tensed sentences have tenseless truth conditions to undermine the argument that time is tensed. On the face of it, philosophers of time of all persuasions see the connection between language and ontology as significant when arguing for their particular conclusions about the nature of time. To what extent do they depend on that connection, and to what extent is this practice justified? It is these issues that I examine in this paper. What role do facts about language play in the arguments of both A- and B-theorists? How much weight are they being expected to bear, and are they up to the job?

I will begin by discussing a recent critical notice by Ned Markosian,² in which he claims that many New B-theorists argue invalidly from the claim that tensed sentences have tenseless truth conditions to the conclusion that temporal reality is tenseless. I will defend the B-theorists against this objection, and show that while early B-theorists may have relied on some such inference, New B-theorists do not. I will argue that giving tenseless truth conditions for tensed sentences is not intended to prove that temporal reality is tenseless.

¹ See, for example, the chapters by Goodman and Quine in Smart (1964), Gale (1968) especially pp. 53–68, Swinburne (1990), and Markosian (1992).
² Markosian (2001)
Rather, it is intended to undermine the A-theorist’s move from claims about the irreducibility of tensed language to the conclusion that temporal reality must be tensed. I will then move on to consider how A-theorists have used facts about language in attempting to establish their conclusions about the nature of temporal reality. I will take the recent work of William Lane Craig, a prominent presentist, as an example, and argue that, despite his claims to the contrary, he relies on an inference from facts about temporal language to facts about temporal reality in his attempt to establish his conclusion that temporal reality is tensed.

**Language, time and the B-theory**

Ned Markosian has recently argued that many proponents of the New B-theory of time endorse a line of reasoning that moves from premises about the nature of temporal language to conclusions about the nature of time itself. He goes on to argue that this line of reasoning is invalid; it is not legitimate to draw ontological conclusions from semantic premises.

Markosian analyses the position of the New B-theory into four theses, two of which are semantic, while the other two are ontological. They are:

**The Indexical Analysis of Tense:** Expressions like ‘now’, ‘it has been the case that’, and ‘it will be the case that’ are indexical terms whose references vary depending on relevant features of the context of utterance.

---

3 Markosian (2001)

4 Markosian’s immediate target is Dyke (1998). However, he claims that his criticism applies more widely to New B-theorists in general. I will discuss the general application of his criticism.
The Eliminability of Tense Operators from Truth Conditions: Sentences containing tense operators (like ‘it has been the case that’ and ‘it will be the case in two days that’) can be given truth conditions that do not themselves contain such operators.

The Non-existence of Temporal A-properties: There are no genuine, irreducible A-properties; talk that appears to be about A-properties, if true, is made true by facts involving B-relations, but not A-properties.

Non-presentism: Non-present objects are just as real as present objects.\(^6\)

Markosian stated the third thesis as follows: “There are no genuine, irreducible A-properties; talk that appears to be about A-properties is analysable in terms of B-relations.”\(^7\)

This way of expressing this thesis is ambiguous, and potentially misleading. It suggests that sentences that ostensibly refer to A-properties can be translated by sentences that make no such reference, which is something that New B-theorists reject. However, a weaker interpretation of it is that sentences that ostensibly refer to A-properties have truth conditions that make no such reference, and this, New B-theorists accept. Consequently, I have altered the statement of the thesis to reflect the real position of New B-theorists.

What, according to the New B-theorist, is the relationship between these semantic and ontological theses? If the ontological theses are true, then the semantic theses follow naturally. If there are no A-properties and all times are equally real, then any sentence which appears to locate some event in the past, present or future cannot be made true by the fact that that event is in the past, present or future (there is no such fact). Instead, any such sentence will be made true by the temporal relation in which that sentence stands to the

---

5 Markosian calls this thesis ‘The B-theory’. For the sake of clarity I have changed its name.

6 Markosian (2001) 616–617

7 Markosian (2001) p. 616
event that it is about. If there are no A-properties, then an account of the truth conditions of tensed sentences will include no reference to A-properties. If all times are equally real, then it is natural to conclude that expressions like ‘now’, ‘it has been the case that’ and ‘it will be the case that’ are indexicals that behave very much like the spatial indexicals ‘here’ and ‘over there’. That is, just as the reference of ‘here’ varies depending on where it is uttered, the reference of these temporal expressions varies depending on the time at which they are uttered.

This is not to say that one cannot be an A-theorist and endorse these two semantic theses. In fact there are some A-theorists who do just this. However, pace Markosian, the force of the semantic theses is not that they entail the ontological theses, but rather that the existence of tense in language need not be indicative of the existence of tense in reality. In other words, the semantic theses are intended to undermine the A-theorist’s inference from the existence of tense in language to the existence of tense in reality. Markosian’s objection to the New B-theory centres on the connections between these semantic and ontological theses. He interprets the New B-theorist as endorsing a line of reasoning from the two semantic theses of the New B-theory to its ontological theses. That is, he takes her to be arguing from the indexical analysis of tensed expressions and the claim that tensed sentences have tenseless truth conditions to the conclusions that there are no tensed properties and that all times are equally real. If this is an accurate account of the argument of the New B-theorist, then she is indeed at fault. However, I believe that the New B-theorist need not rely on an inference of this kind.

The New B-theorist ought not to claim that she arrives at the ontological conclusions of the New B-theory via its semantic theses. The ontological theses of both the A-theory and the B-theory are consistent with the New B-theory’s semantic theses. So, having established

---

the truth of those semantic theses, we would not be in a position to affirm the truth of the ontological theses of either the A-theory or the B-theory. Any inference that can be drawn between the semantic and the ontological theses of the New B-theory of time goes *from* the ontology *to* the semantics. Independent arguments are needed to establish the ontological theses of the New B-theory. I don’t intend to argue for or defend those ontological theses here, but suffice it to say that my reasons for endorsing them are influenced by both McTaggart’s paradox\(^9\) and the Special Theory of Relativity.\(^{10}\)

One question regarding Markosian’s objection to the New B-theory of time remains puzzling. Why did he think that New B-theorists were persuaded that one could validly infer the theory’s ontology from its semantic theses? My suspicion is that it has something to do with the emphasis that exists in discussion in the philosophy of time on the nature of temporal language. However, rather than it being the New B-theorists who are guilty of reading their metaphysics off from their semantics, I submit that this is a common fault among A-theorists. Since the 1960s, proponents of the A-theory\(^{11}\) have assigned much significance to the fact that tense is an ineliminable feature of natural language. Just what this significance amounts to I will explore in the remainder of this paper. But in response to the A-theorist’s claims that the ineliminability of tense in language has some kind of ontological significance, the New B-theorist has argued that, while the sentences of natural language may be irreducibly tensed, they have truth conditions that are tenseless. The New B-theorist’s focus on showing that tensed sentences have tenseless truth conditions was intended to undermine the A-theorist’s claim that irreducible tense in language must have implications for the existence of tense in reality. That is, it was intended as a negative

---

\(^9\) McTaggart (1908). See also Dyke (2002).

\(^{10}\) See, for example, Saunders (2002).

\(^{11}\) See, for example, Gale (1968) especially pp. 53–68 and Swinburne (1990).
argument to block the move from the irreducibility of tense in language to the existence of tense in reality. Markosian has misinterpreted it as a positive argument from the claim that tensed sentences have tenseless truth conditions to the conclusion that temporal reality must be tenseless.

To support my hypothesis that Markosian’s criticism is based on a misinterpretation, I will briefly set the arguments of the New B-theory regarding the truth conditions of tensed sentences into their historical context. This will shed some light on how both A- and B-theorists used facts about temporal language in arriving at their conclusions about temporal reality.

A-theorists believe that the existence of tense in language is indicative of the existence of tense in reality. Ordinary language, they claim, provides a guide to ontology that ought, in general, to be respected. The fact that there are tensed sentences that appear to locate events in the past, present or future is a good reason to think that those events really are located in the past, present or future. To put it another way, the fact that there are tensed sentences that appear to ascribe the A-properties of pastness, presentness and futurity to events is a good reason to think that those A-properties really exist.

This belief in ordinary language as a guide to ontology was shared by the A-theorists’ erstwhile opponents, the Old B-theorists of time. They argued that all tensed expressions could be eliminated from ordinary language without any significant loss to what we are capable of saying. Thus, their implicit assumption was that the ready-made ontology provided by ordinary language should be accepted unless certain defeating conditions obtain. They argued that one such condition does obtain, namely, that tensed expressions can be eliminated from ordinary language without any associated loss of expressive power. The Old B-theorists claimed that everything that can be said using tensed expressions can be
said equally well without them. They concluded that, since tensed expressions are redundant, there is no feature of reality that they pick out, so time is not tensed.

New B-theorists reject the claim that tensed expressions are eliminable. They agree with the A-theorists that there are some things that cannot be said without them. Nevertheless, they argue that the truth conditions of tensed sentences can be stated in purely tenseless terms. What this establishes is that, even if there are some things that cannot be said without the use of tensed expressions, it doesn’t follow that tenses exist in reality. If it can be shown that true tensed sentences are made true by purely tenseless facts, then that is a reason for rejecting the claim that tense in language is indicative of tense in reality. Thus, the role played by the claim that tensed sentences have tenseless truth conditions is not to prove that temporal reality is tenseless. Rather, it is to undermine the move from the existence of true and irreducible tensed sentences to the existence of tense in reality.

Markosian’s criticism is interesting precisely because it brings out the key difference between the old and the new versions of the B-theory. Old B-theorists did rely on an inference from the eliminability of tense in language to the conclusion that time is tenseless. New B-theorists, by contrast, do not aim to arrive at their ontological conclusions from a consideration of facts about temporal language. Indeed it could be argued that Markosian’s mistake was to conflate the Old and the New B-theory. This conclusion would be supported by the fact that, as I noted above, his statement of one of the ontological theses of the New B-theory is open to two interpretations, one of which is consistent with the Old B-theory, and the other with the New B-theory.

In the next section I will examine the reliance placed by A-theorists on facts about temporal language in reaching their conclusions about the nature of time. The evidence
produced by this investigation will support my suspicion that it is the A-theorists, not the B-theorists, who are too quick to draw their ontological conclusions from semantic premises.

Language, time and the A-theory

A-theorists have used the fact that ordinary language involves reference to pastness, presentness and futurity (ie, it uses tensed expressions) to argue that temporal reality is itself tensed. To give just three prominent examples, in his 1993 book *Language and Time*, Quentin Smith argued that “the argument that tensed sentences are untranslatable by tenseless sentences ... provides adequate evidence for the tensed theory”. Peter Ludlow argued in his 1999 book *Semantics, Tense and Time*, that “we can gain insight into the metaphysics of time by studying the semantics of natural language,” and “the goal of this book is to provide a semantical argument in support of the A-theory conception of time.” William Lane Craig, in his 2000 book *The Tensed Theory of Time: A Critical Examination*, presents what he calls the A-theorist’s fundamental argument, the argument from the ineliminability of tense, which is essentially an argument from tensed language to the conclusion that time is tensed. It goes as follows:

1. Tensed sentences ostensibly ascribe ontological tenses.

2. Unless tensed sentences are shown to be reducible without loss of meaning to tenseless sentences or ontological tense is shown to be superfluous to human thought and action, the ostensible ascription of ontological tenses by tensed sentences ought to be accepted as veridical.

---

12 Smith (1993) p. 3
13 Ludlow (1999) p. xvi
14 Ludlow (1999) p. 5
3. Tensed sentences have not been shown to be reducible without loss of meaning to tenseless sentences.

4. Ontological tense has not been shown to be superfluous to human thought and action.

5. Therefore, the ostensible ascription of ontological tenses by tensed sentences ought to be accepted as veridical.¹⁵

Before I respond to this argument directly, I want to comment on the fact that it clearly relies to a certain extent on facts about temporal language. Just what role are facts about temporal language playing in this argument? The assumption underlying the argument is that ordinary language refers to things of various kinds, and unless we have a good reason not to, we ought to accept that there are things of these various kinds. In other words, ordinary language presents us with a ready-made ontological inventory, and we ought to accept that it is correct unless we have a good reason to think otherwise.

What would count as a good reason not to take the ontological inventory given by ordinary language at face value? Craig’s argument suggests two conditions which, if they obtained, would justify us in not accepting the ordinary language guide to ontology. Firstly, if tensed sentences can be shown to be reducible without loss of meaning to tenseless sentences, then we would not be compelled to accept that tense in language is veridical. To generalise, for any expression, A, if A has certain ontological implications that B lacks, but everything expressed by A can be expressed by B, then A could be eliminated from natural language, and we should conclude that reality does not contain the sorts of things that A ostensibly refers to. The principle behind this is presumably parsimony. If one kind of expression makes reference to a certain kind of entity, but what can be said using that kind

of expression can be said equally well using another kind of expression that doesn’t have that ontological implication, then parsimony would support the conclusion that we should not countenance that kind of entity.

The second condition which would justify us in not accepting the prima facie ontological implications of ordinary language is if the kind of entity ostensibly referred to by some ordinary language expression proved to be superfluous to human thought and action. So, for any expression, A, if A ostensibly refers to some entity, and human activities can be fully explained without reference to that entity, then there is no good reason to suppose that it really exists. It seems that parsimony is also the driving force behind this thought.

Thus, according to Craig, ordinary language is a guide to ontology, although not an infallible one. We should accept the ontological categories it presents us with, and also the contents of those categories, unless considerations of parsimony suggest otherwise. Parsimony can operate in at least two ways to defeat the ordinary language guide to ontology. Firstly, if we can do without an expression without losing the ability to say what it says, and if it has ontological implications not shared by its replacement expression, then parsimony dictates that we are not committed to its ontological implications. Secondly, if some expression implies the existence of some entity, but whether or not that entity exists makes no difference to human thought or action, then parsimony dictates that we are not committed to its existence.

Craig’s argument only invokes the principle of parsimony to defeat the ordinary language guide to ontology, but it does not rule out the possibility that there might be other defeaters. For instance, if ordinary language suggests that a certain kind of entity exists, but the supposition that that kind of entity exists conflicts with some well-confirmed scientific theory (for example, the Special Theory of Relativity) then we would be justified in denying its existence. Again, if the supposition that a certain kind of entity exists generates a
contradiction then we would be right to conclude that the kind of entity in question does not exist.

I turn now to present my response to the A-theorist’s fundamental argument. The argument moves from the premise that tensed sentences ostensibly ascribe ontological tenses to the conclusion that this ought to be accepted as veridical. Craig insists that, in order to avoid its conclusion, the B-theorist must either show that tensed sentences can be translated into tenseless sentences (thus refuting premise 3) or that tensed facts are not required for human thought and action (thus refuting premise 4). Craig devotes a chapter each of his book to examining and rebutting B-theoretic attempts to refute these premises. However, he gives very little space to consideration of premise 2. In support of the claim that linguistic tense reflects ontological tense he states that “its ineliminability ... and its indispensability for human life and action make it plausible that tense is a feature of reality as well as of language.”16 His assumption here seems to be that enough has been said to place the burden of proof onto the B-theorist. But whether or not the semantic facts adequately represent the ontological facts is just the question at issue, and cannot be assumed from the outset.

Consider again Craig’s comment in support of premise 2. He writes:

Many A-theorists maintain that tense cannot plausibly be regarded as a feature of language and thought alone, that language furnishes us, as it were, a sort of window on the world whereby we may apprehend the factual objectivity of tense. They argue that the ineliminability or irreducibility of tense in language and its indispensability

---

16 Craig (2000) p. 19 my italics
for human life and action make it plausible that tense is a feature of reality as well as of language...¹⁷

Craig here appeals to two features of tense in language to support the existence of tense in reality. Premise 2 of the fundamental argument makes explicit the A-theorist’s dependence on these two features of tense in language. It does this by setting them out as two conditions that must be met if we are to have grounds for dispensing with the ordinary language guide to ontology.

His preliminary remarks in the passage quoted above suggest that it is tense in language that is both ineliminable and indispensable for human thought and action, and that this gives us reason to think that tense is also a feature of reality. It follows that his corresponding conditions ought to be that tense in language must be shown to be either eliminable from language or dispensable for human thought and action, in order to defeat the ordinary language guide to ontology. This is precisely what he does with respect to the first condition, which states that unless tense in language is shown to be eliminable, it ought to be accepted as veridical.

However, he deviates from this pattern in his formulation of the second condition. He is entitled to argue that unless tense in language is shown to be dispensable for human thought and action, it ought to be accepted as veridical. But instead he argues that unless tense in reality is shown to be dispensable, tense in language ought to be accepted as veridical. This move is unjustified. The burden of proof is on the A-theorist to prove that ontological tense is indispensable in order to establish that tense in language reflects tense in reality. Craig illicitly attempts to shift the burden of proof on to the B-theorist, demanding that she prove that ontological tense is dispensable in order to establish that tense in

¹⁷ Craig (2000) p. 19
language does not reflect tense in reality. However, as I suggested above, he is entitled to the condition that if tense in language can be shown to be dispensable to human thought and action, then we are not compelled to follow the ordinary language guide to ontology in the case of tensed sentences. In what follows I will modify his position to include the assumption he is entitled to, rather than the one he uses, which he is not entitled to.

So, Craig’s conclusion that temporal reality is tensed depends on two features of tense in language. He thinks that because tense is ineliminable from language, and also indispensable for human thought and action, that it must also exist in reality. Accordingly, he thinks that the only way a B-theorist can avoid this conclusion is if she can show that tense in language is either eliminable from language or dispensable for human thought and action. But this is not the case. A B-theorist can hold that tense in language is ineliminable and indispensable for human thought and action, yet still not be committed to the existence of ontological tense. Indeed, this is what many New B-theorists, myself included, hold. Tense cannot be eliminated from language without some loss of meaning, and there are some human activities that cannot be fully explained without the use of tensed sentences. Nevertheless, all these essential and true tensed sentences are made true by tenseless facts.

Craig’s position can be captured by considering the difference between his position and that of the Old B-theorists. Craig comments that Old B-theorists thought that if a purported temporal fact could not be expressed in the tenseless language of science, then it was, for that very reason, not a fact at all. The Old B-theorists thought that any tensed expression was either reducible to some tenseless expression, or redundant. Craig’s contrary view is that, since tensed expressions are neither reducible to tenseless expressions nor redundant, they must therefore express facts distinct from those expressed by tenseless

---

18 See, for example, Dyke (2003)

19 See, for example, Dyke and Maclaurin (2002)
expressions. But there is a third alternative, which Craig does not consider. If one acquires some sensitivity to the difference between facts and their expression, one can see that it is possible that there are some facts that can be expressed in both tensed and tenseless ways, where the \textit{ways of expression} are not reducible to each other, but where they do not express different facts. So it is possible to hold that tensed language is neither reducible nor redundant, and still deny the existence of tensed facts in the extra-linguistic world.

The flaw in Craig’s argument can be identified if we return to his two conditions that would defeat the ordinary language guide to ontology. These were:

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textbf{R1 (Reducibility):} For any expression, A, if everything expressed by A can be expressed by B, and A has certain ontological implications that B lacks, then there is no good reason to accept A’s ontological implications.
  \item \textbf{D1 (Dispensability):} For any expression, A, if A is dispensable to a complete explanation of human activity, then there is no good reason to accept A’s ontological implications.
\end{itemize}

Craig argues that neither of these conditions is met, and concludes that he is justified in adopting the ordinary language guide to ontology. All along he has relied on an underlying assumption that he is entitled to treat ordinary language as veridical unless certain conditions obtain. But, exactly what justifies his appeal to this assumption? I submit that, in endorsing these two conditions, he implicitly endorses the following two additional conditions:
R2: For any expression, A, if no other expression is capable of expressing everything expressed by A, then we are justified in accepting the ontological implications of A.

D2: For any expression A, if A is indispensable to a complete explanation of human activity, then we are justified in accepting the ontological implications of A.

These two conditions are a lot stronger than the first two, and for that reason, a lot harder to defend. Craig makes no attempt to defend them, since he only endorses them implicitly by supporting their weaker counterparts. But without them, his argument cannot establish what he wants it to. Without them, he is unable to move from premises about temporal language to conclusions about temporal reality. As a New B-theorist I can consistently accept the two weaker conditions and reject the two stronger ones, and my reasons for doing so have to do with the difference between facts and their expression.

With respect to reducibility, it is possible to hold that tensed expressions allow us to say things that cannot be said using any other expression, but nevertheless we are not forced to accept their *prima facie* ontological implications. A tensed sentence may not be reducible to a tenseless sentence, but that does not mean that the two sentences refer to different facts. It may be (as I claim it is) that some tenseless fact is the truthmaker for both of those sentences. So even if tensed sentences are irreducible to tenseless sentences, it does not follow that there are any tensed facts.

With respect to dispensability, it is possible to hold that we cannot give a complete explanation of human activity without making use of tensed expressions, but nevertheless we are not forced to accept their *prima facie* ontological implications. It may not be possible to explain, for example, why I feel regret that a happy event is past, or anticipation if it is still future, without using tensed sentences, but it is still possible to hold that those tensed
sentences, if true, are made true by tenseless facts. Indeed, it is a quite general point that human activities are influenced by what people say, and that those activities are explained using various kinds of expression, but this in itself does not commit us to the *prima facie* ontological implications of those expressions. Some human activities (particularly, the behaviour of many children) cannot be explained without making use of the expression ‘Santa Claus’, but that does not give us a reason to think that Santa Claus exists.\(^{20}\)

So, the A-theorist, and indeed the B-theorist, is justified in presenting facts about temporal language in support of a certain kind of conclusion about temporal reality. Specifically, facts about temporal language can allow us to *opt out* of following the ordinary language guide to ontology. But I believe that they cannot force us to *opt in* to it. But it is just this move that Craig, and other A-theorists, wish to make.

Conclusion

Markosian’s criticism of the New B-theorists was that they argue from a pair of semantic theses to a pair of ontological theses. I responded that New B-theorists ought not to see that inference as valid, and they need not rely on it to reach their ontological conclusions about the nature of time. The New B-theorist’s focus on showing how tensed sentences have tenseless truth conditions has been misinterpreted by Markosian as a positive argument from the claim that tensed sentences have tenseless truth conditions to the conclusion that temporal reality must be tenseless. In fact it is a negative argument intended to block the A-theorist’s claim that irreducible tense in language must have implications for the existence of tense in reality. This suggests that, if anyone is trying to read off their ontological conclusions from semantic premises it is the A-theorists. I then subjected this hypothesis to consideration, focusing on the work of a noted A-theorist presentist, William Lane Craig. A

\(^{20}\) I am grateful to Alan Musgrave for suggesting this example to me.
close examination of what he takes to be the A-theorist’s fundamental argument revealed that he relies implicitly on (but does not argue for) two principles that would sanction the move from semantics to ontology. On the face of it he merely supports principles that would allow us to opt out of following the ordinary language guide to ontology, but in order for his argument to work, he must also endorse principles that would force us to opt in to it. It is this last move that I claim is illegitimate. Facts about language can prevent us from adopting the ontological inventory supplied by ordinary language, but they cannot force us to adopt it.

References


Dyke, Heather and James Maclaurin “’Thank Goodness That’s Over”: The Evolutionary Story,’ Ratio XV (2002): 276-292


McTaggart, J.M.E. ‘The Unreality of Time,’ *Mind* 17 (1908): 457-474


Smith, Quentin *Language and Time* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993)