A Therapeutic Reading of the A and B-Theory of Time

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Abstract

Gordon Baker's reading of Ludwig Wittgenstein offers a novel way to understand Wittgenstein's philosophy. Baker's Wittgenstein is interested in offering liberation from being beholden to 'pictures' – conceptions & ways of looking at things. Instead of advancing philosophical theses, liberation from dogma consists in providing alternatives pictures, making one conscious of the picture they are beholden to, and showing that there are other possible ways of looking at things. The

In the 20th and 21st century, there have been debates between 'A-theorists' and 'B-theorists' who take themselves to be advancing theses on the nature of time and temporal order. Their disagreements include whether the past is real, whether the present really changes, whether our experience of temporal passage is an illusion or objective, whether their opponent's theory is coherent, etc.

This thesis is in three parts. In the first chapter, I outline the main commitments of Baker's reading and defend it against its main critics. In the second chapter, I explicate the commitments of the A and B-theorist and examine some main areas of debate and disagreement. In the final chapter, I examine the debate between A and B-theorist on Baker's reading, where the goal is for them to recognize their views as stemming from pictures (as opposed to how time must be). In other words, I advance a therapeutic reading of the A and B-theory of time.

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Introduction

In March 2004, a collection of essays comprising of the late Gordon Baker's reading of Ludwig Wittgenstein was published. The title of the collection – *Wittgenstein's Method: Neglected Aspects* – reflects the way in which Baker's reading stands in sharp contrast to more pervasive readings of Wittgenstein, one of which was ironically developed and popularized by Baker himself along with Peter Hacker. It is difficult to underemphasize the ways in which the late Baker's reading differs from the 'B&H' readings. To name just a few areas of difference, Baker's reading diverges from most other readings in what it takes to be Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy, the goal of his later work, his method, and his identification of both the source of and solution to dissolving philosophical problems.

One of the ways in which the late Baker's describes Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy is *therapeutic*. The subject of therapy in this case is the philosopher, and her problems are philosophical problems – problems often in the form of questions like "How do I know if anyone other than me exists?", "What is meaning?", and "What is the nature of time?". Like a therapist, the goal of Baker's Wittgenstein is to resolve the philosopher's anxieties, something which a philosopher deeply concerned and engaged with a philosophical problem will have. Getting rid of the anxiety consists in getting the philosopher to acknowledge that the philosophical problem stems from a particular way to look at things, a particular conception, or what I should more appropriately call a *picture* (a notion that will become clearer later). A picture stands in opposition with how things simply are or must be, which is typically how the philosopher confronts the philosophical problem – as a genuine worry to respond to from a set of possible philosophical theories. In recognizing the philosophical problem as stemming from a picture, however, it will cease to be a genuine worry and, so to speak, dissolve.

At this point, I expect any self-respecting philosopher to be at least a little offended. After all, philosophical problems are extremely different and have radically variable forms. Just think about how the way to tackle any specific philosophical problem has varied enormously over time and continues to change. And there is often little agreement on the very formulation of most philosophical problems.

I agree with this self-respecting philosopher, but interestingly, so would the late Baker's Wittgenstein. He would agree that different philosophers formulate different philosophical problems which, in turn, stem from even more different ways of looking at things. And so, like therapy, in Baker's reading – the therapeutic reading – an ideal Wittgensteinian solution is person-relative and issue-specific. That is, it considers the specificities of the view in question. This means there is no general solution to dissolving philosophical problems. Instead, for each problem, one must isolate the pictures one's interlocutor operates with and get them to acknowledge the pictures *as* pictures.

This brings us to a series of debates in the last century on the nature of time, or what is sometimes called the metaphysics of time. Though philosophers have been deeply interested in questions involving time more broadly, one of the now pervasive debates in the metaphysics of time is between 'A-theorists' and 'B-theorists'. The debate itself is on the nature of temporal order: broadly, A-theorists argue that events in time are either past, present, or future, and B-theorists argue that while events in time are temporally related to one another, there is really no such thing as the past, present, or future. This is only a rough formulation of their most basic commitments, which have also continued to be refined and reformulated as the debate has progressed. The debate itself spans several areas of disagreement, each where both the A and B-theorist launch arguments that the other defends against.

Though I cannot engage the A or B-theorist as interlocutors in this thesis, their views are specific, and as the debate progresses on various fronts, they continue to develop specificity. This

specificity allows us to set their philosophical problems apart from generalized, abstracted notion of a philosophical problem. And this brings me to my goal in (and the namesake of) this thesis: to provide a therapeutic reading of the A and B-theory of time. I want to try to show, in line with the philosophy of Baker's Wittgenstein, that both the A and B-theory of time stem from particular conceptions – from particular pictures - ones that are unacknowledged and unrecognized by the philosophers themselves. And in acknowledging them as pictures, my goal is for the problems of the A and B-theorist – for a sympathetic reader – to dissolve as genuine worries.

However, to reach this goal, I want to first go through what Baker's therapeutic reading and the A and B-theory of time entail. What I have said so far is just to orient the reader to what is to come – I do not expect anyone to have a detailed understanding of how the therapeutic approach is supposed to work or even what the A and B-theorist believe from this introduction alone. This is where I want to outline my two further aims of this thesis: (i) to highlight the main features of Baker's reading and defend Baker's Wittgenstein in the face of criticism, and (ii) do a faithful reconstruction and explication of some of the main issues in the debates between the A and B-theorists. In addition to them being independent aims of this thesis, understanding both Baker's and the A and B-theorists' views significantly better is necessary for an intelligible and convincing therapeutic reading of the A and B-theory.

With the goals of this thesis in mind, I want to turn to its structure. It consists of three chapters:

(1) Gordon Baker's Therapeutic Reading of Wittgenstein

(2) The A and B-Theory of Time

(3) A Therapeutic Reading of the A and B-theory of Time

The structure of the thesis mirrors the goals. In chapter one, I explore the main features of Baker's view, including an explication of the notion of a picture which comes to function as a dogma and prejudice, and what is required to resolve anxieties. I also defend Baker's view against some major criticisms, including ones from Peter Hacker, Hans-Johann Glock, and Rupert Read.

In chapter two, I outline the core commitments of the A and B-theory of time and develop them further, focusing on offering a reconstruction of how an A or B-theorist would articulate their views. I then go through two main areas of debate, which spans disputes about translatability, language and experience, and the coherence of the A-theory, and offer a brief description of some debates I do not discuss in detail.

In chapter three, I do a therapeutic reading of the A and B-theory of time, which consist largely in isolating the pictures at work by both the A and B-theorist, and in some cases, one of them. For each picture, I try to show that it is a way of looking at things rather than how things simply are. The hope is that, in acknowledging them the A and B-theories as stemming from pictures, they can be dissolved as genuine worries.

Chapter One: Gordon Baker's Therapeutic Reading of Wittgenstein

In this chapter, I will outline the main features of the late Gordon Baker's reading of Wittgenstein - also known as the 'therapeutic reading'[1] – and defend it against two major criticisms it has received. The chapter is divided in the following sections:

(i) The Main Features of Baker's Therapeutic Reading

(ii) The First Criticism: On the Notion of a Philosophical Argument

(iii) The Second Criticism: On General Schools of Thought & Individual Neuroses

§1.1 The Main Features of Baker's Therapeutic Reading

There are many aspects to Baker's reading, and even more ways to spell them out. In this section, I will not attempt to provide a comprehensive account of all of them. Instead, I aim to outline the features necessary to have a general understanding of the view, and enough to do a therapeutic reading of the A and B-theory of time. Keeping this in mind, understanding Baker's Wittgenstein requires understanding a few key concepts.

The first of these is the notion of a *picture*, a term which appears frequently in Wittgenstein's writings. Some of the ways in which Wittgenstein uses the term is by talking about pictures *of* something, such as the picture of essence of human language, the Augustinian picture of language, a picture of grammatical rules, to name a few.[2] Pictures play a central role in Baker's reading of Wittgenstein. With this in mind, here are five key features of pictures, according to Baker's Wittgenstein:

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[1] I want to note that the 'therapeutic reading' is used as an umbrella term for how Gordon Baker, Eugen Fischer (2011), and John Wisdom (1965) read Wittgenstein. These readings are quite different in important respects, and in this thesis, I will be exclusively referring to Baker's reading (and not Fischer's or Wisdom's).

[2] See: Wittgenstein (2009, 5-7)

1) *Pictures are Conceptions and Ways in Which One Thinks:* Consider one of the pictures Wittgenstein talks about – a "picture of the essence of human language". Saying that this is a picture is to say that it is a conception, a way to think about language, namely one where language has an essence. Since pictures are conceptions, there are *many* pictures, *many* different ways of looking at the same thing (Baker, 2004). For any given picture, there is an alternative insofar as there is another way one could conceive or think about something. And as such, there are alternative pictures to the picture of language as essence.

   Since pictures are conceptions, for any given picture, there are certain analogies and objects of comparison which determine, or at the very least, deeply influence the kinds of things one says and asks about what the picture is regarding. Consider the following example: One may picture sentences as being composed of words each of which bear some relation to one another. This picture of sentences makes certain analogies intelligible. One analogy is between sentences and physical objects, where a sentence is to the words in it what a physical object is to the particles it is made up of. Similarly, if one thinks about language as having an essence, it influences the ways in which one thinks about the thing in question e.g., treating the essence of language as something to be discovered.

2) *Pictures Can Be Held Unconsciously:* For Baker's Wittgenstein, pictures are often held unconsciously (as opposed to consciously) (Baker, 2004, 7). This means that someone will have a conception, a way of looking at things, without being aware that this is the case. Functionally, unconscious pictures would pervade one's thinking in deep ways (about whatever it is a picture of) without one realizing it. This will also manifest in not recognizing

the analogies or objects of comparison that determine or influence how one thinks about something.

3) *Pictures Are Not Theories; Pictures Give Rise to Theories:* Not only are pictures simply different from theories, but it is also a specific picture which gives rise to a theory or set of theories (Ibid., 27). Even theories which take themselves to be opposed to one another may originate from the *same* picture. Take, for example, a picture where the mind is directly aware of its own ideas. Such a picture creates the possibility for many different theories e.g., a theory where a subject accesses the world through their ideas (Representational Realism), or one where ideas are the only thing that is real (Classical Idealism), or one where a subject can never know whether anything other than its ideal are real (A Variant of Skepticism).

4) *Everything Can Be Made to Fit a Picture:* As a picture is a way of looking at things (rather than a theory), everything can be made to fit it. One of the implications of this is that there is no counterevidence to a picture, nor can one refute a picture (Ibid., 185).

Consider the following case: Suppose someone pictures human beings as complex machines. If we are trying to change their mind, we might point out cases where humans do not resemble machines, or cases where human beings can do things it would be impossible for a machine to do e.g., in saying that humans can feel and be creative while machines cannot. But to this, the person can say that feelings and creativity can also be explained mechanically, that we are too complicated to understand those features of ourselves, or that our description of a machine is too narrow and formed by looking at the commonality between less complicated machines. In effect, what we are doing is not refuting the picture or offering counterevidence. At best, we are offering cases that are awkward or difficult for

our interlocutor to explain. The crucial point, however, is that our interlocutor *can* explain them even in their picture.

5) *There are No "Right" or "Wrong" Pictures:* Now, one might acknowledge that there are many ways of looking at things and will follow up by saying that there is also a *right* way to think about things - the right analogies, the right conceptions, namely ones which gives us the *truth* or show us how things *really* are. According to Baker's Wittgenstein, however, there is no such thing as a right or wrong picture (Ibid., 262). Instead, no picture is inherently better or worse than another. There is simply a multiplicity of pictures, numerous ways of looking at things without any further commitment to a right picture.

Understanding what a picture is, and specifically how there is no such thing as a right or wrong picture, is also central in understanding what Baker's Wittgenstein identifies as the *source of philosophical problems*. Consider some quite general examples of what are typically considered as philosophical problems:

(i) Do only I exist?

(ii) Do my ideas represent reality?

(iii) How do I know anything at all?

(iv) Is lying morally wrong?

(v) Is time real?

If a philosopher addresses any of these as a genuine philosophical problem, we can imagine her constructing arguments or giving reasons each to the effect of answering a question in the

affirmative or in the negative. Sometimes, philosophers may disagree with a particular formulation of a problem only to propose what they take to be the *correct* formulation e.g., a philosopher who says that the question is not "do my ideas represent reality?" but instead "is it possible for an idea to represent a non-idea?". Regardless of which of these routes the philosopher chooses though, she takes her account to be guided by truth*,* as aiming towards constructing the *correct* account.

As we have already seen, however, Baker's Wittgenstein sees both the questions themselves and any theory one constructs to address them as rooted in a picture. That is, any of the choices available to the philosopher – answering in the affirmative, negative, or formulating the *correct* formulation – are themselves rooted in pictures. According to one picture, a given philosophical question may be a genuine question answered in the affirmative. According to another picture, it may be answered in the negative. And according to yet another picture, it may not even make sense to pose. But unlike the philosopher who presupposes that there is a correct answer to these philosophical problems, for Baker's Wittgenstein, there is no such thing as the *correct* answer, only different pictures.

So far, I have outlined an approach to addressing philosophical questions, where one thinks that there is a correct account or answer to a philosophical problem. This approach contrasts with Baker's Wittgenstein, who instead thinks all there is to say is that there are a multiplicity of pictures. Though, in one sense, this shows the way in which Baker's Wittgenstein identifies the *source* of philosophical problems, there are three other related features that are important to get a fuller understanding of Baker's reading.

I want to highlight these features, all which pertain to the relation between pictures and the source of philosophical problems. All three features can be developed on an analogy with *prejudice* (in the ordinary sense), an analogy which Baker's Wittgenstein greatly emphasizes:

1) *A Willful Resistance Towards Other Pictures/Aspect-Blindness:* When one is described as prejudiced, one can be said to be beholden to a certain worldview. Part of this entails an *unwillingness* to recognize and see how another viewpoint may be equally (if not more) intelligible, a resistance towards other conceptions (Ibid., 154). We can imagine someone with deep prejudice who, when presented with an alternative conception, is dismissive of it or does not take it seriously. Similarly, one can be said to be beholden to a picture when one treats a picture as the only possibility, the only legitimate way of looking at things, and is unwilling to accommodate alternative conceptions.

   In this case, the picture one is beholden to comes to function as *dogma* (Ibid., 34). The analogy with dogma ties in with the fact that pictures cannot be refuted, nor can one provide counterevidence towards them. There is, therefore, a sense in which being beholden to a picture is not an *intellectual* problem (one of presenting alternative conceptions) as much as it is one of *willingness* (of seriously entertaining alternative conceptions).[3]

   Another way to express this point is using a Wittgensteinian analogy which Baker frequently draws to make this point – the image of a duck-rabbit (Baker, 2004, 34). Suppose someone looks at a picture of the duck-rabbit and insists they see a duck. When you tell them they could *also* look at it as a rabbit, they refuse and insist it is only a duck. We could describe such a person as being blind to an *aspect* of the picture.

2) *The Problem is What We Take the Picture to Be Rather than Picture Itself:* One can be prejudiced about many things. I may hold the prejudice that dogs are better than cats, or the prejudice that winters in Connecticut are always terrible. The reason it is appropriate to call me

[3] Wittgenstein also remarks that a philosophical problem and its treatment have "to do with the will, not with the intellect" in various ways (Wittgenstein, 1980, 7).

prejudiced has little to do with the particular beliefs themselves but rather in the attitude I have towards them (I may get very angry when you mention Connecticut winters or be unwilling to seriously consider any arguments for why cats are better than dogs). Similarly, there is nothing inherently wrong in a picture, but in the attitude one has towards the picture i.e., in taking the picture to represent how things are.

3) *Being Beholden to Pictures Stems from Anxieties and Cravings*[4]*:* Just as we can say one's prejudice stems from particular anxieties (e.g., a fear of abandonment) and particular cravings (e.g., wanting to be superior), one is beholden to a picture from particular anxieties and cravings too (Ibid., 146). For example, an external-world skeptic may be beholden to a picture which itself stems from an anxiety about being consistently wrong about things and wanting to secure one's beliefs in something tangible. Wittgenstein also frequently talks about *cravings* which drive one towards specific kinds of pictures and explanations. The "craving for generality", for example, drives one to want to construct explanations at the most general level e.g., when one thinks "happiness is the alleviation of suffering" (Ibid., 53-55). Similarly, a craving for "intermediatory links and explanations". might partly explain philosophical interests in in asking "what makes this sentence true? And what makes *that* true?", and philosophical concepts like grounding, primitivity, and regress (Ibid., 149).[5]

[4] Some other terms Wittgenstein uses in addition to anxieties and cravings: unrest, torment, disquiet, discomfort, drives, obsessions, revulsion, angst, irritation, profound uneasiness of mind, profound mental discomfort, obsessional doubt, shock, troubles, compulsions to say things, irresistible temptations, alarm (Baker, 2004, 182).

[5] One of the striking features of this view is that asking serious philosophical questions is not an activity that is detached from our particular anxieties and cravings for certain kinds of explanations. In this sense, Baker's Wittgenstein violates a pervasive ethic in philosophy where a philosophical question can be abstractly addressed and a philosophical theory can be constructed without paying much attention to why it was posed in the first place.

These features provide an overview of what Baker's Wittgenstein sees as the *source* of philosophical problems. In addition to identifying the source of philosophical problems, Baker's Wittgenstein also has a positive conception of the goal of philosophy and the *solution* to philosophical problems. Unsurprisingly, Baker's solution to philosophical problems does not look anything like traditional solutions to philosophical problems. Traditional philosophical problems are often addressed in the form of an inquiry or question about some phenomena or concept e.g., the problem of solipsism, or in asking "do others exist?". And the solution to the problem often consists in constructing theories or accounts e.g., an account or theory of why we can really know other minds. For any given theory, there may be arguments to support it and show that it is correct, and similarly ones that undermine or refute it. All of this is also closely related to the goal of philosophy itself – to construct true theories, that directly answer and address philosophical questions.

Contrast this with Baker's Wittgenstein, who instead thinks that philosophical problems like solipsism stem from anxieties and cravings which give rise to pictures one is beholden to. Since there are no correct or incorrect pictures, constructing theories and discussing which one is correct is deeply misguided. As such, so are the goals of traditional philosophy. This means that, for Baker's Wittgenstein, the solution to philosophical problems, and in turn the goals of philosophy itself, must consist in something very different. With this in mind, consider the main features of Baker's Wittgenstein positive goal of philosophy:

1) *The Goal of Philosophy is Ridding People of Philosophical Prejudices & In Obtaining Intellectual Freedom:* For Baker's Wittgenstein, the *only* goal of philosophy is helping people to stop being beholden to pictures - to cease being dogmatic, to let go of philosophical prejudices (Ibid., 8). I think there is a traditional sense in which philosophers want to get rid of prejudice since

it gets in the way of having the *correct* theory or account. For Baker's Wittgenstein, however, what is wrong with philosophical prejudice is simply that it restricts intellectual freedom (Ibid., 74). Through ceasing to being beholden to a picture, a person can be considered intellectually free. In this sense, Baker's Wittgenstein is best described as an anti-dogmatist.

2) *The Goal of Philosophy is to Help Someone See Aspects Previously Unattended To:* We can express this anti-dogmatist goal a little differently using the image of the duck-rabbit: Baker's Wittgenstein succeeds when he can get someone who can only see the duck in the duck-rabbit (one who is *blind* to an aspect) to recognize the duck as just one aspect of the picture, or to see the duck-rabbit as a duck-rabbit. In effect, this means helping someone see an aspect previously unattended to, in inducing an aspect-switch (Ibid., 76).

3) *The Method is Person-Relative:* Strictly speaking, there is no restriction to how one may induce an aspect-switch or get someone to stop being beholden to a picture – one can get as creative as they want to do this. There are, however, certain *strategies* that Wittgenstein employs frequently: providing alternative pictures, asking questions, issuing reminders, contrasting the ordinary use of words with how they are used in philosophy, etc.[6] But a key feature of Wittgenstein's method is that it is *person-relative* and ideally involves dialogue, much like therapy (Ibid., 6). This is because getting someone to recognize their picture as a picture involves being sensitive to the particular pictures they are beholden to and the anxieties and

[6] I will do a more detailed discussion of the strategies Wittgenstein uses when considering some criticisms of Baker's reading in the next section. I think, highlighting these strategies in sharp contrast with traditional conceptions of philosophical argument help make them significantly clearer.

> cravings that are driving them. A strategy that works with one person does not necessarily work with another person.[7]

I hope to have gone over some of the main features of Baker's reading of Wittgenstein. I want to note that the way in which I have explicated Baker's reading does not emphasize the analogy between Wittgenstein's method and Psychoanalysis. I find that though the analogy with Psychoanalysis can be easily misconstrued, even though the way Baker himself develops it is largely careful and considered (Ibid., 6-8). A central point in Baker's reading that should be evident by now is the ways in which both the source and solution to philosophical problems lies is *us*. *We* are beholden to pictures, *we* have anxieties and cravings, and *we* obtain intellectual freedom by ridding ourselves of philosophical prejudice.

With the main features of Baker's reading in mind, I want to now move onto consider some criticisms launched against it. Broadly, we might sort out criticisms in general in two camps: Criticisms motivated textually (ones that claim that Baker's reading does not cohere with what Wittgenstein said or meant) and criticisms against the view itself (ones that criticize Baker's Wittgenstein himself). The criticisms I consider all fall in the latter camp, though in a few areas where it is helpful, I allude to some textual considerations. I chose these criticisms because their charges are severe, and if successful, deeply undermine the intelligibility or usefulness of the therapeutic reading. I also think that these are criticisms which many readers may initially have when going through Baker's reading.

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[7] From a textual standpoint, this also helps make sense of why Wittgenstein often writes as if he is engaging with imagined interlocutors, who vary with the degree of resistance they have to certain suggestions and with the views that they have. (Ibid., 181)

§1.2 The First Criticism: On the Notion of a Philosophical Argument

It should be striking the degree to which Baker's Wittgenstein differs from a traditional conception of philosophy. So much of the act of philosophizing seems involve providing reasons for or against a view, in constructing theories, and perhaps most important, in making *arguments*. Some arguments we may come across consistently in philosophy are arguments that seek to establish some secure foundation, arguments that establish necessary connections, arguments about what must be the case, and of course, arguments about what is the case.

Baker's Wittgenstein does not seem to be interested in any of this. Since theories emerge ultimately from pictures, and there is no such thing as a right or wrong picture, it may seem as if Baker's Wittgenstein is not interested in making arguments at all. This is a sentiment we find in several critics of the therapeutic reading. The criticism goes that Baker's Wittgenstein does not construct or refute arguments, and therefore does not really engage in philosophy.[8]

I think this criticism gets one thing right – Baker's Wittgenstein does indeed reject the kinds of arguments mentioned above. Where the critics go wrong, however, is in thinking that these are the *only* legitimate kinds of arguments one can make in philosophy, or the *only* rational method a philosopher can use. To understand this point, consider the characteristic feature the kinds of arguments the critics have in mind. These arguments are largely deductive arguments in the form of a *proof*. That is, they are ones where, if the philosopher can provide true premises and valid inferences, we *must* yield a true conclusion. Similarly, there are characteristic ways to refute such arguments, like through a *reductio,* by showing that the argument generates an infinite regress, etc.

[8] See: Glock (1992) & Hacker (2007)

These kinds of arguments are, of course, not exclusive to philosophy. The paradigm case for this the kind of argument in mathematics – arguments that ends with the letters 'Q.E.D.'.[9]

For many philosophers, this kind of argument is essential to philosophy. This is because there is this kind of argument is the only *rational* way to establish something. To make this point, Glock (1992) claims that since Baker's Wittgenstein does not make these kinds of arguments, his way to change people's minds seems to be to hit them over the head. And similarly, Hacker (2007) claims that, in getting rid of arguments, Baker's Wittgenstein's is just giving his patient's pills.

Both Glock and Hacker's statements should emphasize the dichotomy some philosophers see between proof-oriented arguments on the one hand, and completely non-rational means on the other. On Baker's view, however, there intermediatory possibilities between offering proofs and a non-rational method, namely entertaining *rational considerations.* Rational considerations are not proofs but rather considerations which may get one to see things differently and turn one's attention toward an aspect previously unattended to. I will now provide some cases of rational considerations, many of which, Wittgenstein explicitly uses:

1) *Offering Novel Objects of Comparison* – Since pictures often involve analogies where there is some object of comparison, one way we can get someone to look at things differently is through offering novel objects of comparison (Baker, 2004, 11). In one famous case from the *Investigations,* Wittgenstein asks us to imagine two men working with building stones. At different points in their work, one of the shouts "slab!" and the other brings a slab to him.

[9] The point that philosophical arguments are of the form of a proof that ends with Q.E.D was made by Friedrich Waismann in an article titled *How I See Philosophy.* Waismann also points out other characteristic features of this analogy between philosophical argument and mathematical proof, including the use of *reductio ab absurdum* and infinite regress in refuting philosophical arguments. Baker sees clear analogies between Waismann's article and the late Wittgenstein's views. (Waismann, 1968, 26) and (Baker, 2004, 141)

Wittgenstein asks us if the builders had no other language or speech except this (Wittgenstein, 2009, 6).

The case of the builders can stand as an object of comparison with our language. Through identifying similarities and dissimilarities in our and the builder's language, we may in turn throw light on features of our language (Ibid., 56) (e.g., the varieties in the ways in which we use language as opposed to the builders, the role of ostension, names, and commands in our language, and so on).

2) *Describe Simplified Versions of What We Want Someone to See* – Like novel objects of comparison, we may describe simplified versions of some case to help someone turn our attention towards a particular aspect or feature (Baker, 2004, 11). We find an example of this the first remark in the *Philosophical Investigations,* where Wittgenstein describes an imagined scenario in which a cashier is presented with a slip of paper which says, "five red apples" (Wittgenstein, 2009, 5). The cashier then opens a drawer labelled 'apples', looks up the word 'red' on a table and a color sample opposite it, and says the cardinal numbers in order up to the number five. For each number, he takes an apple of the same color as the sample out of the drawer. One of the questions Wittgenstein then asks the reader is how the cashier knows how to look up the word 'red' and what to do with the word 'five'. And in effect, Wittgenstein is constructing this case to try to get a reader to think about what an explanation may look like and where explanations can end.

It is interesting to note that in contemporary philosophy, the use of simplified versions of some phenomena (a thought experiment) are intended to be help us understand what is *really* happening. That is, thought experiments normally serve as simplified cases from which philosopher's extract quite general features or properties. According to Baker's

Wittgenstein, these simplified versions only serve to make us see things differently, turn our attention towards aspects previously unattended to, and affect a shift in our intellectual orientation.

3) *Construct Indeterminate Cases* – If someone says, "stay roughly here", is there a boundary for where you are meant to stay (Ibid., 38)? Is there a rule in tennis for how high someone can throw a ball (Ibid., 37)? Wittgenstein asks questions like these all the time, and the standard readings often take these questions to be rhetorical or be making an implicit argument. But for Baker, we should read these questions as Wittgenstein constructing indeterminate cases meant to make us think differently. The boundary case, for example, may make someone who thinks that a word, when used correctly *must* have a determinate sense think otherwise. Similarly, the tennis case may make someone who thinks that the only rules one needs to adhere to in a game are ones explicitly stated in a rulebook and all else is fair-game think differently about what it means to be a rule.

4) *Offer New Centers for Variation/Offering Alternative Pictures* – One strategy to get someone who is beholden to a picture is by offering another picture which serves as a new center for variation. This is because, when one is beholden in a picture, it may appear as the picture is self-evident, obvious, or the *only* way things could be. Offering an alternative picture, a strategy Baker's Wittgenstein applies frequently, may allow to see how there is a different way to look at things, and therefore recognize the picture they were beholden to *as* a picture, as one way to look at things among others.[10]

[10] There are several passages in the *Investigations* where Wittgenstein is read to be constructing a theory or making a long deductive argument, which on Baker's reading are understood as Wittgenstein providing alternative pictures. The most popular case for this is what is often referred to as the "private language argument". It would take too much here to show how Wittgenstein is offering an alternative picture (and not anything that looks like a proof-like argument) in these

5) *Asking Questions:* A question, for example, *can* change the way we look at things, induce an aspect-switch. "What thought does a baby have when she utters her first word?", "Can I point to a feeling?", "Can I know that I know something?". These questions may get one to look at things differently, even if one does not see them as disguised assertions (i.e., as "a baby has no thought when she utters her first word", "I cannot point to a feeling", "I cannot know that I know something"). Questions may also be hyperbolic, sarcastic, or in the form of a joke e.g., when Wittgenstein asks, "Why can't a dog simulate pain? Is it too honest?" (Ibid., 96). In some instances, the very formulation of the question may be striking enough – a formulation previously unconsidered, or even unimagined which gets one on a line of thoughts that leads to an aspect-switch.

6) *Issuing Reminders:* One may also issue reminder to lead to an aspect-switch. Wittgenstein frequently uses reminders of the everyday meaning of a word (Baker, 2004, 91). These remarks are standardly read as a disguised deductive or inductive argument, where Wittgenstein is taken to be saying that we should only use words in a way that conforms to their everyday use, and not in any special, philosophical sense. In Baker's reading, however, Wittgenstein is not issuing any limitations to word-use or arguing that the 'real' meaning of a word is its everyday use as opposed to a special, philosophical one. Instead, the emphasis on everyday words helps one see the presuppositions one makes and the vast number of steps one needs to take to adopt specific philosophical pictures, as opposed to thinking of them as self-evident and obvious. Reminders of the use of the everyday use of "this" and "that", for example, may help someone who affirms Russell's theory of types (where the only proper

sections, but I would be prepared to argue this elsewhere. For more on how to make sense of these sections on the therapeutic reading, see: Baker (2004, 108-140)

> names are "this" and "that") *see* that they are beholden to a picture (Wittgenstein, 2009, 25). This does not mean that we can never assign a special function to words, but it is rather that philosophers tend to think of their theories as emerging from minimally controversial assumptions.[11]

This list is not exhaustive by any means, but it highlights some important instances of Wittgenstein offering rational considerations. All of these cases have a rational component, in that they consist in getting someone to engage with something intellectually. If we allow for a broader conception of *argument* beyond proofs and what philosophy may consist in, then it should be easy to see how offering rational considerations to get one to look at things differently can legitimately be called philosophy.

After going through these cases, we can also ask: why would a philosopher not consider these cases considered rational or part of a conception of an argument? And to this, Baker's Wittgenstein would say that this philosopher is in the grip of a picture – a picture of argument and rationality – one where what it means to make an argument consists in offering a kind of proof that everyone must agree on if done correctly. In such a picture, the analogies that come to mind, such as the one between arguments in philosophy and mathematics, are not incidental but critical parts of the picture itself. We could even suggest that such a picture of arguments and rationality models itself after mathematics, where the notion of a rational consideration may be less appealing. Once we recognize that it is a picture of argument and rationality that makes us want to say that *only* proof-

[11] A textual point: Just as Baker's reading differs from traditional readings in the ways mentioned above, it also has a very different view of Wittgenstein's writing 'style' and 'prose'. Traditional readings, like Glock's, make sense of Wittgenstein's non-traditional philosophical writing style as a flourish, or rhetorical, but generally maintain that we can extract arguments from what his remarks. Baker's reading takes the style seriously – when Wittgenstein asks a question, Baker reads it as a question (and not a disguised assertion), when Wittgenstein issues a reminder, Baker reads it as a reminder (and not a criticism of a view), when Wittgenstein mentions a possibility, Baker reads it as a possibility (and not Wittgenstein's own view). (Baker, 2004, 3-5)

oriented arguments count as real arguments, we can begin to see what arguments may look like if we did not adopt this picture, if we did not think this is what an argument must be. And according to this broader conception of argument, we can make sense of how rational considerations too are a kind of argument.

I want to end this section with highlighting two interrelated features that set the method of offering of rational considerations apart from a proof-oriented conception of philosophy:

1) *Philosophy Consists in a Kind of Persuasion:* If philosophy were conceived of as a discipline with constructing proof-oriented arguments, then it would follow that once a sound argument is provided, one *must* accept its conclusion, whoever they are, whatever their presuppositions must be. Any failure to affirm the conclusion of a sound argument is the fault of the person, not the argument. And in this sense, the locus of a proof-oriented conception of philosophy is the argument itself. When one thinks of an interlocutor in this context, they may change how they present their argument (perhaps because one presentation makes more persuasive than another), but this is incidental. As a whole, there is a sharp distinction between *making sound arguments*, and the act of *persuading someone to affirm the sound argument*. I have already remarked how the paradigmatic case for proof-oriented deductive and inductive arguments is mathematics (at least in its self-conception), where it has little bearing on a mathematician whether or not her interlocutor is 'persuaded' by Euclid's proof of infinite primes – insofar as the proof is sound, and the act of persuading her interlocutor is an additional task.

   Contrast this with Baker's reading of Wittgenstein's method, where persuasion is not an incidental, additional task but rather the locus of philosophy. For one, this shows that philosophy is fundamentally about getting an interlocutor to see other possibilities and aspects beyond what they think must be the case. The metaphor of therapy is helpful here.

Just as it is nonsensical to think of therapy without *someone* who is being therapized (even if it is self-therapizing), it is nonsensical to think of philosophy without *someone* who one aims to show other possibilities or aspects they are blind to. While this does not mean there is no distinction between making an argument and attending to an individual's particular dispositions, beliefs, dogmas, etc. in this conception of philosophy, it does mean that the tasks of argument and persuasion are not distinct.

2) *Freedom to Refuse:* The proof-oriented conception of argument and the method of offering rational considerations also differ in their treatment of *freedom* (Baker, 2004, 8). In the domain of demonstrable proofs (like in mathematics), the idea is that one *must* affirm it if one is acting rationally. One's failure to affirm a sound proof is explained, in part, by them acting irrationally. For Baker's Wittgenstein, however, one is free to refuse, and refusal does not make someone irrational (Ibid.). All one's refusal is indicative of is perhaps poor persuasion on our part, or the degree to which they are beholden by a picture. Even in this latter case though, being beholden to a picture is not equivalent to any kind of irrationality. Just as one is free to refuse in philosophy, one is also free to affirm. Unlike a conception of proofs, where one's being rational is considered a sufficient condition to affirm a proof (as if the proof is forced upon them), one is never forced to see possibilities or aspects. This also links to how there is no universal or guaranteed method that works. There are guidelines, but rational persuasion ultimately turns on the individual, and so the act of persuasion (and an interlocutor's freedom to reject or affirm suggestions, remarks, etc.) is discursive.

I hope to have shown that much of the criticism of 'no arguments' in Baker's Wittgenstein relies on either wholly ignoring rational considerations as a form of argument, or at the very least, not

taking it very seriously. We need not be pedantic of what counts as an 'argument' here. Even if one thinks that the term 'argument' should be left only for proof-oriented arguments, we can get rid of the term altogether and maintain that Baker's Wittgenstein is not in the business of making arguments. But I think this is a little extreme, and it is more fruitful to expand the notion of an argument beyond the narrow scope of proof-oriented arguments, and incorporate the wide range of techniques, strategies, and remarks that Wittgenstein uses, especially given that they sometimes *do* make us see things differently and consider possibilities previously ignored.

§1.3 Second Criticism: On General Schools of Thought and Individual Neuroses

In *Gordon Baker's Late Interpretation of Wittgenstein,* long time former collaborator Peter Hacker explains why, in his view, the late Baker's therapeutic reading of Wittgenstein is ultimately wrong. Hacker claims that since Baker's Wittgenstein is person-relative and patient specific, he is therefore not concerned with combatting 'general schools of thought' like Cartesian Dualism, Logicism, Platonism, etc. (Hacker, 2007, 91). Though this is not necessarily a problem, I think it deeply mischaracterizes Baker's reading. In this section, I want to show the ways in which Baker's Wittgenstein does care about general schools of thought, especially as they can be quite central in addressing a person's philosophical anxieties and anxieties.

Now, Hacker characterizes Baker correctly only in one respect – it is true that the therapeutic reading entails that Wittgenstein's method is person-relative and patient-specific. But this is as far as Hacker's characterization is correct. There are broadly three interrelated problems with Hacker's characterization:

1) *Critiquing General Schools of Thought Can Induce an Aspect-Switch:* Claiming that Baker's Wittgenstein only deals with a person's neurosis *rather than* general schools of thoughts (like Platonism) suggests that a person's neurosis and general schools of thought do not bear any relation to one another. This could not be further from Baker's reading. For one, my neurosis might itself be that I am a Platonist. That is, my becoming a Platonist may itself both *come from* and simultaneously *feed into* a (i) *craving* of a general explanation, (ii) a prejudice that the world *must* be a certain way, (iii) a certain *picture* of language and reality, (iv) my being *blind* to aspects and ways of looking at the world, which leads me to think Platonism is the only intelligible way to make sense of things. Combatting general schools of thought and being concerned with a person's neurosis are therefore not mutually exclusive, and sometimes dealing with a person's neurosis consists in combatting a general school of thought.

2) *Ridding Philosophical Prejudice Ultimately Resides in a Person:* Though it may be tempting to say that Baker's Wittgenstein is not interested in 'general schools of thought', he is better understood as saying that while general schools of thought should be addressed, the solution to philosophical problems consists in getting someone to see things differently. Sometimes, what someone may be prejudiced towards is a general school of thought, and so ridding them of philosophical prejudice will consist in trying to show them that their subscribing to this school of thought stems from a prejudice or showing them that there are other intelligible conceptions. This way to think about a solution to a philosophical problem stands in contrast with a philosophical attitude where general schools of thought are dealt with without an emphasis on the cravings or anxieties that create them, or the pictures that give rise to them. The reorientation from 'philosophical problem in the abstract' to 'a person with

a philosophical problem' simply entails that we should not address philosophical problems in a way that are completely independent of a person's particular motives, anxieties, cravings, and pictures. Crucially, it does not entail that we should never think about general schools of thought.

3) *Limits to the Notion of a 'General School of Thought':* There is a sense in which Hacker's own dichotomy between persons and general schools of thoughts is a mischaracterization. It is true that there may be aspects of a school of thought that are shared across individuals (you and your friends might all think numbers are a kind of object). Recognizing what is shared is incredibly helpful in formulating, in a very limited sense, a general strategy to solution. But to continue the analogy with therapy - any therapist who either does not take a particular person's idiosyncrasies or tries to replicate exactly the same solution with any set of patients who loosely share some experiences will be a pretty terrible therapist. Similarly, no two Platonists are the same. And while there may be aspects of that are shared, cravings, anxieties, and prejudices run deep and take *particular forms* across individuals. The particularity in forms means that if one is trying to show someone a possibility – an aspect – one needs to take individual peculiarities seriously.

This is also why Baker's Wittgenstein emphasizes the role of dialogue with an interlocutor. There is no *general* method to show the Platonist a different way of looking at things. There might be strategies that carve out some routes e.g., reminding them of the ordinary usage of words like "exist", "objects", "real", etc., but these strategies are rough guides, not a determinate set of rules or sentences. Any chance of success requires engaging with a particular Platonist's anxieties. One Platonist might be more adamant to say that numbers *must* exist if they form such a significant part of our best scientific theories, while

> another Platonist might be agnostic about this point but think Platonism just seems more 'intuitive' than other ontological theories. So what better way to address individual concerns and anxieties than in the form of a dialogue? This may not be entirely mutually exclusive from a non-individualistic approach to dissolving philosophical problems impossible - after all, there is such a thing as group therapy! But more seriously, dialogue, where an individual can express their concerns completely and freely, seems like an incredibly effective way to adequately address and bring out the nuances and particularities of what they think, and by extension, showing them possibilities.

What I hope to have shown with these points is that Baker's Wittgenstein is still deeply interested in general schools of thoughts, albeit in a different way from a traditional philosopher. He is not interested in refuting them in the favor or some other theory. His interest in dealing with general schools of thought instead focuses on a deep sense of the ways in which they are borne out of particular anxieties, cravings, and pictures. This also does not mean that Baker's Wittgenstein can never offer criticisms against a general school of thought. It just means that these criticisms are launched insofar as they may cause an aspect switch, get someone to recognize the pictures from which a general school of thought emerges, to get someone to recognize other possibilities, and so on.

I began this chapter with the goal of orienting the reader to the most important features of Baker's reading of Wittgenstein. In addition to defending the view against its critics, I find that responding to criticism is also an effective way to illustrate just what the view itself is. And so I hope that, at this point, the reader has a deeper understanding of Baker's view. I will reference many of these features in the third chapter, where I will try to isolate the pictures at work in the A and B-

theory of time and offer rational considerations to get a sympathetic reader to recognize them as pictures.

To do this, however, we must first understand the A and B-theory of time. My goal in the next chapter, therefore, is to provide an account of both the main commitments of the A and B-theorist, but also a brief explication of some of the main areas of debate between them. While Baker's reading of Wittgenstein will not be relevant to understand the debate on its own terms, I hope that the reader may start recognizing some pictures at work as the views themselves are laid out.

Chapter Two: The A and B-Theory of Time

In the metaphysics of time, there is a broad disagreement between A-theorists and B-theorists. Each takes themselves to be saying something about the nature of time. In this chapter, I shed light on a part of that disagreement. My focus will be on two particular areas of disagreement, although I will briefly outline some others too. Before being able to do this, I will first explain exactly what the A and B-theory are, their commitments, and some views and metaphors that are traditionally associated with or invoked in relation to them. With these things in mind, the chapter consists of the following subsections:

(1) The A and B-Series

(2) The A-Theory and its Commitments

(3) The B-Theory and its Commitments

(4) The A and B-Theory Concluded

(5) The First Disagreement: Translatability and the Role of Experience

(6) The Second Disagreement: The Incoherence of the A-theory

(7) Remarks on Other Disagreements & Conclusion

§2.1 The A and B-Series

One way to think about the history of the universe is as composed of a series of 'events' – events like the creation of our solar system, events that happened a millennium ago, the event of your birth, events happening now, and the events in the future. Philosophers of time are concerned with events, and in particular, in how events in time can be *ordered* (Dyke, 1998). Though

not the only ones, there are two broad ways to think about how events in time are ordered. The first way is called the A-series, and the second way is called the B-series[12]:

A-Series: Positions in time can be ordered according to their possession of *properties* of past, present, or future (Markosian, 2020, 139). The event of the creation of the solar system, for example, possesses the property of being past. So does all the events that happened a millennium ago. The event of you reading this possesses the property of being in the present. And all the events yet to happen possess the property of being in the future.

We can also get more specific with the properties of being past and future. Instead of just saying an event possesses the property of simply being past or future, we may say that they possess the property of being a thousand years past, being one day past, being two days future, and so on.

B-Series: Alternatively, positions in time can be ordered by two-place *relations* of earlier than, being simultaneous with, or being later than (Ibid). The event of the creation of the solar system is earlier than the event of my birth. The event of me writing this is simultaneous with some events on the 8th of April 2022 (it is also simultaneous with itself). The event of you reading this is later than the event of me writing this, and so on.

Just as we can get more particular by specifying how much in the past or future an event is in the A-series, we can similarly get more particular about how much earlier than or later than an event is in the B-series e.g., an event being two days earlier than another event, an event being a millennium after another event.

[12] The terms 'A-series' and 'B-series' were first coined by John McTaggart in a paper titled *The Unreality of Time*, published in 1905. McTaggart also talks about an additional 'C-series', but both McTaggart and most contemporary philosophers of time are largely interested in the A and B-series.

By convention, the properties that events possesses in the A-series (past, present, and future) are called the *A-properties*, while the relations that events have to one another in the B-series (earlier than, simultaneous with, later than) are called the *B-relations*.

Now, even though it is hopefully quite straightforward to imagine these two ways to order events in time, this alone does not give us the A-theory or B-theory – this is a more difficult task. This is, in part, because different A-theorists and B-theorists formulate the main commitments of the theories differently. Most of the time, the commitments are not made explicit either. This is evidenced by the fact that there some philosophers who have written on trying to figure out what the A-theory and B-theory really entail![13]

The next two subsections are dedicated to highlighting what I take to be the most widely shared versions of the A and B-theory. As we will see, this way to think about the A and B-theory also makes some of their fundamental differences clear, thus setting the stage to understand how their disagreements will play out, and imagine other fronts where they might disagree with one another.

§2.2 The A-Theory and its Commitments

The A-theorist has three interrelated commitments:

1) *The A-Series is Essential for an Adequate Characterization of Time:* Recall that the A-series is the way to order events in time as possessing the properties of past, present, or future. Now, an A-theorist need not think events cannot be ordered in a B-series – she is happy to say that

[13] See: Zimmerman (2005) for versions of an A and B-theory that are incredibly similar to highlight the difficulty of isolating their commitments.

the events in 1909 happened earlier than events in 1910. But she is committed to saying that the B-series is not enough to characterize the true nature of time.

2) *Events Objectively Possess the A-properties*: The A-theorist will often use the term 'objective' to describe the A-properties (Dyke, 1998). While this term can be a little elusive, it helps here to think about what an A-theorist means for the A-properties to be objective as subject-independent. Even if there were no observers or beings that experienced, there would still be a distinction between past, present, and future. So events do not possess the properties of being past, present, or future in virtue of us – they possess them regardless of us.

3) *There is an Ever-Changing Present:* The A-theorist is committed to some notion of the ever-changing present, where every event possesses the property of being present at one point or another. All events in the past, for example, possessed the property of being present. Events in the near past possessed it more recently, while events in the distant past possessed it less recently. All events in the future, at some point, will possess the property of being present, and events in the near future will possess the property of presentness sooner than events in the distant future.

Now, as I said earlier, it is difficult to parse out the essential features of the A-theory. Regardless of the many variations of the A-theory, however, the three commitments I have laid out here are shared amongst almost all A-theorists. It should also be clear that the commitments mentioned above are all deeply related. On closer scrutiny, and with few extra assumptions, they may even imply one another. I have decided to keep them separate for the sake of clarity, and to highlight the individual differences between them even if they are all emerge from the same assumptions.

The A-theory is often called the 'Tensed Theory of Time' (Nine, 2020). This is because tensed sentences i.e., sentences containing any of the A-properties may truth values that change over time. Consider the sentence "Johnson is the Prime Minister of the UK". For the A-theorist, in the distant past, this sentence was false. In the present, it is true. And depending on whether the future is open or predetermined and the unlikely event that Johnson will be Prime Minister of the UK forever, it is either true or false. While most A-theorists do take tense seriously and relativize the truth value of a sentence containing A-properties, there is some dispute about whether this view is *exclusive* to the A-theory. Some philosophers have tried to show that one can be a B-theorist and also take tense seriously, with a slightly modified account of truth and semantics.[14]

The A-theory is also sometimes called the 'Dynamic Theory of Time' (Ibid.). This is an implication of the commitment that the present is ever-changing. It is 'dynamic' because an A-theorist can make sense of what it means for an event to change. Change is understood as an event successively possessing the properties of first being future, present, and then past. Relatedly, it is dynamic because it supposedly captures the dynamic nature of time itself – as something that passes or flows.

It is important here to note that an A-theorist is not committed to this view of change though, nor does an A-theorist have to say that time flows. One can still be an A-theorist who understands the metaphysics of change quite differently, and not as the successive possession of the A-properties, which is why neither of these features are as essential to the A-theory as the three commitments I laid out earlier.

[14] See: Zimmerman (2005)

§2.3 The B-Theory and its Commitments

The B-Theorist has three interrelated commitments:

1) *The B-Series is Sufficient for an Adequate Characterization of Time:* Recall that the B-series is the way to order events as standing in particular relations (earlier than, simultaneous with, later than) to each other. Although a B-theorist can recognize we allude to the A-properties (past, present, future) in everyday use, the A-properties are do not describe how time *really* is. And so, if anything, our use of the A-properties says more about us than it does about temporal reality or the metaphysical nature of time.

2) *Events Do Not Objectively Possess the A-Properties:* Like the A-theorist's use of 'objective' as subject-independent, the B-theorist will instead argue that the A-properties are not objective and therefore subject-dependent. Using the same counterfactual, if there were no observers or beings that experienced, there would be no distinction to be made between past, present, and future at all. The events themselves do not possess any of the A-properties.

3) *There is No Ever-Changing Present:* Since events do not possess any of the A-properties by their own virtue, events do not go from possessing the property of being future to being present and then being past. Instead, the only relevant facts about temporal ordering are their relative position to each other. The temporal relations events stand in relation to each other are unchanging. If some event occurs earlier than another event, the fact that those two events are related will never change. Every event is located somewhere in the B-series, and it never changes its temporal location.

For the A-theorist, it is an open question whether the future is open or closed. Different versions of the A-theory entail either commitment. The case is different for the B-theory. Since there is no objective distinction between past, present, or future events, the B-theory entails that the future is closed - after all, there is no such thing as the 'future', there is just a series of events that stand in unchanging relations to each other.

Just as the A-theory is called the Tensed Theory of Time, the B-theory is called the 'Tenseless Theory of Time' (Ibid.) And as the A-theory is called the Dynamic Theory of time, The B-theory is called the 'Static Theory of Time', or the 'Block Universe Theory of Time'. This is because, if there are no objective properties of past, present, and future, then nothing changes from being past, to present, to future. This generates a certain image of temporal order: a four-dimensional block of spacetime with every event occupying its temporal location.

§2.4 The A and B-Theory Concluded

Now, in the literature on the A and B-theory, many images and metaphors are invoked – blocks, spotlights, rivers, to name just a few! While many of them are not particularly helpful, I want to reference one that is. Ned Markosian introduced this metaphor in an attempt to highlight some sharp divisions between how the A and B-theorist think about time:

> The (B-Theory's conception of time) is like a movie that is never shown - the frames are all there, but the movie is just sitting on a shelf. Also, instead of being attached end to end, in the normal way of filmstrips, the frames are cut, and then stacked one on top of another. Each frame is a temporal slice of the world, and if you look closely at the stack of frames, you can see the various objects - each of which is a "spacetime worm" curving through the continuum that is spacetime. No part of the movie is metaphysically privileged, no frame is special, there is no light shining on any one frame.
>
> The (A-Theory's conception of time) is like a movie that is being shown right now, and its not the frames in the filmstrip that are the universe, but the image on the screen. There is only one image on screen, and it keeps changing. That's because reality is one thing that keeps changing. It was that way, and now it is this way. Soon it will be some other way. (2020, 142-43)

With respect to the B-theory, the metaphor captures certain important features:

(i) The frames bear relations to each other but "no frame is special" – similarly, there is no particular time that is metaphysically privileged.

(ii) the frames are sitting on a shelf, like a movie that is never shown – there is no "change" in terms of successive moments, or events possessing successive properties, hence why the B-theory is the 'static theory of time'.

(iii) the frames are already there, there is no unfolding of frames - the entire temporal order of the universe is already given – what is conventionally called the past, present, or future is already laid out

With respect to the A-theory, the metaphor captures the following features:

(i) There is one image on the screen and so there is a "special frame" – similarly, there is a time that is metaphysically privileged, which we call the present.

(ii) The movie is shown, and each frame is shown one after the other – there is "change" in terms of successive moments and events possessing successive properties. Hence, the A-theory is the 'dynamic view of time'.

Notice that the analogy for the entire temporal order of the universe being laid out in the B-theory (or its negation) does not carry over in the A-theory. The metaphor makes it seem as if the A-theorist must be committed to a closed future, since the frames on the film that are played are already there even if they are not being played currently. As I remarked earlier, however, whether

one takes the future to be open or closed is a matter of which versions of the A-theory one subscribes to. Both an open or closed future are compatible with the A-theory.[15]

I want to conclude the section on the A and B-theory by addressing a worry one may have: Is there really is a disagreement between the A and B-theory? After all, is it not possible for someone to be both an A-theorist *and* a B-theorist? While I cannot speak for all formulations of the A and B-theory, with the commitments I have laid out, the A-theory and B-theory are mutually exclusive. If one thinks that time is *really* constituted by both an A-series *and* a B-series, then they are an A-theorist! This is because the B-theorist denies that the A-series represents how reality is, how events in time are *really* ordered. An A-theorist, on the other hand, is happy to affirm that time is also constituted by the B-series, but what is really at stake is whether events in time possess the A-properties. It is tempting to think that the A-theory is just some commitment to the A-series and the B-theory is just some commitment to the B-series, but I hope to have shown that is not the case.

Now that we know the core commitments of the A and B-theory, I want to go a little deeper into exploring how the debate between the A and B-theorist plays out. It is one thing to know what a philosopher is formally committed to, and another altogether to see hear justifications for the commitments, or what one says when faced with criticisms. In the next sections, I want to go over three different areas of debate between the A and the B-theorist to get a deeper understanding of both views. Ideally, one would want to consider all areas of debate, since each of them bring out substantially different kinds of assumptions, preconditions, and features of either view. Ideally, one would also consider what different A-theorists and B-theorists have to say for any one issue as well. But in the interest of space, and what I hope will be enough, I will consider two areas of disagreement.

[15] Compare a version of the A-theory for a closed, deterministic future (Cameron, 2015) with one with an open future, or at least, no determinate claims about the existence or lack thereof of future events (Sullivan, 2012).

§2.5 The First Disagreement: Translatability and the Role of Experience

One of the commitments of the A-theory is that the A-series is essential for an adequate characterization of time. As remarked earlier, the A-theorist is often described as a tensed theory of time and attributed as taking tense seriously. Both these claims amount to a view of tensed propositions and their status. This point is made quite well by Arthur Prior in a paper from 1957 titled *Thank Goodness That's Over*.

Before considering Prior's own argument, I want to briefly consider a B-theorist strategy that was very popular in the mid to late-20th century. Recall that one of the commitments of the B-theory is that the B-series is sufficient for an adequate characterization of time. Many B-theorists took it upon themselves then to show that sentences which implicitly or explicitly contain or reference A-properties can be *translated* to sentences with only B-relations. The idea is that, if we can successfully translate every sentence with A-theoretic terms into sentences which instead only use B-theoretic terms, we can adequately describe reality only using B-relations. There are a few ways to do this, depending on the sentence or utterance in question. Consider the following utterances and the B-theorist's translation of them:

(i) "The Mughals ruled over India" is translated to "The event of the Mughals ruling over India is[16] *earlier than* the event of this utterance".

(ii) "The concert is going to be terrible" is translated to "The event of the concert is *later than* the event of this utterance *and* the concert is terrible.

(iii) "The convention is happening right now" is translated to "The event of the convention is happening *simultaneously with* the event of this utterance."

[16] By "is", I am denoting the tenseless 'is' as opposed to the tensed 'is' – more on this later.

In all three cases, the B-theoretic strategy is to relativize the sentence to "the event of this utterance". And so, all past events are "earlier than the event of this utterance", all future events are "later than the event of this utterance", and all present events are "simultaneous with the event of this utterance". Relativizing to "The event of this utterance" is not the only method but is certainly a convenient one since it neatly divides up past, present, and future cases.

All three cases also make use of what the B-theorist calls the 'tenseless is' (which I have denoted as is).[17] The B-theorist wants to make a distinction between a tensed 'is' and tenseless 'is'. The tensed 'is' appears in sentences which colloquially include the A-property of presentness e.g., "he is at the restaurant", "The year is 2022", etc. In contrast, the tenseless 'is' appears in sentences which are not conveying presentness e.g., "2 plus 2 is four", "an ant is an insect", etc. The reason it is important for the B-theorist to be able to make this distinction is because the translation of sentences with A-properties into ones with only B-relations makes use of the term 'is'. If all uses of 'is' were tensed, then the B-theorist's translation would be tensed and therefore invoke the A-properties, and therefore be self-defeating. The tenseless is allows the B-theorist to use the term 'is' without invoking tense. Like many distinctions the B-theorist invokes, this is challenged by many A-theorists, who often deny that the use of a tenseless 'is' is plausible. Such an A-theorist would say that even cases like "2 plus 2 is four", and "an ant is an insect" involve a tensed 'is', but I will not explore this further in the interest of other disagreements.

Other than the strategy of relativizing a sentence to "the event of this utterance", a B-theorist can also translate sentences with the use of dates (Nina, 2020). Recall that the B-theorist entails a deterministic view of events, since there is no objective distinction between past, present, or future events. This means that we can reference the temporal location of an event simply by a date. So instead of the use of the A-properties, all we need to do to describe an event's temporal location

[17] See Smart, 2008 for a detailed discussion on tenseless expressions.

is attach the date (and time) to it, based on how specific we want to get. So "General Zia-Ul-Haq *was* assassinated" can translated to "The event of Zia-ul-Haq's assassination is on August 17th, 1988", and similarly "I am writing this now" can be translated to "The event of my writing this is on April 11th, 2022".

These strategies are not the only ones available to the B-theorist. What is important, however, is that the B-theorist here is interested in offering a *translation* of utterances that implicitly or explicitly contain or reference the A-properties. Now, offering a translation opens the possibility of offering a successful or unsuccessful translation. This is where Prior's argument comes in. As an A-theorist, Prior thinks that A-properties are necessary for an adequate description of reality – B-relations on their own are incapable of adequately describing reality. Prior's strategy in the paper is to take a particular utterance and claim that the B-theorist cannot successfully translate it into a sentence that only uses B-relations *without changing the meaning* of the utterance. If the A-properties are in fact essential to the unique meaning of the utterance, then the A-properties are essential for an adequate characterization of reality. Negatively stated, it suggests that the B-relations are not enough for an adequate characterization of reality.

The utterance in question is the namesake of the paper – "Thank goodness that's over" – a sentence uttered when one feels some sense of relief after, say, a headache, a boring lecture, a difficult task, etc.[18] Prior writes:

> One says, "Thank goodness that's over", and not only is this, when said, quite clear without any date appended, but it says something which it is impossible that any use of a tenseless copula with a date should convey. It certainly does not mean the same as "Thank goodness the date of the conclusion of that thing is Friday, June 15, 1954), even if it be said then. (Prior, 1959, 17)

Prior here is referencing the second of the two B-theoretic strategies I laid out earlier, where a sentence containing or referencing A-properties is translated into a sentence where the event of

[18] Examples my own.

the date is stipulated. Prior's claim is that the sentence "Thank goodness that's over" does not *mean the same as* "Thank goodness the date of the conclusion of that thing is Friday, June 15, 1954" – a sentence that only uses B-relations.[19] Prior's implicit claim, of course, extends beyond this particular translation into a sentence using B-relations, and more broadly is that "Thank goodness that's over" *cannot* be translated into a sentence using only B-relations. Since it cannot be translated successfully, B-relations are insufficient to capture all sentences or utterances, and so the B-theory fails.

Here is my reconstruction of the structure of Prior's argument:

(1) There is some utterance *x* ("Thank goodness that's over") which contains or references A-properties

(2) We cannot translate *x* ("Thank goodness that's over") into a sentence with B-relations without changing its meaning

(3) The B-theory is adequate only if it can translate sentences which contain or reference A-properties without changing their meaning

(4) (From 1, 2, & 3) The B-theory is inadequate

The structure of Prior's argument can be applied to any sentence or utterance that implicitly or explicitly contains or references A-properties. For any such sentence or utterance, if it cannot be translated into a sentence or utterance with only B-relations without changing its meaning, then the B-theory seems to fail on its commitment to B-relations being adequate for an adequate description of reality.

[19] A question neglected by A and B-theorists alike has been whether "Thank goodness that's over" necessarily entails the A-properties. Though I will not be considering that here, if this is the case, then Prior's argument fails.

Setting aside the general strategy, let us understand why Prior thinks "Thank goodness that's over" cannot be translated into "Thank goodness the date of the conclusion of that thing is Friday, June 15, 1954" without changing its meaning. Prior thinks that while we could say the latter, what is conveyed by the former is something very different. Consider what is conveyed if one says "Thank goodness that's over" to oneself after a headache. It can be considered as an expression of relief. On the other hand, "Thank goodness the date of the conclusion of that thing is Friday, June 15, 1954" does not convey the same expression – after all, one is not relieved because of the date of the conclusion!

If, instead of the B-theoretic strategy of translating the utterance into one with a date, we used the relations of earlier than, simultaneous with, or later than, we could translate "thank goodness that's over" to "Thank goodness the event of the pain of the headache is earlier than this utterance". The A-theorist would want to say that this attempt similarly fails since one is not expressing relief that the event of the pain is earlier, but instead is expressing relief that the headache is finally over.

Now, there are several ways in which a B-theorist can respond. The B-theorist can, for example, (i) deny that something different is expressed in both utterances, (ii) argue that the meaning of an utterance consists in its truth-value, which is preserved in the B-theoretic version of "Thank goodness that's over", (iii) argue that providing an adequate description of reality is a different task than being able to translate all utterances and the B-theorist is only committed to the former, to name a few possibilities. In the remainder of this section, I want to consider one response available to the B-theorist, which is closest to (iii). As is the goal with this chapter overall, my hope is that it gives us a sense of what a B-theorist's response looks like, and in turn, we get a better understanding of the debate itself and what the A and B-theorists take themselves to be doing.

With this in mind, one of the responses available to the B-theorist is to deny that there needs to be a successful meaning-preserving translation of every sentence or utterance. Instead, the B-theorist can maintain that the only sentences or utterances that they need to be able to translate are ones that describe how things *really* are, how time *really* is. This approach relies on making two successive moves:

(i) Making a distinction between our experience of time and time itself

(ii) The claim that (at least some parts of) how we experience time are not representative of how time really is

Once the B-theorist makes these two moves, she can say that while "Thank goodness that's over" expresses something that is impossible for a sentence with only B-relations to convey, this has no bearing on the success or failure of the B-theory itself. This is because "Thank goodness that's over" conveys something that is contingent on how we experience time, but the B-theorist is interested in how time really is, mind-independently, objectively.

B-theorists sympathetic to this approach often describe some aspects of our experience of time as *illusions*. Using the term illusion invokes a distinction between appearance and reality. Consider the Müller-Lyer illusion, where two equal lengths appear to be different because of the lines at the side. We could describe the situation by saying that the lines were really the same length, even though we think they are different lengths. Crucially, continuing to think that they are the same length has no bearing on whether they are the same length. Now, this person, knowing this was an illusion, describes their experience by saying: "I was fooled in thinking they were different lengths". We would not deny that they thought they were different lengths.

Illusion works similarly in the case of the B-theorist's conception of our experience of time. The B-theorist will not deny that there are sentences and utterances that uniquely rely on the A-properties, and cannot be translated in a mind-independent, objective way. But the key point is that this is perfectly consistent with features of our experience of time being an *illusion*.

To reiterate, this is but one of the many options available to the B-theorist. What I have done here is carve out one route amongst others for a B-theorist to respond to Prior's challenge. And similarly, we could defend Prior's argument in several ways too. My hope, however, was to shed light on the issue of translatability and experience, and show why one might, based on these issues, decide that the A or B-theory are more attractive.

§2.6 The Second Disagreement: The Incoherence of the A-theory

In the same paper where John McTaggart introduced the term 'A-series' and 'B-series', he also made the argument that the A-theory is incoherent. He writes:

"Past, present, and future are incompatible determinations. Every event must be one or the other, but no event can be more than one. This is essential to the meaning of the terms" (McTaggart, 1908, 468)

McTaggart's claim here is that past, present, and future are incompatible properties when applied to events. No event can possess two or more of the properties i.e., no event can be past, present, *and* future, be past *and* present, be present *and* future, or be past *and* future. He then writes:

"The characteristics, therefore, are incompatible. But every event has them all. If M is past, it has been present and future. If it is future, it will be present and past. If it is present, it has been future and will be past. Thus, all the three incompatible terms are predicable of each event, which is obviously inconsistent with their being incompatible, and inconsistent with their producing change." (Ibid.)

Here, he claims that, according to the A-series, every event must have the properties of being past, present, *and* future. All past events were once present and future, all present events were once future and will be past, and all future events will be present and past. But, as McTaggart

pointed out earlier, past, present, and future are incompatible properties. This generates a paradox: according to the A-series, all events must possess the properties of past, present, and future, and yet the properties of past, present, and future are incompatible properties. And this suggests that the A-series is incoherent.

At this point, and to McTaggart's own admission, no one is quite convinced. This is because there seems to be quite a straightforward response to the paradox itself. The response consists of two moves:

(i) An event cannot *simultaneously* possess the properties of past, present, and future.

(ii) No event simultaneously possesses the properties of past, present, and future - instead, events possess the A-properties *successively*.

This seems to resolve the incoherence. And there seems to be some basis to affirm both (i) and (ii). Someone might not be able to possess the properties of being-tall and being-short simultaneously, but she can possess the properties successively e.g., being shorter when she is 8, and being tall when she is 26. It seems we are applying the same rationale in the case of the A-properties applied to events.

For McTaggart, this solution does not work. The problem with this response begins with what we mean when we say that events possess the properties of past, present, and future *successively*. According to McTaggart, what we must mean is the following: for every event M, if it is past, it *will be* present and future, if it is present, it *was* future and *will be* past, and if is future, it *was* present and future. After making this claim, he writes:

> "But this explanation involves a vicious circle. For it assumes the existence of time in order to account for the way in which moments are past, present and future. Time then must be pre-supposed to account for the A series. But … the A series has to be assumed in order to account for time. Accordingly the A series has to be pre-supposed in order to account for the A series. And this is clearly a vicious circle." (McTaggart, 1908, 468)

This is where McTaggart's argument is a little less clear – why is there a vicious circle in saying that some event *will be* past, *is* present, and *was* future? What does McTaggart mean when he says the A-series must be presupposed to account for the A-series? Although McTaggart does not elaborate on this further, perhaps McTaggart is referring to how the explanation is necessarily self-referential ("it assumes the existence of time…") and this makes it a vicious circle. And if this what McTaggart meant, then any term or concept introduced in order to explain what a possession of being past, present, and future consists in should not presuppose the terms past, present, and future, or any variant of them For McTaggart, the terms 'was', 'is', and 'will be' do exactly this, and so there is a vicious circle.

Though this is one way to make sense of what McTaggart means, I want to turn to a paper appropriately titled *A Defense of McTaggart's Proof of the Unreality of Time* by Michael Dummett to understand a slightly different way to understand McTaggart's argument.[20] Dummett writes the following in section where he clarifies McTaggart's argument against the coherence of the A-series:[21]:

> "… McTaggart argues, the predicates "past," "present," and "future" involve a contradiction: for on the one hand they are incompatible predicates, and on the other to every event all three apply (or at least two of them). Someone will naturally reply that the predicates which apply are not the simple "past," "present," and "future," but rather, for example, "will be past," "is present," and "was future," and that these three predicates are not incompatible. But, McTaggart claims, this move advances us no further. Instead of three, we now have nine predicates, each of which still applies to every event and some of which are incompatible, for example, the predicates "was past" and "will be future." Admittedly the objector may again reply that the predicates which really apply to the same event are "is going to have been past" and "was going to be future," and that these are again compatible. But McTaggart can counter this move as before, and so on indefinitely." (Dummett, 1960, 497)

Dummett's explanation makes McTaggart's problem with the response a lot clearer. Let's illustrate this. In response to McTaggart's argument, one said that an event does not possess the A-properties simultaneously but possesses them successively. And so it is not the case that some event

[20] See also: D.H. Mellor (1981), who makes a similar reconstruction of McTaggart's argument
[21] I want to note that some philosophers argue that Dummett's reconstruction of McTaggart's argument is not an accurate one. See: Garrett (2017).

M is past, present, *and* future, but rather that some event M that *will be* past, *is* present, and *was* future. We have, so far, thought of M as only occurring in the present. But since there was a time when M had not yet happened, and there was a time where M will have already happened, M must also possess another set of properties. When M has not yet happened, M *is* future, and *will be* past and present, and when M will have already happened, M *is* past, and *was* present and future. This means that this approach compels us to say that M has not three but nine different properties. While the three properties we explicitly identified (will be past, is present, was future) are compatible, particular combinations of the nine properties are incompatible e.g., M *will be* past, M *is* past, and M *was* past. Dummett anticipates that one might try to respond to this problem in similar fashion as earlier by saying that no event M *will be* past and *is* past simultaneously, but rather only possesses these properties successively. But all this has done is generate the problem once again – but this time nine properties turn into twenty-seven! The consequence of this is that we cannot simply say that events possess the A-properties successively.

According to McTaggart, asserting that events possess the A-properties successively generates a vicious circle. In Dummett's version, I think it is equally appropriate to say that it generates an infinite regress. In any case, for both McTaggart and Dummett, given that this approach was the only meaningful way to solve the problem, the A-series entails that events must have certain properties, and also that iterations of these properties are incompatible. The A-series is incoherent.

Here is a complete reconstruction of Dummett version, which should make the structure of the argument clearer:

(1) An event M must possess the A-properties

(2) M can possess the A-properties *simultaneously*

(3) M must possess the A-properties *simultaneously* or *successively*

(From 1, 2, 3) M must possess these properties *successively*

(4) If M possess properties successively, then when M *is* present, M *will be* past and *was* future. Similarly, when M *is* past, M *will be* present and future. And when M *is* future, M *was* past and present. (Let us call these set of properties the A*-properties)

(5) No event can possess the A*-properties *simultaneously*

(6) M must possess the A*-properties *simultaneously* or *successively*

(From 4, 5, 6) M must possess these properties *successively* (Repeated)

.

.

And so on (Let us call this the infinite regress)

(7) From the vicious circle/infinite regress, the A-series is incoherent.

Before considering an A-theoretic response to this argument, I want to note that many contemporary A-theorists do not take McTaggart's argument very seriously.[22] I suspect this is, in part, because McTaggart's argument is considered on its own terms without Dummett's version. But there are notable exceptions who reject Dummett's reconstruction too. We can imagine a number of ways an A-theorist might respond to the McTaggart-Dummett argument. The A-theorist could, for example, defend the response that events possess the A-properties successively, deny McTaggart & Dummett's characterization that there is a problem with events possessing the A-properties simultaneously, and so on.

[22] It has been described as a "philosophical 'howler'" (Broad, 1938, 316), McTaggart's "worst argument" (Zimmerman, 2005, 401), and a "complete failure" (Skow, 2015).

The response I will be considering is presented by E.J. Lowe in a paper titled *The Indexical Fallacy in McTaggart's Proof of the Unreality of Time*. Lowe begins by drawing our attention to the notion of 'indexicality'. Indexicals are linguistic expressions whose reference changes from context to context. Some examples of indexicals include "I", "here", "now", "he", "she", "that", etc. In sentences without indexicals (e.g., "General Franco ruled Spain") the reference is fixed and does not change from context to context (the references are General Franco and Spain). In sentences with indexicals (e.g., "He ruled Spain"), the reference changes depending on the context ("he" could refer to General Franco, Queen Isabella, me, and so on). With this in mind, Lowe writes:

> I think that McTaggart does commit a simple, if understandable, blunder in the logic of indexicality. It is not legitimate to say that an event e, which is not happening here, but is happening over there, is happening here over there. All we can say really is that if e is happening there and not here, then an utterance over there of the sentence 'e is happening here' is true. It does not follow that e is happening here over there-which is a blatant contradiction. Now, similarly, when I say that e will happen, I am not implying that e is happening now in the future, though I am implying that in the future it will be possible to make a true statement by saying 'e is happening now'." (Lowe, 1987, 66)

In this passage, Lowe draws our attention to the 'logic of indexicality' in a familiar case – that of space. Suppose a friend was standing on the wooden floor in front of us and we uttered the following sentences: "He is not standing *here*" (where 'here' refers to the carpet) and "He is standing *there*" (where *there* refers to the wooden floor). Lowe thinks that this would not make it reasonable to say, "He is standing *here* over *there"* in the same context. Why not? Well, in the first two sentences ("He is not standing *here*" and "He is standing *there*"), there is some fixed reference for both 'here' and there' (the carpet and wooden floor respectively). In the case of "He is standing *here* over *there",* even though the reference for 'there' remains the same (the wooden floor), the reference for 'here' has shifted from the carpet to the wooden floor.

Lowe then uses the lesson learned about the use of indexicals in the spatial case and applies it to the temporal case. Using a similar example, one says, "he is standing *now*" (where 'now' is at time t1) and "he is not standing *later*" (where 'later' is at time t2). Using Lowe's rationale, it would

not make sense to say "*Later,* he is not standing *now*". Again, though the referent for 'later' remains the same (t2), the referent for 'now' has shifted from t1 to t2.

Lowe then writes:

> But how, exactly, does this bear on McTaggart's argument? Well, certainly, 'e is present', 'e is past', and 'e is future', said simultaneously, express contradictory statements. But what about the claim that what is future will become present and then past (so that every event is past, present and future)? This is simply false, or, more strictly, incoherent. What should be said is that if e is a future event, i.e. if e will occur, then it will be possible to express a true statement by means of the sentence 'e is present', or 'e is happening now'. (Ibid.)

Here, Lowe applies this more explicitly to the McTaggart-Dummett argument. In my reconstruction of the argument, the vicious circle/infinite regress in the A-series emerges, in part, from premise (4) - saying some event M *is* present, *will be* past and *was* future, and at a later time, M *is* past and *was* present and future. Lowe's claim is (4) involves a mistake in the "logic of indexicality". When we shift from the saying some event M *is* present (where 'present' is at time t1) to saying that later M *is* past (where 'later' is at t2), we have effectively changed the referent of 'is' from t1 to t2, and therefore changed the context of utterance. Since they are not affirmed together or in the same context, no contradiction emerges, and so the A-series is coherent.

This concludes my consideration of Lowe's response to the McTaggart-Dummett argument. If one buys the McTaggart-Dummett argument and concludes that the A-series is incoherent, one might be tempted to become a B-theorist, or at the very least, think that the A-theory is implausible. If, however, one thinks Lowe has found the fault in the McTaggart-Dummett argument – a mistake in the "logic of indexicality" – then there is no incoherence, and so the A-theory seems plausible.

§2.7 Remarks on Other Disagreements

These two disagreements form a tiny portion of the much broader dispute between the A and B-theorists. By no means are these disagreements also the most important ones – I do not think

any of them deserve that title. To do justice to the debate itself, I want to briefly go over some other disagreements, and explain why I have chosen to focus on the ones I have:

1) *Our Best Scientific, Physical Theories*: One of the central reasons to be a B-theorist – one I have not considered – is an appeal to physical theories. B-theorists often cite Special Relativity as eliminating any meaningful distinction between past, present, and future from physical models of space and time. Some B-theorists go as far as saying that Special Relativity is incompatible with the A-theory.[23] The broader idea here is that, if the A-theory is incompatible with or eliminable in our best scientific theories and instead entails a B-theoretic conception of time, we should be B-theorists.

   There is a lot of disagreement whether physical theories like Special Relativity lend themselves to the B-theory. Some A-theorists, for example, emphasize that there is a way to affirm the empirical results of Special Relativity while maintaining that the A-properties are real. This route involves disagreements within what the theory entails. Alternatively, there is a broad disagreement about how our attitude towards physical theories should be – e.g., if a physical theory requires us to deny that there is a present, should we affirm it over of our own experience? Beyond Special Relativity, some A-theorists cite other physical theories – specifically some interpretations of quantum mechanics - that they argue require an A-theoretic conception of time rather than a B-theoretic one (Monton, 2006).

[23] A common approach used by the B-theorist: The A-theory entails that past, present, and future are objective properties of events, and so it should be possible for two events to be simultaneous (e.g., if two events happen in the present). Special Relativity, however, entails that it is impossible that any two events are simultaneous in any absolute terms, but only relative to some inertial or reference frame. Therefore, the A-theory is inconsistent with Special Relativity. For responses to the B-theoretic criticism, or how one may construct an A-theory consistent with Special Relativity, see: Brading (2013) & Zimmerman (2006).

While I think this is an important disagreement, I think it is beyond the scope of this thesis. Cashing out whether our best scientific theories lend themselves to the A or B-theory requires understanding the theories themselves (or at the very least, theories like Special Relativity which are discussed the most in the literature), their commitments, interpretive issues, assessing how we should treat the central concepts and ontologies of the theories (scientific realism, anti-realism, and everything else) and assess whether the theory has implications on temporal concepts like the past.

2) *The Passage/Flow of Time:* Another kind of disagreement I have not highlighted here are ones about the passage or flow of time. A-theorists often think the A-theory accounts for passage while the B-theory does not. Some A-theorists explain the passage or flow of time as consisting in events go from being in the far future, then the near future, then the present, then the near past, and then the far past. Since the passage of time forms an important part of our experience, the A-theorist will use the A-theory's unique capability to account for it as evidence towards the A-theory.

As we have already seen, especially in the response to Prior's argument, B-theorists do not necessarily pay considerable weight to experience, which is described as subjective and illusory with respect to time. Instead, the B-theory is a view about the *real,* objective, mind-independent nature of time and temporal ordering of events. Alternatively, some B-theorists even deny that there is such a thing as the 'flow' or passage of time in our experience, instead calling it a misleading metaphor.

The reason I have not considered this issue is because there is a lack of A-theorists who support temporal passage in any robust way. I find that is, more often than not, temporal passage is gestured towards rather than substantially developed as evidence towards

the A-theory. I suspect this is because there is not a lot more to say beyond: time passes! Even if this is not the case, however, I think simply drawing our attention towards the disagreement about whether time passes or does not (without necessarily analyzing how this is challenged by the opposing theorist) gives us a lot to work with.

3) *Ontology:* While the A and B-theory are not necessarily ontological theories, they entail a set of possibilities for one's ontological commitments. There are many ontological theories associated with the A-theory, of which the most popular ones are Presentism (only present things exist), the Growing Block Theory (only past and present things exist), and the Moving Spotlight Theory (past, present, and future things exist). Different A-theorists therefore disagree on the ontological status of entities.

   There are not as many flavors of B-theoretic ontology since there is no objective distinction between past, present, and the future. As a result, most B-theorists simply affirm the existence of things independent of their temporal location. The kinds of disagreements between variations of the A-theoretic ontological theories and the B-theory are based on the features of the theory in question.

   Though much of the debate between A and B-theorist revolves around competing ontologies, adding ontological concerns – especially questions of different treatments of what existence itself is – adds another deep dimension to an already complicated discussion. The issues with ontology are also not exclusive to the A and B-theorists, and generally extend into a number of other issues in metaphysics. For this reason, I find that a proper treatment of these concerns, like a discussion on our best scientific theories, is beyond the scope of this thesis.

This list is not exhaustive but, combined with the two I have discussed in detail in this chapter, are some of the main areas of disagreement between the A and B-theorist. Many of the disagreements between the A and B-theorist also bleed into one another, insofar as they have overlapping themes or when addressing issue also entails addressing another.[24]

[24] Consider the differences in which the A-theorist and B-theorist treat questions of experience and its relation to time – aspects of this question feature in (i) Prior's argument ("Thank goodness that's over") and the translatability of sentences describing our experience, (ii) the experience of the passage of time and if it reflects an objective feature of time, and (iii) whether the conclusions of our best scientific theories, like Special Relativity, take precedence over our experience.

Chapter Three: A Therapeutic Reading of the A and B-Theory of Time

In the previous chapter, I hope to have shown some of the key concerns shared by the A and B-theorists. I drew attention to their main commitments and fundamental areas of disagreement: whether the A-properties are required for an adequate characterization of time, whether events objectively possess the A-properties, whether the present is everchanging, and so on. I also looked at some arguments they launch against one another: some sentences are not translatable in terms of B-relations, the experience of time is an illusion, the A-theory is incoherent, etc. My hope was to construct a faithful discussion and capture a moment in the debate between the A and B-theorist – what *they* take their views and commitments to be, what *they* take to be good or bad arguments for or against these, and what *they* take to be a discussion on the nature of time.

In the first chapter, I provided the main features of Baker's therapeutic reading of Wittgenstein, and in the process of assessing the main criticism it has received, hope to have elucidated and clarified some of its crucial aspects. A central part of that chapter is the accusation that many philosophical problems originate in being *beholden* to a picture or set of pictures, in being *dogmatic* about them. And a central feature of the therapeutic reading is that these pictures are either unacknowledged and operate unconsciously, or they operate consciously but are presented as the *only possibility* – an attitude where one thinks "what else could there reasonably be?" or "this is the only way that makes sense!"

The therapeutic goal of philosophy is liberation from dogma and prejudice, from seeing some picture or set of pictures as a way to see things amongst other possibilities, and in acknowledging the picture *as* a picture. As opposed to traditional philosophical deductive or inductive argumentation, this approach consists instead in offering a set of rational considerations to help someone develop a *different* intellectual orientation. As I elaborated in the first chapter, some

examples of rational considerations are offering novel objects of comparison, constructing indeterminate cases, offering new centers of variation, and describing simplified versions of what we want to see. And a metaphor I have invoked and find helpful is the image of the duck-rabbit. Some philosophical problems arise in seeing the duck-rabbit as duck exclusively, and a therapeutic approach is to guide someone to acknowledge the rabbit. This helps the interlocutor see the image as a duck-rabbit and become liberated from the prejudice that duck-picture was the *only* way to look at the image.

With this in mind, we can turn to this chapter. Dramatically stated, my goal in this chapter is to get the A and B-theorists - who in various respects see the duck-rabbit image as only a duck – to acknowledge the rabbit! This is not as simple as it sounds since there is not one but many pictures at work, and no two A or B-theorists are the same. Ideally, as is the case with therapy, one can isolate a particular individual and isolate their particular anxieties, worries, and the pictures *they* are beholden to. But given the nature of this thesis, my approach will be to think about the kinds of pictures an A or B-theorist seem to be beholden to, similar in strategy to the way Wittgenstein writes the *Investigations*. We work with this constraint, but the degree of depth in the previous chapter allows for specificity in isolating the pictures at work.

Less dramatically stated, my approach in this chapter consists in isolating the pictures at work for the A and B-theorist and offer rational considerations which may guide sympathetic and willing readers to acknowledge other possibilities. With this I mind, I also want to offer two caveats. First, in a domain as rich as the metaphysics of time, there are *many* interwoven pictures at work. I will focus on isolating a few pictures which I think are conducive to a productive therapeutic reading in the scope of this thesis. Second, I want to emphasize that the rational considerations I offer are not deductive arguments – a point central to the therapeutic reading. The overall goal of this chapter

to challenge the picture the A or B-theorist is beholden to in the hope that they may recognize the pictures, cravings, and anxieties operative in their theories.

With this in mind, this chapter consists of four sections:

(i) A Craving for General Explanation: The Manifest & The Hidden

(ii) A Picture of Words as Referring Expressions

(iii) A Picture of Exactness & Precision

(iv) A Picture of Time *as* Space

(i) In "A Craving for General Explanation: The Manifest & The Hidden", I argue that there is no standard against which we can judge whether the A or B-theory is a better explanation of the nature of time. As such, it makes more sense to be agnostic and yet there are A and B-theorists. This should make us ask: why? On a therapeutic reading, I suggest that we have A and B-theorists rather than agonistics because, in addition to satiating a craving for a kind of general explanation of time, the A and B-theory satiate their own kinds of cravings, namely ones to want to affirm the manifest and uncover the true nature of things respectively.

(ii) In "A Picture of Words as Referring Expressions", I isolate a picture where certain kinds of words (past, present, future, event, time) are thought of referring to some kind of thing or object (in the most general sense). This is a picture which both the A and B-theorist are beholden to. I then show that there is an alternative picture where we can use these terms without taking them to be referring expressions. Recognizing the

alternative picture should help in realizing the ways in which the picture of referring expressions is a picture, and not how things are or must be.

(iii) In "A Picture of Exactness & Precision", I isolate another picture the A and B-theorist are beholden to – one where a certain kind of philosophical language is meant to be more exact and precise than ordinary language. I also provide an alternative picture where precision is understood only in the context of some purpose. This purpose-driven conception of precision is in sharp contrast with a picture of precision simpliciter. I will also show how this alternative picture undermines some of the central arguments made by philosophers (Dummett and Lowe) in the previous chapter, with the goal of recognizing it as a picture.

(iv) In "A Picture of Time *as* Space", I isolate a picture where time is conceptualized in terms of space. While the B-theorist claims to invoke space as a useful analogy or metaphor in her explication of time, I try to show the ways in which the analogy plays a more central role in how the B-theorist conceptualizes time itself. It is not *just* an analogy or *merely* a metaphor but influences the kinds of questions the B-theorist asks, the responses they give, and the logic, so to speak, of their theory. In recognizing the degree to which it influences the B-theory, my hope is that it helps us recognize it as a picture.

§3.1 A Craving for General Explanation: The Manifest & The Hidden

In this section, I want to suggest that the desire to be an A or B-theorist comes from a craving to affirm two kinds of general explanation. The A-theory satisfies a craving to affirm our

ordinary ways of talking about the world – the desire to say how we talk about the world *really* is how the world is. The B-theory, on the other hand, satisfies a craving to get underneath the ordinary, as if one has discovered how things *really* are as opposed to what they seem to be.

To make this suggestion intelligible, I will first show there is no determinate standard against which we can judge both theories that could help one conclude one is a better explanation than the other, due to the kinds of explanations they are.[25] The absence of such a standard means that the appropriate attitude towards the A and B-theory should be one of agnosticism. Regardless of this, most metaphysicians of time are not agnostics – they are A *or* B-theorists, both confident that their explanation is the correct one, that only it *really* explains the nature of time. And so we may ask: why are there A or B-theorists rather than agnostics? This is where Baker's reading provides an answer: wanting to affirm the A or B-theory originates from certain kinds of cravings – ones that drive one to do philosophy (Baker, 2004, 146). And as I have mentioned, while the A-theory originates in what we can loosely call a craving to affirm the manifest, the B-theory originates in a craving to uncover what is hidden.

Let us begin with an uncontroversial remark: The A and B-theories are both theories that seek to explain the nature of time and temporal order. As such, there is a *scope* of explanation, a domain of things the A and B-theorists take themselves to be explaining: the A-theorist is not concerned with explaining whether coffee tastes better hot or cold, but is instead concerned with explaining, for example, what temporal passage or change over time consists in. The scope for the A and B-theory is limited to the following:

(i) An explanation of what time, temporal order, and any associated concept consists in i.e., an explanation that entails that temporal order consists in events holding properties, or

[25] A large portion of this section is dedicated to defending this claim.

events being in two-place relations to one another, and an explanation of what events, moments, etc. consist in.

(ii) An explanation of every phenomenon associated with or impacted by a difference in the nature of time and temporal order e.g., differing accounts of what change, temporal passage, etc. consist in.

In addition to just providing *an* explanation, however, both the A and B-theorist also take themselves to be providing the *truth* and take their opponent to be wrong.

With these thoughts in mind, I want to ask the following question: what makes one explanation *better* than the other? Normally, to assess how one explanation is better than another, we might recognize or introduce some standards against which we should judge them. A theory in physics might be considered a good explanation if we can use it successfully e.g., a theory which helps us construct a stable bridge which does not collapse under a lot of pressure. We might think a theory is good if it can make accurate predictions e.g., about whether it will rain tomorrow. In both these cases, there is some standard against which we can judge the physical theory. The standard might not tell us whether a theory is *true* (if one thinks there is more to truth than usefulness) but what we can say is that an explanation that can be used at constructing stable bridges and detecting weather conditions accurately is *better* than an explanation that cannot. In the case of the A and B-theory, however, there is no parallel standard of use in application or prediction. The A and B-theory are different kinds of explanations than physical theories since neither of them are (or can be) used in this way.

In the absence of a standard of usefulness, we might turn to some other standard, like which of the theories is 'intuitive', or coheres better with one's existing worldview. But to this, we might ask: are either the A or B-theory intuitive? Do either of them cohere with an ordinary worldview,

whatever that means? The B-theory certainly isn't. The B-theorist will tell you that every time you mention the past, present, or future, you are strictly speaking wrong. If you tell her that time is passing quite quickly, she will tell you that it isn't because there is no such thing as the passage of time. It may seem then the A-theory comes out on top since the A-theorist affirms the existence of the past, present, and future, and retains our ordinary talk of the passage of time. But if we are applying this standard of intuition, how intuitive is it to say the following sentence:

"The event of Napoleon's death possesses the property of being in the distant past and does not possess the property of being in the near past, but in the year 1800 CE., it possessed the property of being in the near past."

According to the A-theory, this sentence is true. But is it intuitive? Does it cohere well?

Even if we said it was, whatever 'intuitive' means, why think that the truth has anything to do with intuition? After all, the A and B-theory both invoke a technical vocabulary e.g., of events possessing temporal properties or two-place relations, that departs from the ordinary ways in which we normally talk about time. Here, there is a sharp contrast between ordinary word use which is considered intuitive and inaccurate, and technical vocabulary, which is considered unintuitive and true. Think here also of scientific explanations, which may provide an unintuitive explanation for a phenomenon but may still be considered true. None of this is to say that being 'intuitive' is not a virtue in any kind of explanation – a teacher might want to come up with an intuitive explanation for their students to help them remember, and this might make it a good explanation. But as far as the A and B-theory are concerned, which are theories of what *really* is the case, being intuitive does not seem to be a standard in deciding which of these theories is true, and in turn, the better explanation.

So, in the absence of usefulness, predictive power, and being 'intuitive', we can turn to one final standard I will consider: which of the theories offer a *complete* explanation, i.e., which theory is able to explain and account for everything in the domain of things to be explained. The idea here is that, if one theory is able to completely or adequately explain the nature of time, temporal order, and any phenomena related with it, we could say it is the better theory. The problem here, however, is that both the A and B-theory are complete explanations. Both explain what they set out to explain through providing a full account of the nature of time and temporal order, any associated concept, and any related phenomena. The A and B-theory do this by making two interrelated moves:

(i) *Explanation in Terms of the Core Commitments:* After listing their core commitments, the A and B-theory can simply explain most phenomena in terms of the core commitments of the theory itself. Take the question of what an object undergoing change consists in. The A-theorist might say that an object has undergone change if its properties are different as time passes, or as it goes from being in the past to the present. The B-theorist might instead say that an object has undergone change if its properties are different at t1 and t2, where t2 is later than t1. Similarly, take the question of what one really means when one talks about the past: for the A-theorist, it is some set of events that all bear this property, but for the B-theorist it is a set of events earlier than the time of the utterance.[26]

(ii) *Illusions:* There are also concepts or phenomena which the core commitments of the theory may be incompatible with. For any such concept or phenomena, the A or B-

[26] For accounts of the differences between an A and B-theoretic account of change, see: Prior (1968) & Sydney (1968)

> theorist will can say: they are just illusions! The B-theorist invokes this move repeatedly.[27] The phenomenon of temporal passage is not something compatible with its core commitments, so the B-theorist can say that it is an illusion. Similarly, the concept of the past, in the ordinary sense, is incompatible with its commitments, and so the B-theorist can say there is *really* no such thing as the past.[28]

These moves are *always* available to the A and B-theorist, which guarantees that there is no phenomena that cannot be explained. So insofar as the better explanation is the one which explains everything it sets out to explain, both the A and B-theory are on par.

We can keep going through other potential options for a standard against which to judge whether the A and B-theory is better, but this seem to be the most intelligible ones. As we have seen, none of them can help decide which of the two theories is better, let alone answer the more ambitious question of which one, if any, is true. If one is persuaded that there really is no determinate standard against which we can judge which of the two theories is better, here is something that should strike us: There are philosophers who are steadfast A-theorists and steadfast B-theorists. The next question we should ask is: why? In the absence of a determinate standard to compare theories, how can one be a steadfast A or B-theorist?

Here is another possibility: couldn't one simply be agnostic about the A and B-theory? This would look like one saying, "I understand how the A-theorist and B-theorist respectively explain time but cannot really say which one is true". There is a sense in which this is the more

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[27] See: Williams (1951) and Mellor (1981) as examples of a more detailed description of how a B-theorist explains temporal passage as an illusion.

[28] Some theorists might try to explain *why* we have this illusion. Some B-theorists, for example, have tried to show that temporal passage has 'evolutionary advantages' which are useful but not accountable to truth. But as far as the theories themselves go, the demand for such explanations is not central to the theory.

appropriate *attitude* if one is concerned with which of the two is true.[29] Such an attitude makes even more sense when we consider that there are no knockdown arguments against either theory, since both the A and B-theorist have some way to respond to any new criticism. We can imagine a similar attitude if one is presented with two physical theories, both of which successfully explain or model the phenomena in question. Are we compelled to say one is true over the other? Or is there a sense in which we can suspend judgement while still understanding the way the theory explains what it sets out to? The possibility of agnosticism should draw our attention to why one would want to affirm either the A or B-theory despite not needing to.

On Baker's therapeutic reading, we can explain why one would choose to be an A or B-theorist in a situation where the attitude of agnosticism is more appropriate. On the whole, wanting to affirm the A and B-theory can be explained by the desire to do a certain kind of philosophy itself: a craving for general explanation. (Baker, 2004, 53-5) In this case, this craving consists in wanting to explain what the nature of time itself is. The grand scale of the question is not incidental and is testament to its generality. To satiate the craving, this general explanation cannot simply be antecedently held i.e., one cannot be agnostic about it. It is only in affirming it that there is a sense of relief, and one, so to speak, gives in to the craving.

At the same time, however, there are more specific cravings for why one would want to be an A-theorist or B-theorist. On a very general level, the A-theory satisfies a craving where what one ordinarily talks about (talk of the past, present, future, of time passing, the present changing) *really* is part of reality – the A-theorist can talk about the past *because* the past objectively exists. This is the same attitude that is expressed when one says: "It's not just that I think it, it is *really* there". This is part of an attitude and a picture where one's language represents reality accurately

[29] Wittgenstein (1967, 26) makes a similar point by drawing our attention towards the *attitude* one has when they provide a psychoanalytic explanation for an action.

and objectively, one where there is a kind of symmetry between the way I talk about the world and how the world *really* is, an attitude where the nature of time is manifest.

The B-theorist, on the other hand, is beholden to a competing desire – one which describes what lies beneath the surface, what is hidden. This kind of craving is what leads one to try to strip away the ordinary and messy to uncover what is *really* happening. It is as if we have discovered how things *really* are when they looked to be so different and deceptive. These sorts of explanations have a kind of charm and are often marked by highlighting a distinction between what seems to be the case and what there *really* is, where the former is an illusion.[30]

Now, the therapeutic reading provides an explanation for why the metaphysician of time is more likely to be an A-theorist or B-theorist rather than be agnostic. But what is also important on Baker's reading is there are a multiplicity of pictures, and neither of them are right nor wrong. Where the A and B-theorist go wrong then is *not* in their failure to be agnostic in the absence of a determinate standard to judge their theory on, but in a failure to recognize their picture *as* a picture. In the remaining sections, I want to go through identifying a series of pictures in the A and B-theorist's accounts and the surrounding debate and providing an alternative picture and different possibilities for each one. My hope is that both isolating the picture at work and providing an alternative will help see the ways in which the current A and B-theory debate stems from a failure to recognize other possibilities, and therefore help one to see how the theories stem from pictures rather than true explanations.

[30] I also want to make a related suggestion: the way the A and B-theorist often use the term 'really' exemplifies these cravings and can be understood as serving the function of a persuasive or rhetorical device to get a reader to *adopt the picture* remarked about. Consider the difference between the sentence "time does not pass" and "time does not *really* pass". Or the difference between the two sentences, "Every generation thinks they are different, but *really* we are all the same.", and "It may look as if we are all the same, but *really* every generation is different." Though, in one sense, the term 'really' is not adding any content, it suggests that *this* way of looking at things is correct and the previous one was not.

§3.2 A Picture of Words as Referring Expressions

In this section, I want to show that the very terms of the debate between the A and B-theorist are rooted in a picture of language, namely one where certain temporal words e.g., 'past', 'time', 'event', etc. in some sense, refer to something (in the most general sense). I then want to suggest an alternative picture, one where these words are intelligible and yet they do not necessarily refer to anything.

To begin, we may imagine the following exchange between the A and B-theorist:

A-*Theorist:* Napoleon died in the past.
B-Theorist: Well, I get what you mean but that's strictly speaking wrong. Really, what is true is that Napoleon's death happened earlier than this conversation.
A-Theorist: Both are true if you like. Yes – Napoleon's death happened earlier than this conversation, but it also happened in the past
B-Theorist: There may be nothing wrong in using the term 'past' colloquially, but if we are concerned with truth, then we should get rid of it. There is no such thing as the past.
A-Theorist: Well, I am not just using it colloquially – I am concerned with truth too, and that Napoleon died is in the past is the truth! After all, there really is a past.

This exchange, aside from the awkward prose, makes use of commitments and claims that most A and B-theorist quite explicitly make. I want to focus on the following presupposition: that there is a *difference* between the sentences "Napoleon died in the past" and "Napoleon's death happened earlier than this conversation". To see a difference in these sentences itself originates from a picture of language, namely one where our words, in some sense *must* refer to an object in the most general sense, a kind of 'thing'. The A-theoretic sentences talks about 'the past' while the B-theoretic sentence does not. And so, it looks as if the A-theorist is committed to this thing called 'the past' while the B-theorist is not.

While the past, present, and future are things only the A-theorist affirms, both the A and B-theorist also talk about 'events' in this way. The A-theorist talks about events possessing properties, while the B-theorist talks about events holding certain temporal relations to each other. Even if one changes the term 'events' itself and replaces it with moments, sections of time, or even tensed and

tenseless propositions, that *something* is being talked about, described, and referred to is inescapable. Baker describes this picture –what he calls a 'schema' here - in the following way:

> According to this schema, a difference in the meanings of two words must always be explained by reference to a difference between the two objects which they severally stand for, and a difference between the uses of two sentences must be accounted for by reference to a difference between the two facts which they severally describe.[31] (Baker, 2004, 186)

By treating terms like 'past', 'time', 'events', etc. as referring expressions, the A and B-theorist can predicate them in the same way one would predicate other referring expressions. It is because the term 'car' functions as a referring expression in the sentence, "the car is passing" that one can say things like "the car is passing", "the car is yellow", "the car is broken", etc. This structure is mirrored in cases of predicating temporal terms the way A and B-theorists do, when they say, "time is passing", "events possess the A-properties", "the past is unreal", etc.

Of course, both the A and B-theorist would reject the characterization that they are beholden to a 'picture'. They might concede that their accounts require that terms like past, present, future, and event are referring expressions, but simultaneously think that there are good reasons to think they are just that. I want to consider two main reasons for why an A or B-theorist would think this.

The first of these is that simply that we refer to things *all* the time. Why think there is anything wrong in the case of treating certain kinds of temporal terms as referring expressions? To help their case, consider the following dialogue:

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[31] Baker also highlights several pictures of language that Wittgenstein talks about at length. He writes: "A category of unconscious pictures which seem particularly pervasive and pernicious: pictures of 'how language works'; pictures of how to speak about how we speak (Augustine's picture of language); tendency to construe the grammar of the expression of sensation on the model of 'object and designation' (Wittgenstein, 2009, 106); that all sentences are descriptions; that language functions to convey thoughts which may be about houses, pains, good and evil, or anything you please (Ibid., 108); that all items falling under a general term must have something in common (Ibid., 35); the thesis that every proposition *must* be complex " (Baker, 2004, 186). Though I will not be discussing any of these at length, many of these pictures are interwoven, and recognizing their multiplicity helps recognize more pictures at work in many philosophical theories more broadly.

"What do you think echidnas and blobfish are?"

"Well, echidnas are a kind of anteater, but blobfish are just a kind of fish."

In this case, one might say: The words 'echidnas', 'blobfish', 'anteater', and 'fish' refer to different things. The reason there is a different word for 'echidnas' and 'blobfish' is because they refer to different things, namely echidnas and blobfish. The A and B-theorist might then tell us compare this case with the following case:

A-theorist: What do you think the past and future are?

B-theorist: The past consists of all events earlier than this conversation, but the future consists of all events later than this conversation.

The A and B-theorist may then say: We can treat these cases in parallel with the first case. Of course, 'past', 'future', and 'event' do not refer to any kind of physical object like an echidna or blobfish, but they are still things to be referred to, to be talked about, to be described as if they are objects in this most general sense.

Here is the problem with this point: *Just because* (i) both sets of cases share a sentential and grammatical structure and (ii) the first set of cases are referring expressions (or can be seen as referring expressions) does not mean that (iii) the second set of cases are referring expressions. Consider the following sentences: "It is 5'o clock in Lahore", "It is 5'o clock in Oxford", and "It is 5'o clock in Middletown". We may take these cases to have some structure e.g., "it is 5'o clock in *x*" where *x* is some location. And it may seem that, no matter what one plugs in *x,* the meaning of the sentence – regardless of whether it is true or not – should at least be intelligible. But this is incorrect,

since we can construct sentences like "It is 5'o clock on the sun" (Wittgenstein, 2009, 118). This sentence is neither intelligible nor meaningful. Of course, we may explain why not e.g., telling the time only makes sense on Earth. But what is important is that, simply because we have numerous cases where it makes sense to say "it is 5'o clock" in does not mean that it is transferrable in every case. Cases like this should show how the A and B-theorist cannot make the argument that the 'past' and 'events' are referring expressions because they feature in the same *kinds* of sentences as 'echidnas' and 'fish'.

A second reason why the A and B-theorist may think their terms are referring expressions: What else would they be? After all, even if one concedes that we cannot simply take the grammatical structure of sentences in some cases and assume that other cases are referring expressions, one could think they *must* be referring expressions. How else do we talk about things like events, the past, and time at all?

But this is where we may introduce an alternative picture of language, one where it is intelligible and meaningful to use these terms and expressions in some contexts without thinking that they are referring expressions. If we can show that these terms are not *necessarily* referring expressions, then we can show the A and B-theorist that their views stem from a picture as opposed to how things must be. To do this, I want to draw our attention to some sentences which include the terms the A and B-theory treat as referring terms (past, future, event, etc.). I want to show that we can make sense of these sentences without necessarily thinking that these terms are used as referring expressions. To illustrate this, consider the following four sentences and a way we may think of what it means the same as:

(i) "Do not worry about it, it is in the past" means the same as ""Do not worry about it since it has already happened"

(ii) "Reflect on your past behavior" means the same as "Reflect on things you have done"

(iii) "What is the present tense of slept?" means the same as "What is the word we use to denote that someone is sleeping"

(iv) "I will be late for the event!" (where the event is a garden party) means the same as "I will be late for the garden party"

In cases (i) and (ii), we can quite easily replace the terms 'past' with 'what has happened' or what one 'has done'. In both cases, we need not think about the 'past' as a thing being referred to. Similarly, in (iii) we can treat the word 'present' to denote a type of word, rather than a referring expression.

Finally, in (iv), we can take the more general term 'event' to just mean the actual event itself i.e., the garden party. While the 'garden party' is being used as a referring expression, the word 'event' is then just a category whose reference varies in each context of utterance. The upshot here is that, according to this way of thinking about events, it does not make sense to group events.

According to this alternative picture – this way of looking at things - we have a way to make sense of sentences which include A and B-theoretic terms without thinking of them as referring expressions and kinds of things. That is, it shows that these terms are not *necessarily* referring expressions, contrary to the argument we made on behalf of the A and B-theorist. And if we entertain this alternative picture, we get a compelling story about what has gone wrong for the A and B-theorist: the idea that these terms either must be referring expressions or that we have a good argument for why they are (from other similar uses) *comes from* being beholden to a picture of language – one where words refer.

Now, even after explicating this alternative picture, an A or B-theorist may say: "Sure, not all uses of past, present, future, events, etc. necessarily refer, but even you admit that they *could* be

referring expressions in some contexts! So, what is wrong in saying that when I say, "the past is real" or "the present is everchanging", I am really referring to the past and present!"

There are two responses to this rebuttal. The first is that the A and B-theorist do not really get to choose how words operate. Yes, *we* use words. But just because we want to talk about certain things, use words as referring expressions, does not mean that they will automatically refer to things. I may say I want to use 'happiness' as a referring expression, but this does not mean happiness suddenly appears. Somewhat similarly, the A and B-theorist may want to use 'time' as a referring expression, but this does not mean there is such a thing as time which consists of a series of events!

The second response to this rebuttal is that, if one seriously asserted this, then it is safe to say they have missed the point of what I want to say. At no point did I claim that the A and B-theorist *cannot* think of their expressions as referring expressions. This is a way of looking at things. What I have tried to do, however, is show that this is just that: A way of looking at things - a picture. I tried to do this by showing what the A and B-theorist take for granted and by showing what else is possible, what other ways there are to look at things. Anyone who launches this rebuttal thinks that I am trying to refute the A and B-theory's picture, but here it is useful to remember that on Baker's reading, one cannot refute a picture. Katherine Morris writes:

> 'Imagine someone's saying: "*All* tools serve to modify something. Thus the hammer modifies the position of the nail, the saw the shape of the board, and so on." – And what is modified by the rule, the gluepot, the nails? – "Our knowledge of a thing's length, the temperature of the glue, and the solidity of the box"' (PI §14). In these last cases, the 'harmonisation' of our 'practical opinions' about what rules, gluepots and nails do with the dogma that all tools serve to modify something is less 'easy' than in the other cases; at the same time, the harmonisation *can be done*: the dogmatist does *answer* the question 'what is modified by the rule, the gluepot, the nails? (Morris, 2007, 69-70)

She then writes:

> It may seem that Wittgenstein is offering counterexamples, but this would be futile - the dogmatist can accommodate and harmonize the less easy cases. "This is how dogma becomes irrefutable and beyond the reach of attack" (Wittgenstein, 1980, 28) (Ibid.)

Morris' comments help make sense of both why pictures cannot be challenged if one is dogmatic about a picture, and in turn, the limits of offering rational considerations. If one is dogmatic and

thinks that all tools serve to modify something, they can always find a way to make any tool meet this standard. Similarly, if one is dogmatic about the picture of some terms as being referring expressions, then one can maintain that they are *really* referring to the nature of time and temporal order. And they would think that, at the end of this section, that the A or B-theory is unscathed.

If, however, one is sympathetic to this alternative picture as an intelligible possibility, then there are two upshots. First, it should help see why the A or B-theorist's concerns are not necessary concerns, nor are their theories self-evident, or arising from 'the facts'. In harsher terms, it helps see the ways in which the debate is rooted in dogma. Of course, one *may* still look at what an A or B-theory turns out to be – based on a picture of language. There is nothing wrong with that. But remember that A and B-theorists take themselves to be engaging in a debate about how things are. And the nature of the disagreement is such that both of them think they are right and the other is wrong.

Remember here that our inquiry is perspectival, where there is no singular fact of the matter. Invoking the image of the duck-rabbit: it can be seen as a duck *or* a rabbit, it is not secretly one of them nor is it some duck-rabbit hybrid animal. The A and B-theory, however, stem from a way of looking at language (seeing only the duck in the duck-rabbit) and this alternative picture helps them see that there are multiple ways of looking at language (also seeing the rabbit in the duck-rabbit, and therefore recognizing that the image is a duck-rabbit).[32]

[32] Another example of the A and B-theorist being beholden to a picture of words as referral expressions that I have not discussed in this section is with the term 'is'. As we saw in the previous chapter, some A-theorists argued that the term 'is' is necessarily temporal, while some B-theorists argued that there is a tenseless 'is'. In both cases, the term 'is' is discussed as if it is a kind of thing which is *really* one way or another. Undermining this would involve a similar strategy as I have used in this section i.e., showing where this picture comes from, and suggesting alternative possibilities.

§3.3 A Picture of Exactness & Precision

The A and B-theorist are also beholden a picture where a certain kind of philosophical language is more *exact* and *precise*. This picture is also pervasive in a certain approach to doing philosophy not limited to the metaphysics of time. Before explaining the ways in which some A and B-theorists are beholden to this picture, here are some of the following central features of this picture:

1) *Ideal Languages:* A philosopher beholden to this picture would be interested in coming up with an ideal language free of ambiguity, and clear in structure. Relatedly, they will view 'ordinary language' as inexact and imprecise.

2) *Technical Vocabulary:* Exactness and precision are expressed in the use of a certain kind of philosophical language. Here, we might see talk of properties, relations, names, logical and sentential operators, etc.

3) *Philosophical Language is Better at Describing What There is:* In conjunction with a picture of words as referring expressions (from the previous section), this picture or precision and exactness entails a conception of language where there is a technical vocabulary that is closer to describing the world or reality how it *really* is, or at the very least, it describes it *better* than ordinary language

Consider the following sentence:

Socrates is a man

The philosopher beholden to such a picture would argue that this sentence is imprecise, since the surface grammar hides many features of what is being communicated. This philosopher would then 'analyze' these sentences. Consider these examples of how this sentence can be analyzed in increased degrees of technicality:

Socrates has the property of being a man

.

.

For all *x,* if *x* is Socrates, then *x* is a man

.

.

"(x) S(x)É M(x)[33]

(Where *S* is the property of being Socrates and *M* is the property of being a man)[34]

To challenge this picture, I ask: in what way are the analyzed versions of the sentences more exact and precise than the ordinary sentence "Socrates is a man"? Consider the following remark from section 88 of the *Investigations*:

88. If I tell someone "Stay roughly here" - may this explanation not work perfectly? And may not any other one fail too?

"But still, isn't it an inexact explanation?" Yes, why shouldn't one call it "inexact"? Only let's understand what "inexact" means! For it does not mean "unusable". And let's consider what we call an "exact" explanation in contrast to this one. Perhaps like drawing a boundary-line around a region with chalk? Here it strikes us at

[33] Baker (2004, 33) makes a related point: "He had mistaken the possibility of a comparison (the possibility of rephrasing 'Socrates was older than Plato' as 'Socrates stood in the relation of being older than to Plato') for a state of affairs of the highest generality (namely, that all words with material meanings are distributed in networks of purely logical relations."
[34] The notation is not essential to this approach but shows the ways in which philosophical language aspires to be like mathematical notation – the gold standard for exactness and precision. A philosopher beholden to this picture may say, "*if only* our language was as precise as mathematics where the definitions and meanings are clearly stated!"

once that the line has breadth. So a colour edge would be more exact. But has this exactness still got a function here: isn't it running idle? Moreover, we haven't yet laid down what is to count as overstepping this sharp boundary; how, with what instruments, it is to be ascertained. And so on. (Wittgenstein, 2009, 46)

In this remark, Wittgenstein explicates a picture of precision and exactness, the same one I am isolating. He is trying to show that thinking of "stay roughly here" as an inexact explanation originates in a picture where there is an idealized explanation that 'perfectly' delineates the boundaries of where one is supposed to stay. In the remarks following this Wittgenstein says "exactness (is) running idle" (Ibid.). He also draws our attention to how one beholden to such a picture has not "laid down what is to count as overstepping this sharp boundary" nor have they figured out "with what instruments (overstepping this boundary) is to be ascertained" (Ibid.). In these latter remarks, Wittgenstein can be read as drawing attention to the things someone beholden to such a picture has not done, which would be central tasks in boundary drawing. The point is not to refute the picture, but to recognize it as a picture by drawing our attention to how deeply it permeates our thinking.

Moving away from Wittgenstein's remarks here, here is an alternative picture: things are only more or less precise in relation to one another *for some specific purpose.*[35] According to this picture, there is no such thing as being more precise at describing, since even descriptions too are offered some specific purpose. Think here of two maps of Earth where one represents national borders in the last century, and another represents the movement of tectonic plates. The question of which map describes the Earth better would be quite odd. The appropriate answer would be: One is better for understanding borders, the other for earthquakes!

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[35] Wittgenstein frequently refers to the use of a concept for some specific purpose. Consider some cases from the *Investigations:* "We want to establish an order in our knowledge of the use of language: an order for a particular purpose, one out of many possible orders, not *the* order." (Wittgenstein, 2009, 56), or "To repeat, we can draw a boundary a for a special purpose. Does it take this to make the concept usable? Not at all! Except perhaps for that special purpose" (Ibid., 37), or "But what is the purpose of that symbolical sentence? It was supposed to highlight a difference between causal and logical dependence." (Ibid., 92)

Now, one may respond by saying that the analyzed versions of sentences are more exact since they are more generalized versions of the sentences. That is, they tell us the *kind* of sentence it is e.g., the ways in which "Socrates is a man" is like sentences like "Aristotle is a man", "Lahore is a city", "The chair is red", etc. Similarly, the analyzed formulation guarantees that we do not make wrong inferences, which ordinary language is prone to. A logician may point to how we can infer "Socrates is a featherless biped" from "Socrates is a man" and "Men are featherless bipeds", but we cannot infer "Something is better than a ham sandwich" from "Something is better than nothing" and "Nothing is better than a sandwich". The logician may further elaborate that the surface grammatical structure of the ordinary sentences masks the *real* structure of the sentence, while the analyzed version of the sentences shows the differences in these kinds of sentences e.g., the way "Socrates is a man" is the conjunction of two properties while "Nothing is better than a sandwich" is the negation of a property.

But in what ways does generalizability of both sentence-type and kinds of inferences entail a more exact or precise language? Instead, isn't it possible to think of the analyzed sentences as better *for the purpose* of drawing specific kinds of inferences? Or better *for the purpose* of creating a specific kind of taxonomy of sentence-types? Instead, one may want to group sentences *for the purpose* of a different taxonomy of sentence-types e.g., whether they are compliments or insults or *for the purpose* of different sorts of inferences e.g., what can be inferred about what someone means based on their tone in speech. To reemphasize, on this alternative picture of exactness and precision in terms of purpose, there is no notion of precision and exactness *simpliciter* or precision and exactness for descriptions *simpliciter*.

With this alternative picture in mind, let's turn to the ways in which the picture of exactness and precision is pervasive in the A and B-theory. We do not need to look further than McTaggart and Dummett's argument, as well as Lowe's response from the previous chapter. McTaggart and

Dummett argue that events in time must possess *all* the A-properties (past, present, and future), and yet they cannot possess them simultaneously. In Dummett's version of the argument, this means they must possess them successively such that an event *was* future, *is* present, and *will be* past. Dummett goes on to argue the concepts 'was', 'is', and 'will be' are synonymous with the concepts 'in the past', 'in the present', and 'in the future' respectively. Since events cannot possess these properties simultaneously either, they must possess them successively, resulting in an infinite regress.

Here are three key moves in Dummett's version of the argument outlined in the previous chapter:

1) 'Events' possess the 'properties' of 'being past', 'being present', and 'being future'
2) 'Events' can either possess these 'properties' 'simultaneously or successively'
3) 'Was', 'is', and 'will be' mean the same as 'in the past', 'in the present', and 'in the future'

If not for any of these moves, there would be no 'infinite regress' nor would Dummett conclude that the A-theory is incoherent.

Note, however, the ways in which all three moves rely on a very specific technical vocabulary rooted in a picture of exactness and precision. For example, if instead of events *possessing* the properties of past, present, or future, we talked of events having happened, happening, or going to happen, it would be difficult to make sense of what it would mean to say that an event happened, be happening, or going to happen 'simultaneously or successively'. That is, Dummett's argument relies on a picture of language where talk of properties, and of events having them, is a more precise and exact description of reality than ordinary language. Similarly, if instead of saying that 'was' means the same as 'in the past', we got rid of property talk and only understood sentences in the context they were uttered, Dummett would not be able to argue that there is an infinite regress of temporal

properties. Again, this relies on a picture of language where one has isolated that 'was' *really* entails the hidden property 'in the past', as if there is a generalizable and precise description that applies across sentences.

We see a similar picture of philosophical language as exact and precise in Lowe's response to McTaggart and Dummett. Lowe's response consists of three moves:

1) Extracting the logic of indexical expressions in spatial cases e.g., in sentences like "He is standing over there"
2) Applying this logic of indexicality to the temporal case e.g., in sentences like "He is standing now"
3) Showing that when the logic of indexicality is consistently applied (i.e., from the spatial to the temporal case), there is no incoherence.

Lowe's argument is rooted both in a picture of words as referring expressions (the one discussed in the previous sections) and a picture of exact and precise philosophical language. It relies on the former picture since there is a 'logic of indexicality' to be understood in the first place, a picture where indexical expressions *must* share generalizable features across sentences, where they describe something in the world by fixing a referent i.e., what the words are talking about. On a picture where words like 'past' do not necessarily refer, who is to say there is something beyond describing how we use these expressions in a variety of contexts? Similarly, the way that Lowe obtains the logic of indexicality from the spatial case ('here', 'there') to the temporal case ('now', 'then') is through a kind of sentential analysis. This relies on a picture of language where we can

break down sentences into their exact components, extract, and then apply this logic across varied contexts.[36]

§3.4 A Picture of Time *as* Space

A picture invoked repeatedly in the debate on time is that of time *as* space. This metaphor is invoked specifically by the B-theorist. Here are three ways in which the B-theorist invokes this metaphor:

1) *The Four-Dimensional Block:* Many B-theorists use the metaphor of the 'four-dimensional block' to explain their commitments. We are asked to imagine a four-dimensional block which includes every point in spacetime such that every event has a particular spatiotemporal location. Every point in the block bears some relation to every other point. And all events can be simultaneously seen on the block, regardless of whether they are - in A-theoretic vocabulary - past, present, or future.

2) *Points in Time & Temporal Relations:* Beyond the visual metaphor, in describing temporal order, the B-theorist also uses a certain kind of vocabulary normally used for space. The B-theorist will talk about points in time as bearing temporal relations to one another. "Napoleon's birth is earlier than Zia-ul-Haq's death" describes a temporal relation between two events in time, much like the way spatial points bear spatial relations to one another e.g., "Oxford is west of Lahore." Just as we can infer other spatial relations from a description alone ("Oxford is west of Lahore"

[36] Compare Rudolph Carnap's attempts in *Meaning and Necessity* (1947) to formalize ordinary utterances and construct more precise artificial languages and Gilbert Ryle calling Carnap's attempts "gratuitous algebra" (Ryle, 1949, 69). This dispute captures the A and B-theorist's and the alternative picture in this section to a degree, at least insofar as it expresses two different conceptions of language and precision.

implies that "Lahore is east of Oxford" and "Oxford and Lahore are not in the same spatial location"), we can similarly infer other temporal relations from a description ("Napoleon's birth is earlier than Zia-ul-Haq's death" implies that "Zia-ul-Haq's death is later than Napoleon's birth" and "Napoleon's birth and Zia-ul-Haq's death are not in the same temporal location).

3) *No Metaphysically Privileged Moment:* One of the main points of disagreement between the A and B-theory is on whether there is a 'metaphysically privileged' point. The B-theorist will often use the example of how, on analogy with how there is no 'metaphysically privileged' point in space, there is no metaphysically privileged point in time either. All we have is different points that bear relations to each other. The model of space helps us make sense of how we can think about time without any notion of the present. What would be the spatial equivalent of the present be anyway? Similarly, we get a coherent model of time which does not entail any commitment to the present.

While these cases all invoke a certain similarity between space and time, they also entail some important differences from each other. The four-dimensional block is quite consciously invoked as a *useful* image to understand how time works. No B-theorist really thinks there is a four-dimensional block, but it is nonetheless supposed to be incredibly helpful in understanding how to think about time on a B-theoretic conception.[37] Unlike the four-dimensional block, the B-theorist's language of 'points in time' and 'temporal relations', on the other hand, is not supposed to be a metaphor. Nor is the claim that there is no metaphysically privileged moment. The way space is invoked in these latter cases is like an analogy – since we can understand what it is like to talk about spatial points, spatial

[37] We saw a similar metaphor invoked by Markosian (2020) in the previous chapter where we are asked to think about the B-theorist's conception of time as film strips stacked on top of each other, and the A-theory as a film on screen.

relations, and no metaphysically privileged places, we can understand what it is like to talk about temporal points, temporal relations, and no metaphysically privileged moments.

Here is the key question: on the B-theorist's conception of time, is the invocation of space an innocent metaphor, analogy and useful pedagogical tool in understanding the main aspects of the theory, or does it play a central role in the story of the B-theory? The B-theorist will, of course, answer with the former. He might say: "We do not *need* space to understand time. All I am doing is invoking metaphors and analogies. If you will, I can explain my view without talking about four-dimensional blocks and without referencing how space has no metaphysically privileged points. Why should only a conception of space be able to entail terms 'point' or 'relation'?"

To this retort, however, it is important to remember that on Baker's reading, a picture is not a necessary component of a theory in the way that a necessary presupposition is. No one is claiming that the B-theorist *must* invoke space to list their commitments. This would make isolating pictures on par with making a transcendental argument (x, y is necessary for x, therefore y)! At this point, recall that the therapeutic conception of philosophy is not in the business of offering proofs, but instead in isolating a specific way of looking at things and offering alternative possibilities, in helping recognize how one is looking at things as a picture. (Baker, 2004)

With this mind, what can we do to show the B-theorist that they are beholden a kind of picture? We can make the following remarks:

1) *The Centrality of the Analogy with Space:* We can ask: is it a coincidence that there are so many parallels in a B-theoretic understanding of space and time on the B-theoretic conception of time? Is it a coincidence that the four-dimensional block so aptly captures the B-theorist's main commitments? Or is it the case that the B-theorist has *constructed* the B-theory on an analogy with space, and dropped the metaphor somewhere along the way?

To emphasize this point, we could ask the B-theorist: without using space as a metaphor, how would you intelligibly explain that there is no metaphysically privileged moment in time – that there is no such thing as the present?

2) *Illusions:* Instead of looking exclusively where the analogy holds, it also helps to look at places where the analogy between space and time breaks down to see how the B-theorist makes sense of these. Think here of both the notion of temporal passage (there is no spatial passage) and a conception of the present (there is no spatial equivalent to the present). Both these quite significant features of time explained away as *illusions*. How deep is this picture of time as analogous with space that the B-theorist feels these dissimilarities must not even be part of reality!

3) *What is Metaphysically Possible:* There are some other areas where the analogy between space and time breaks down in significant ways. First, when someone asks, "Where is Middletown?", we can point West, but if someone asks, "Where is the past?" we normally do not (and cannot) point at anything. Second, while I can go from my room to the kitchen and then back again, I cannot do the same with going to the past to the future and then back again.

We can imagine a B-theorist invoking a divide between what is metaphysically possible versus what we can do. She might say that ostensively referring to the past (a kind of 'temporal pointing') and going from the future to the past (a kind of 'temporal movement') are both metaphysically possible, but we are the kinds of beings that cannot do

so – perhaps God could![38] Again, this shows how when the analogy breaks down, the B-theoretic picture will only be able to explain them away by going at great lengths!

Now, even with these remarks, we can imagine a B-theorist could say that nothing I have said *demonstrated* that there is anything wrong with the analogy of time on space. In fact, *all* my so-called criticisms of the dissimilarities between space and time are already addressed in the B-theory e.g., by claiming that time travel is metaphysically possible, or that some features of time like the experience of temporal passage are subjective and not *really* features of how time itself is, etc.

But at this point an attentive reader will know that this retort is *always* available to an interlocutor. There are no proofs on the therapeutic reading, just as there are no proofs in therapy. And it was never my goal to refute these theories in any traditional philosophical sense or show that they are unintelligible by offering counterexamples. It is completely reasonable to *picture* time as space – it is, after all, *a way* to think about time. Rather, I am suggesting that we should be cognizant of the ways in which space *is* invoked and how, even when it is not consciously done so, it is the perfect analogy for the B-theorist and Lowe's argument. Pictures cannot be refuted but, through offering rational considerations, we can show a sympathetic reader the picture their theory and arguments arise from, with the hope that she recognizes it *as* a way of looking at things rather than how things are or must be.

Wittgenstein remarks that pictures often begin as metaphors, and the metaphor is dropped somewhere along the way. Even though it is dropped, however, it tacitly influences and affects how you are thinking of things. In light of this, here is a way to understand my remarks in this section: the B-theorist wants to say that the analogy of time with space is a *mere metaphor* and *just* an analogy,

[38] Ross Cameron – who advanced and defended a variation of the Moving Spotlight Theory (which in turn is a version of the A-theory) - said that metaphysics is explaining the world from God's point of view (Cameron, 2016) – my characterization is hardly far-fetched.

while what I want to say is that it seems to carry a lot more weight in the theory! In other words, in trying to show that this is a picture the B-theorist is beholden to and showing the degree to which a picture of time as space permeates the B-theorist's conception of time, I have tried to show that it is not *merely* a metaphor or *just* an analogy. Rather, it influences the entire theory - the kinds of questions the B-theorist asks (e.g., "Can we go backwards and forwards in time?"), the kinds of claims the B-theorist makes (e.g., "there is no metaphysically privileged point in time"), and the logic of the B-theory itself (e.g., dissimilarities between time and space written off as illusions, the logic of indexicality applies the same way to spatial and temporal indexical expressions).

Finally, and to reemphasize at the risk of being misconstrued, there is nothing wrong or bad about the picture of time as space. The goal of Baker's Wittgenstein is instead in getting one to recognize a picture as a picture rather than thinking it to be what is the case. And so, in recognizing the ways in which the picture of time as space permeates the way the B-theorist thinks about time, I hope to have shown a sympathetic reader that it is a picture among other possible alternatives none of which are inherently better or worse than another.

§3.5 Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, my aim was to do a therapeutic reading of the A and B-theory of time. In the process, I outlined the ways in which the cravings for a certain kind of explanation help us make sense of why one would want to affirm the A or B-theory, as opposed to opt for agnosticism. I also isolated three pictures: a picture of words as referring expression, a picture of exactness and precision, and a picture of time *as* space, and tried to show that they are pictures – ways of looking at things – rather than how things are.

For Baker's Wittgenstein, one of the main symptoms of being beholden to a picture is in saying: "How else could things be?" The picture comes to function as the only possibility, the only

intelligible way to look at things. This is why so much of the discussion in this chapter focuses on other possibilities and ways of looking at things - on recognizing a way in which we use temporal terms that does not need them to refer to anything, and in a way to understand exactness and precision that is purpose-specific rather than precise simpliciter. That being said, there are other strategies to help one recognize a picture other than providing alternatives. Sometimes isolating the ways in which an unconscious picture influences the kinds of remarks and affirmations we make and the questions we ask is enough to show someone that their picture is a picture, as opposed to what is obvious. This is also why I focused on the ways in which a picture of time *as* space influences the kinds of inferences a B-theorist makes, the questions they ask, what they explain away, etc., and why I further asked why there are many A and B-theorists rather than agnostics despite there not being any determinate standard against which to judge both theories. Ideally, strategies like this help recognize the role of pictures, anxieties, and cravings in the development of the A and B-theory.

Finally, to a sympathetic reader, I hope to have shown a way out of the A and B-theory, one where we are not forced to choose between them or a related view. It helps here, however, to remember that a therapeutic reading is always contextual and person-relative. One may try to construct a different theory of temporal order and if they do, we would conduct a therapeutic reading that is sensitive to its specificities. At the same time, however, the strategies of how we might conduct the reading would be comparable. It would involve isolating the pictures, anxieties, and cravings at work, providing alternative pictures, inducing an aspect-switch, and more generally, offering rational considerations in order to get someone to recognize their picture *as* a picture, one among other possibilities.

Conclusion

I had three goals in this thesis, each corresponding to the three chapters:

(i) In Chapter One, I aimed to highlight the main features of Baker's reading and defend it against some major criticisms.

(ii) In Chapter Two, I aimed to `do a faithful reconstruction and explication of some of the main issues in the debates between the A and B-theorists

(iii) In Chapter Three, I aimed to do a therapeutic reading of the A and B-theory of time.

At the end of this thesis, I want to offer a few caveats against which these goals can be assessed. Regarding the first goal - though I aimed to provide a relatively thorough reading of Baker's reading, by no means have I provided a complete characterization. There are some notable features I have left out in consideration of space constraints, such as Baker's detailed analysis on some key concepts, distinctions, and phrases in some of Wittgenstein's remarks[39] and the analogies between Wittgenstein's method and Psychoanalysis, and Waismann's views in the article titled *How I see Philosophy*. Though Baker stresses the significance of some of these, we can get a grasp of the general features of the therapeutic reading without necessarily going through all of these concepts, phrases, distinctions, and analogies. Other than the view itself, there are also several potential criticisms against Baker's view that I did not address – the charge that Baker's Wittgenstein is relativistic, that the view is unfalsifiable, and of course, that it is not textually motivated. Though Baker deals with some of these charges briefly himself, I believe

[39] Some of the concepts, distinctions, and phrases I have in mind: "perspicuous representations", "depth grammar", the distinction between "metaphysical and everyday use", the ""private language argument", "*our* language", and the metaphor of vision pervasive throughout late Wittgenstein's writings.

that the therapeutic reading can be defended against these and related criticisms if this thesis was expanded.

Regarding the second goal, though I provided an overview of the A and B-theory of time, I am conscious of the fact that different A and B-theorists may formulate their views with some variability. I am also aware that debate spans many areas. Since no two A or B-theorists are the same, I also expect there to be disagreements about which of the areas of disagreement are the most crucial. Though the scope of this thesis prevented me from going through all the different ways to formulate their views, and go through more areas of disagreements, I hope to have given the reader a formulation that is deeply shared, and disagreements that at least some notable A and B-theorists find central. Again, since I think this is a matter of scope, if this thesis were expanded it would allow for a more detailed consideration of different formulations and areas of debate. As far as the debates themselves go, I chose to focus on depth rather than breadth to orient the reader to both how an A and B-theorists may tackle a philosophical problem and the kinds of arguments they would make.

This brings us to the final goal of this thesis, which is also its namesake – a therapeutic reading of the A and B-theory of time. Though in one sense, it is the most important of these goals, its success depends on the success of the previous chapters – an explication of Baker's reading and the A and B-theories of time. Like the previous chapters, a significant consideration in writing this chapter was scope. By no means are the pictures, cravings, and anxieties identified and discussed in this chapter the *only* ones at work, nor are they necessarily the most important ones. Someone familiar with Wittgenstein's later writings will know that he has several remarks on what he calls the "Augustinian picture of language", on "grammar", and even on some philosophical conceptions of time itself. While I think many of these remarks relate with and apply to the A and B-theory, they need to be properly developed to be meaningfully assessed.

Again, if this thesis were expanded, many of these concerns could be properly dealt to further show the ways in which the A and B-theorist may be beholden to a picture.

A final remark on the therapeutic reading, one I have stressed at various points in this thesis, is that it requires a sympathetic reader. For Baker's Wittgenstein, we cannot offer any proofs. Instead, we can only offer rational considerations to make someone recognize a picture. This process, however, requires willingness. Though this does not mean that anyone unconvinced is just unwilling, it does mean that assessing this thesis requires a different attitude than one would have in evaluating a traditional philosophical argument. So, while my attempts at rational persuasion do not have the structure of deductive arguments, I hope that they are still compelling and get a reader to recognize the pictures at work in the A and B-theory of time.

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